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Nature of Stressors on Female Law Enforcement Academy Recruits

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Abstract

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MS, Tarleton State University, 2000

BS, University of Central Florida, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

A problem in law enforcement academy training is that female recruits endure more stressors than male recruits endure. This can lead to fewer females opting for careers as law enforcement officers. The purpose of this study was to explore the unique stressors on female recruits when they are held to the same standards as males. The feminist theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study to depict how stress is perceived for the female. The first research question examined how outside stressors affected female trainees. The second research question examined how job-related stressors affected female trainees. In-depth, semistructured interviews with students that were enrolled in a basic law enforcement academy at a Southeastern United States training center were conducted using a phenomenological qualitative approach. Thirty-two students were eligible for the study and 18 students participated. Data were analyzed using precoding of the transcription. Next, open coding, descriptive coding, and pattern coding were used to arrive at themes in the data. The results for the first research question showed that female trainees were affected regarding how they believe they are seen in society, how they are perceived in the family role, and how their peers view them as fellow future officers. The results for the second research question showed that female trainees are affected by being the sexual minority in their field, by negative male peer perception, by the treatment and acceptance by their superiors, by the potential career risks of this selection, and by the lack of time left for their personal well-being. This research is useful to law enforcement to discern that female trainees have a higher level of stress over males and measures can be adopted through hiring and retention to result in positive social change.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Dana Dillard. Dana, you can accomplish anything your heart desires if you put your mind to it and no, you don't have to call me Doctor now.

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I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my dissertation chair, Dr. Gregory Koehle and my committee member, Dr. Carolyn Dennis. Dr. Koehle was encouraging and supportive throughout every phase of this journey. Dr. Dennis, your guidance was insightful and greatly appreciated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

A problem in law enforcement academy training is that female recruits face more stressors than male recruits do. According to Violanti et al. (2016), these internal stressors can include pressure to succeed, adherence to scheduling constraints, and pressure from male counterparts. Outside stressors can be based on strained relationships between family and friends, social commitments, and being able to maintain an effective work/life balance. Because of these stressors, females may be discouraged from pursuing a career in law enforcement, and this may keep the ratio of females to males under the ratio of females to males of the current population of the United States. The research questions that need to be answered are the following: How do outside stressors affect law enforcement academy trainees and how do job-related stressors affect law enforcement academy trainees? I will use feminist theory to illustrate how stress is perceived from the female viewpoint. The methodology that I will use in this study is a phenomenological approach due to the nature of stress and how it is experienced by individuals. This research has relevance to social change because understanding the nature of female stress and how it possibly differs from male stress could make sworn law enforcement a more desirable career for females.

Background

Working as a sworn law enforcement officer is a stressful profession. According to Gutshall, Hampton, Sebetan, and Broxtermann, (2017), long-term and acute exposure to job-related stressors can have detrimental effects on law enforcement officers. Most

research related to the stress that is perceived by law enforcement officers has been conducted on participants who are already on the job, actively working as sworn officers. However, a gap exists in the research because no study has been conducted on the onset of stress in academy training, as well as how stress may differ for male and female academy trainees. A question remains whether it is possible to uncover the origins of this stress, and whether, as a result, the effects at the onset could be diminished. Future law enforcement officers' first foray into the realm of sworn law enforcement begins in the academy setting so, it was relevant to look at trainees to see what stressors they are experiencing and from where the stressors are originating. It is widely recognized that females are a minority group in the law enforcement training environment in that a typical academy has less than 20% female recruits, and that is a similar representation of the population of sworn female law enforcement officers on a national level. According to Alderden, Farrell, and McCarty (2017), more female recruits are needed to be attracted to the law enforcement profession to make the role of sworn law enforcement officer more representative of the population of the country; however, females consistently do not choose to pursue careers as sworn law enforcement officers.

Problem Statement: An Overview

The problem in law enforcement academy training is that female recruits have more stressors than male recruits do. This problem can be a contributing factor as to why fewer females choose to pursue a career as a sworn law enforcement officer. Law enforcement agencies would like to make the population of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States more representative of the gender of the population that they

are serving. This will not be corrected until law enforcement agencies understand why females are not drawn to a career as a sworn law enforcement officer in the first place. This is a constant struggle because the make-up of law enforcement officers has consistently remained in the 20% range for females and 80% for males. The population of the United States has consistently remained at 51% female and 49% male, showing how disproportionate female representation in law enforcement is.

Purpose of the Study: An Overview

My purpose in this phenomenological study was to investigate how the stressors on female recruits differ from male recruits. The findings show that females have more and different external stressors than males, as well as more and different internal stressors. Understanding the nature of female stress in law enforcement academies could help to inform policies that lead to an increased female interest in a law enforcement career.

Theoretical Framework: An Overview

The theory that supports this study is feminist theory. When looking at the gender of those working in a field, such as law enforcement, that is predominated populated by males, it would be appropriate to consider that simply being assigned to the minority gender in the field would be a cause of stress for the future law enforcement officer. Looking at this study through a feminist lens would be to interpret stress from the female perspective being the primary viewpoint and then compare that with the stress reported from their male counterparts.

Nature of the Study: An Overview

The key phenomenon that I investigated in this study was stress and how it is perceived differently by males and females. The qualitative method using a phenomenological approach guided this research design. Qualitative research is wholly based on the need to better understand why certain people behave the way they do and what those behaviors mean to them as well as how those behaviors are interpreted by all parties. I collected the data through in-depth interviews with trainees who were attending basic law enforcement academy classes at a southeastern U.S. training center. After I collected the data, I planned to code them using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. I examined the data for emergent themes and the potential differences between male and female stress.

Assumptions: An Overview

The assumptions that I brought to this study are that females would report having perceived more outside and internal stressors than their male counterparts. I also assumed that this affected their drive to become sworn law enforcement officers. These assumptions were necessary because the statistics show that females are underrepresented in the profession of sworn law enforcement officers across the United States. It is reasonable to assume that an explanation exists for this, and for it to be corrected the reasons need to be uncovered and corrected or the numbers of female to male officers will never be representative of the population of the United States.

Scope: An Overview

I have considered that females may have more obstacles toward a career in public safety than their male counterparts due to concerns of their personal safety by their family and friends due to preconceived female roles in society. I examined outside stressors and job-related stressors well as the influence of those stressors on the recruits as individuals. The potential transferability of this study is that readers of this study who have been through academy training may be able to generalize based on their own experiences that they had while attending academy training.

Delimitations: An Overview

Those I left out from the study were the students who chose not to participate in the study. Since 18 students chose to participate in this study, I determined that this was an adequate number of students to move forward with. The only students who were excluded from this study are students who are already employed in a criminal justice field as the perception of stress at the beginning of their career would not be measurable. There were no students in this group that met these criteria.

Limitations: An Overview

The weakness and gaps in this study are the limited number of females who are enrolled in the current classes, and they had the option to opt out of the study as much as the males in the classes. The biases that could limit the study's outcome is as the researcher, being female as well, may cause me to relate more to the female trainees and the stressors that they are experiencing than the males. The steps that I took to reduce the effects of the limitations are to ask the students the same set of questions and a similar

number of follow-up questions. Another limitation is that I did not and will not follow these students through their future careers to determine the stress that is perceived by the officers after their swearing in and employment as sworn law enforcement officers.

Significance of the Study: An Overview

A better understanding of why people are discouraged from pursuing a career as a sworn law enforcement officer is needed. It is widely recognized that policing is a stressful profession and part of the career of a law enforcement officer is the ability to manage the stress. If researchers can understand the origins of stress, perhaps future law enforcement officers can be helped in managing the stressful nature of the position. By making the profession of sworn law enforcement officer more desirable as a suitable career path for both genders, strides are made toward composing the police force in a manner that is more representative of the population that they are serving. This study is needed to more clearly understand where stress originates for trainees and seeks to neutralize those stressors before they become chronic and regular experiences for the sworn law enforcement officer.

Law enforcement agencies have historically had difficulties recruiting females to sworn law enforcement roles. According to Barratt, Bergman, and Thompson (2014), women have always been underrepresented within the ranks of the law enforcement profession when compared with the population that they are serving. Understanding why females are not attracted to a career in law enforcement in the same or higher numbers than males has been a recurring question that has not yet had an answer. Taking into consideration that law enforcement is a predominately masculine, male dominated

profession can cause greater job-related stress for females through discrimination, harassment, or exclusion. Understanding this alone can be a valid reason for why females are discouraged from pursuing a career in law enforcement instead of other career options. If the male dominated perception of sworn law enforcement professionals as well as the actual occurrence of these behaviors by male sworn law enforcement officers can be reduced, more females may be willing to take on sworn law enforcement roles.

According to Violanti et al. (2013), gender inequality affects the diversity of law enforcement agencies, their families, and their career promotion potential. Some contributing factors to the stress the female trainees experience include the unwillingness of their male peers as well as superiors to accept females as equals, sexual harassment, and the constant pressure of needing to prove one's self-worth and value. An elimination or at least a reduction of these stressors may increase the future numbers of female recruits in law enforcement academies.

Problem Statement

The problem that I am addressing in this study needs attention because law enforcement agencies would like to make the population of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States more representative of the gender of the population that they are serving. This will not be corrected until law enforcement agencies understand why females are not drawn to a career as a sworn law enforcement officer in the first place. This is a constant struggle as the makeup of law enforcement officers has consistently remained in the 20% range for females and 80% range for males. The population of the United States has consistently remained at 51% female and 49% male. Stigma exists

against females interested in working in sworn law enforcement that suggest women officers need to exhibit traditionally male behaviors. Barrett, Bergman, and Thompson (2014) have stated that law enforcement in the United States is portrayed as requiring certain skills that are stereotypically masculine, which can include the use of weapons, security and protection roles, and use of force. This may include avoiding or downplaying historically feminine behaviors of wearing makeup and having long hair and may even extend to becoming a mother. These stigmas can contribute to the added stressors that a female law enforcement officer feels already, and these females may be reluctant to appear too feminine to avoid being viewed as less competent because of societal perceptions. It is argued, however, that a female that is too masculine may have difficulty establishing mentoring relationships with more experienced male officers because they can be perceived as a lesbian and receive negative attitudes due to that presumption. Considering the tightrope that females must walk—being feminine but not too feminine—can add occupational stress even before the rigors of police work are added to the perceived stress of the female officer.

Kim, Wells, Vardalis, Johnson, and Lim (2015) suggested that gender has a critical role in stress and the study of stress in sworn law enforcement officers, but a gap exists in the research regarding stress on recruits during academy training where occupational stress for law enforcement officers would likely originate. This is an environment where females would begin to feel the occupational stressors that are present working in a field that is male dominated as the class makeup follows the current trend of 80% males to 20% females. If the origin of stressors can be determined, the police force

may better be able to prevent or minimize the stress on the future female law enforcement officers. In this study, I contribute to the existing literature because I am seeking to explore the origins of stress at the academy training level. These new data will help determine what the causes of the stress are.

The methodology that I used is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. I chose a qualitative method because according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), qualitative research is wholly based on the quest to understand why people behave the way they behave and what those behaviors mean to them. Furthermore, a phenomenological approach allows researchers to examine how individuals experience a phenomenon on a personal level and how the phenomenon of those perceived stressors affect their careers and their future development. Kim et al. (2015) found that female law enforcement officers have higher levels of negative medical symptoms that are associated with psychological and physical symptoms than their male counterparts. In this study, I hope to determine the nature of stress at the academy training level and how stress is perceived by females and males. If my findings are that differences exist between how males and females perceive stress, changes can be made in the training delivery method, additional training could be added, or there may be findings that it will be worthwhile to consider offering services to alleviate some of the causes of perceived stress. The research design that I chose was a qualitative interview process using an interview guide for individual interviews. This was the best method to answer the research question because the participants in this study were permitted to complete the interview around

their training schedule. Also, the interview questions were tailored to obtain the level of response needed for a semistructured interview process.

Research Questions

1. RQ1: How do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include family, friends, social commitments, and home/work balance.

2. RQ2: How do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment in the workplace.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that influenced me in this study is feminist theory. Feminist theory is rooted in the desire to understand the nuances of the inequality of gender. Feminist theory examines the position that females are required to fit into an environment that is male dominated and designed for the needs of males; as a result, females are required to modify themselves to fit into that preconceived setting. According to Allen (2016), feminist theory has had a vital influence on the study of the roles of females in relation to the invisible burden in both women's reproductive labor and care of children, family, and household, which is prevalent regardless of the social class, race, or ethnicity of the female.

Furthermore, according to Hughes (2002), the standard that Western society uses to create the standard has been based on the white, middle-class male. When looking at

the gender of those working in a field, such as law enforcement, that is predominated populated by males, it would be appropriate to consider that simply being assigned to the minority gender in the field would be a cause of stress for the future law enforcement officer. Law enforcement is a stressful field for a vast number of individuals who choose it for a career. However, feminist theory would support that this field is more stressful for females than it is for males because of the structure of the environment within which it exists.

When looking at the research questions of this study in relation to gender, the first question with relation to how outside stressors affect law enforcement academy trainees will differ, in my assumption, based on the gender of the trainee. It is hypothesized that males will have fewer stressors that can be related to work/life balance and family than the females will report. Females report to having been discouraged from male dominated professions by their family members because of the risk involved and obstacles that may be in their path when planning to start a family, and the difficulties with adapting to a male dominated field of work. According to Veldman, Meeussen, Van Laar, and Phalet (2017), female officers, when compared with male officers, tend to believe they are less valued and report being dissimilar from the other team members resulting in a negative influence on their social identity. This would be a burden that would be added solely to the female officer compared with the male officer, resulting in additional perceived stress. The second research question of this study regarding how outsides stressors affect law enforcement trainees considers both males and females and the stressors that they feel regarding pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from

their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment. The assumption here is that females will report more frequent occurrences of these risk factors of stress than males.

This theory relates to the study's approach and research questions in that stress is something commonplace when one seeks employment as a sworn law enforcement officer. It is not a common perception that when one chooses the field of sworn law enforcement that they will have a job that will be low in effort and stress. That being understood, law enforcement is a field that historically has been male dominated and continues to be male dominated. Females are historically deterred from the field of policing and to make the field more gender equitable; it is vital to better understand what continues to discourage females from this field. By looking at this phenomenon through the theoretical framework of feminist theory, the premise exists that females are attempting to fit into a role that is male dominated. This can be done and can be done well as seen from stories of successful females in the field of law enforcement. However, it is a more stressful endeavor for a female compared with a male to make a career in law enforcement. More obstacles exist for females that would deter them from remaining in that field for the entirety of their careers.

Nature of the Study

My purpose in this qualitative phenomenological study is to investigate how outside stressors and job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees differently than male trainees. The key phenomenon that I am investigating in this study is stress and how it is perceived differently by males and females. The qualitative method

using a phenomenological approach guided this research design. Qualitative research is wholly based on the need to more completely understand why certain people behave the way they behave and what those behaviors mean to them in relation to how they mean to others. The categories that I used in data collection and interpretation were coping strategies, gender role orientation, police culture, recruit training, perceived stress, work/life balance, and support structure.

To look at the origins of stress, the best way would be to look at police officer recruits in the academy setting. Some individuals have decided on a path into sworn law enforcement as a career. Many of them have already approached their families about their decision and are learning behaviors and skills that they will have to use as sworn law enforcement officers. I believe that this is where occupational stress begins for these individuals. The expectations of those working as law enforcement officers are addressed in this setting as well as the paramilitary environment is impressed on the students daily. Although these individuals are not yet sworn officers, the mannerisms and behaviors of law enforcement officers are learned here. Their instructors are made up of those who work in the law enforcement community, and many of them are still actively employed as sworn law enforcement officers or are retired from careers as sworn law enforcement officers.

Phenomenology as an approach permits the researcher, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), to examine the subjects' lived experiences of a phenomenon and how that phenomenon is perceived in a specific situation. Stress is perceived by the individual and is not bound specifically by a time or the number of occurrences. I collected the data

through semistructured, in-person interviews with both female and male trainees who were attending basic law enforcement academy classes at a southeastern U.S. training center. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), semistructured interviews allows the format to be arranged logically with a limited number of questions created in advanced; however, such interviews allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions. This format also allows the interviewee to elaborate on their responses at length.

In this study, I assumed that stress is perceived as a phenomenon by those experiencing it as well as those attempting to explain it. I considered that females may have more obstacles toward a career in public safety than their male counterparts due to concerns of their personal safety by their family and friends due to preconceived female roles in society. I will examine outside stressors and the influence that those have on the recruit. Outside stressors include family responsibilities, expectations, preconceived notions, personal commitments, and work/life balance. I will examine job-related stressors and the influence that those specific stressors have on the recruit. Some job-related stressors include pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment in the workplace. I used a qualitative phenomenological approach to the study to explain lived experiences of the participants and how those experiences were having a bearing on their personal stress and well-being while attending the law enforcement academy.

The boundaries of the study were the population of the classes included in the study. The students that were part of the group examined had the option to opt in or out

of the study, but the total population was the students who were enrolled in basic law enforcement academy classes at a southeastern U.S. training center.

The potential transferability of this study is that readers of this study who have been through academy training may be able to generalize based on their own experiences that they had while attending academy training. Another area of potential transferability would be that these findings would be relatable to other training academies as the curriculum is uniform. Those who were left out were the students who chose not to participate in the study. If all or most of the students chose to participate in the study, the study would have been limited to 20 students. The starting student population was 32. Other populations who were excluded were the students attending college credit criminal justice classes because I conducted this study on vocational students only. College credit classes differ from vocational classes because college credit classes do not lead to a position as a sworn law enforcement professional and those students did not have proficiencies to meet to move forward in the program. Therefore, the perceived stress for those students was not comparable with the students who were in the vocational based basic law enforcement academies. I used feminist theory as the theoretical framework for this study, but I also considered the multiple streams framework outlined by Sabatier and Weible (2014). As the research into the topic evolved, it was clear that by looking at the data through a feminist theory lens, the phenomenon that is stress would be more clearly addressed as it is perceived by females.

The weakness and gaps in this study are that the limited number of females who are enrolled in the current classes and they have the option to opt out of the study as

much as the vast number of males in the classes. The population is approximately 87% to 13% of males to female. This is, however, relatively representative of the number of females to males in the sworn law enforcement profession in 2019.

Researcher bias was a potential limitation of this study. To limit potential bias, I used a semistructured interview style. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), in semistructured interviews, the researcher complies a restricted number of questions to begin the interview process and then asks follow-up questions that are determined as the interview progresses. Another limitation of the study was the location of the study. It would be interesting to see whether students at different academies provided similar answers to the questions that I posed to the students who were included in this study.

The planned steps to be taken to reduce the influence of the limitations of the study will be to make sure that the sample size is not too large that the data are hard to code in a way that points the data toward a clear understanding of its relevance to the topic. But, in that same vein, it is necessary to ensure that the sample size is not too small so that it is hard to pick up on trends or themes when coding the data.

I will be unable to follow the students through their progression to completion of the academy to the end and proceed to follow them to their respective careers. I conducted this study only among students who were in the academy training setting and did not complete the program. Also, these students, after completion of the program, did not become sworn law enforcement officers. Rather, they completed the basic law enforcement academy and became eligible to be employed as sworn law enforcement officers in the state after completion of the state officer certification exam. The inherent

problems with my choice of the selection process and research methodology are that there may be a skewed group of students who may include more of one gender (i.e., more males than females or vice versa). Also, there could be a greater presence of parents to nonparents or vice versa. One person who is older in the group by decades can skew the results as well.

Currently, there has been no existing research into how stress begins for a law enforcement officer. It is widely recognized that policing is a stressful profession and part of the career of a law enforcement officer having the ability to manage the stress of the profession. Research exists regarding managing stress, but there has not been research into where stress begins and how it begins. Essentially, missing is research discussing what circumstances lead up to the trainee feeling stress and what can be done at the onset to alleviate that stress. Also, it would be valuable to identify experiences that were more likely to cause the symptoms of stress. If researchers can understand the origins of the symptoms of stress, perhaps they can help future law enforcement officers manage the stressful nature of the position. Specific questions will have to be asked that are geared toward the stress symptoms that are based on impending employment as a sworn law enforcement officer and not the stress that is felt due to the curriculum of the academy and the pressure of test taking and meeting proficiency requirements.

The profession will benefit because law enforcement needs to attract people to the field of sworn law enforcement officer that will be likely to remain there for their full careers. Law enforcement agencies also need their sworn officers to be healthy and satisfied with their career path. By doing everything possible to manage stress is a path

towards that goal of employee satisfaction. By better understanding what causes stress to be felt by an officer, the agency can better manage the stress and may even be able to reduce or prevent it altogether from manifesting and becoming a chronic problem.

The influence that this study can make for social change is that it can help law enforcement professionals better understand what might be causing their sworn personnel to feel stress about their jobs. By understanding the origins of stress and the triggers to stress-like symptoms, steps can be taken to minimize or prevent the stress from becoming something that the officer has a hard time managing and as a result or can cause them to underperform on the job or leave the job altogether to find a less stressful career. A national effort is underway among law enforcement agencies to make the police force more representative of the gender of the United States. It is expected that women will report having more stress-like symptoms based on outside entities than males in the academy setting. Due to this, women will essentially have more reasons to be discouraged from a career as a sworn law enforcement officer than males. If researchers can better understand where the stress originates for females, they can plan for it and control it, therefore making the path toward a career in law enforcement less difficult for females. Furthermore, such research may attract more females toward the career path.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the background of the study and the problem statement. I also outlined the purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical foundation, the nature of the study, the assumptions, the scope of the study, the limitations and the delimitations of the study, and finally the significance of the study. In Chapter 2, I will provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature that has relevance to this topic

of study. This study shows the necessity for more in-depth research into the stressors that

are present for law enforcement trainees and how those stressors affect females and males

differently.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

A problem exists in law enforcement academy training. That problem is that female recruits experience more stressors than male recruits do. According to Violanti et al. (2016), these internal stressors can include pressure to succeed, adherence to scheduling constraints, and pressure from male counterparts. Outside stressors also exist that can be based on strained relationships between family and friends, social commitments, and being able to maintain an effective work/life balance. According to Archbold and Schulz (2012), females pursuing a career in law enforcement are faced with the added stress of being less than capable of being able to perform different aspects of police work as effectively as their male counterparts. My purpose in this qualitative phenomenological study was to investigate the stressors on female recruits when they are held to the same standards as males and to determine whether some of that stress has external origins or internal origins. In this study, my focus was on finding the causes of stress on recruits and breaking out stressors based on the recruit's gender. Going into this study, I presumed that the females were going to have more numerous and more unique stressors than their male counterparts. It is understood that sworn law enforcement is a stressful career choice for all that choose it. However, females are burdened with even more stress than males, and this is a reason that there has been a continual issue with making the police force more reflective of the population of the United States regarding gender.

This literature review is organized under the subheadings of Gender Roles, Support Structure, Work/Life Balance, Police Culture, Recruit Training, Coping Strategies, and Perceived Stress.

Literature Review Strategy

For this literature review, I reviewed relevant literature from 2011 to 2018 that pertained to issues that arise on a social level with sworn law enforcement officers dealing with gender issues, balancing work and life, fitting into the police culture, the effects of prolonged stress, and positive and negative ways that law enforcement officers cope with stress. Also included was an analysis of literature that surrounded the recruit training arena, but this area was limited in volume, which leads to the gap in the literature here. Research was conducted on stress on law enforcement officers, but that research became more limited when looking at when stress begins and the origins of stress in individuals pursuing a career in law enforcement. The studies were diverse, including quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and meta-analytical. I also reviewed many doctoral dissertations. The search engines that I used in this data retrieval process were ProQuest and SAGE journals. To collect this information, I used the following search terms: *perceived stress, recruit training, academy training, coping strategies, coping mechanisms, work/life balance, police culture,* and *support structure.*

The strategy to gather the information for this literature review was to find the issues that surround stress in law enforcement officers. A limited amount of information exists on the focus area of academy training, so I included research involving stress on law enforcement officers, both male and female as a group, and then issues that are

present for females but not males. The support structures that are in place for officers who are experiencing stress symptoms were also present in this study. A key stressor is trying to have an adequate work/life balance, and stressors are associated with that struggle. Officers fitting in with the police culture is also a point of stress, and this is shown in numerous articles to be more of an issue for female officers compared with males. The coping strategies that officers use to deal with stress can be positive or negative and can lead to adverse effects if they can manifest. Stress is continuously a common issue for law enforcement officers and being able to positively deal with it before it causes physical distress is a desirable outcome. Significant research exists regarding ways for officers to deal with stress, but a dearth of studies exists regarding how law enforcement recruits can deal with stress when it beings. Academy training is rigorous, and some recruits already have children and family responsibilities to juggle along with the rigors of training. If these recruits start using negative ways of dealing with stress at the academy training level, it may become a behavior that is carried forward to their future career as a law enforcement officer.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory helped to inform the approach of this study. The feminist theory is rooted in the desire to understand the nuances of the inequality of gender. The feminist theory examines the position that females are required to fit into an environment that is male dominated and designed for the needs of males and as a result, females are required to modify to fit into that preconceived setting. Feminist theory can be traced to resulting from the feminist movement of the mid-1970s to better explain female oppression and

female experiences in society. According to Allen (2016), feminist theory has had a vital influence on the study of the roles of females in relation to the invisible burden in both women's reproductive labor as well as care of children, family, and household, which is prevalent regardless of the social class, race, or ethnicity of the female. Furthermore, according to Hughes (2002), the standard that Western society uses has been based on the white, middle-class male. When looking at the gender of those working in a field that is predominated populated by males such as law enforcement, it would be appropriate to consider that simply being assigned to the minority gender in the field would be a cause of stress for the future law enforcement officer.

Law enforcement is a stressful field for a vast number of individuals who choose it for a career. However, feminist theory would support that this field is more stressful for females than it is for males because of the structure of the environment within which it exists. When looking at the research questions of this study in relation to gender, the first question regarding how outside stressors affect law enforcement academy trainees will differ, based on the gender of the trainee. It is expected that males will have fewer stressors that can be related to work/life balance and family than the females will report. Females report to having been discouraged from male dominated professions by their family members because of the risk involved as well as obstacles that may be in their path when planning to start a family, and the difficulties with adapting to a male dominated field of work.

According to Veldman et al. (2017), female officers, when compared with male officers, tend to believe they are less valued as well as report being dissimilar from the

other team members, resulting in a negative influence on their social identity. This would be a burden that would be added solely to the female officer instead of the male officer, resulting in additional perceived stress. The second research question of this study regarding how outside stressors affect law enforcement trainees allowed me to consider both males and female and the stressors that they feel regarding pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment. It is expected that females will report more frequent occurrences of these risk factors of stress than males.

This theory relates to the study's approach and research questions in that stress is something that is commonplace when one seeks employment as a sworn law enforcement officer. When one chooses the field of sworn law enforcement, the job will not be low in effort and stress. That being understood, law enforcement is a field that historically been male dominated and remains to be male dominated. Females are historically deterred from the field of policing and to make the field more gender equitable; it is vital to better understand what continues to discourage females from this field. By looking at this phenomenon through the theoretical framework of feminist theory, females are attempting to fit into a role that is male dominated.

Researchers have used feminist theory to explore gender inequalities in the sworn law enforcement profession. According to Batton and Wright (2018), female law enforcement officers can be shuttled into positions that are deemed appropriate for women or can require what is a preconceived notion of a feminine skill set such as nurturing and interpersonal communication. Yu (2015) added that women working in

sworn law enforcement roles report at least one occupational barrier in the workplace due to their gender. These barriers included negative attitudes from male co-workers, lack of high-ranking female role models, and work/life balance issues. Morash and Haarr (2011) discussed empirical evidence surrounding a persisting belief that police work is an inappropriate job for women with the reasoning for this resting on the view that men and women have different characteristics and only male characteristics support police work. However, a shift to community policing initiatives has shifted needs to more female based characteristics of communal orientation and expressiveness.

The themes and trends that I picked up from the literature review are that stress is a real problem for sworn law enforcement officers and it is a factor that may deter people from considering the field as a career. For females, the stressors are greater because they historically do not share the household responsibilities with their male significant others equally. Furthermore, present can be the additional genetic requirement that the females physically carry and birth the children in the relationship and have the additional responsibility to have the medical care associated with that. Also, females tend to be the primary caregiver in the household. This can be an added stressor when they are working a full-time job.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are relevant to females that are employed in the law enforcement field. Female roles in society are rigid in that women are the ones that have the genetic role in bearing children. This is a biological requirement regardless of how equal a relationship might be between a male and a female spouse. In that vein, some

responsibilities fall to the women alone. Women have the role of carrying the child through to term and nursing the child after birth. This can be something that can be a challenge to female law enforcement officers.

Agocs, Langan, and Sanders (2015) stated that female law enforcement officers report that they still have the bulk or "lion's share" of the responsibilities that are associated with domestic labor and child-rearing. This can be an added stressor to females in the law enforcement profession. Gender differences are present in stressful situations in many career fields but this especially prevalent for law enforcement officers. According to Kim et al. (2015), reports of increased stress in female law enforcement officers with time shows that stress can hurt task functionality. It has also been found that females have a higher attrition rate and higher rates of turnover than their male counterparts. This perhaps is due to how females perceive stress which can vary from the ways that males do. Kim et al. goes on to state that female officers are more disturbed by not being privy to job- related information as well as their acceptance by others, support, security, language, and sexual harassment. Their male counterparts are imparted more stress by being made fun of by colleagues and being set up in threatening situations. Furthermore, females are more likely to favor a tend-and-befriend response where a male would excel in a fight-or-flight response.

Within the last half-century, there has been an effort to increase the number of females working in criminal justice careers. Alderden et al. (2017), stated that this has been largely based on the perspective that females make the police force less masculine or aggressive and more community friendly. According to Dobrin, Smith, Peck, &

Mascara (2015), this has caused increased scrutiny on females due to their integration into a man's world and as a result, female officers have been subject to unequal treatment to include harassment, hostility from male officers, teasing, and regulation to demeaning tasks. Schuck (2014), however, has alternately found that in law enforcement agencies that have embraced a culture that is more accepting of women, the women that are employed by those agencies report that they have a better work/life balance and as a result, those agencies are more successful at retaining female law enforcement officers.

Historically, gender roles for women in policing were that they were assigned to certain roles in the agency. Positions that required a more social service type role were part of the norm for female officers. According to Kingshott (2012), women were regularly assigned to roles that deal with child abuse, sex crimes, and domestic issues and were prevented from SWAT, gang units, undercover work, and homicide as those were more traditionally men's jobs. Police reform has followed along with changes in the socialization of youth and gender role assignment. Females in the late 1990s were increasingly more likely to have been appreciated for being tomboys or having historically masculine interests and those interests have led females that have grown up from this time and beyond to have career goals and interests that are more historically masculine than traditionally feminine. Today, researchers will see this even more pronounced as it is socially acceptable for a female child to be playing with a racecar or a train as a male. This was not the case just a few decades ago, and this change is relevant in the workforce.

Soft policing initiatives, according to McCarthy (2012), have attracted females to law enforcement due to the social work qualities and the ability to have a kinship with the community through community policing initiatives. It is argued that male officers have typically found these types of duties as secondary functions whereas female officers see these initiatives as proactive and relationship building. McCarthy further argues that female officers have a stronger alliance to the premise of the moral duties of the law enforcement officer as being a role model and advocate for the community in which they work. This difference between genders in their ideology of policing may suggest that gender and policing is more complex than gender differences and may stem from existing value systems.

Schuck (2017) argued that due to soft policing being related to working in the community policing arena of policing, women may resist assignments to community policing position because they fear being pigeonholed into a position that may reduce their legitimacy in the agency and may decrease their chances of obtaining future career-advancing opportunities. This might be due to the existing evidence that is present on female officers as being more supportive of community policing initiatives than their male counterparts. It is important to not confuse a positive outlook on an initiative as a desire to work in that specific area of policing.

Female officers have a fear of being pigeonholed in their police career. Rich & Seffrin (2014) contended that female officers tend to be assigned to rape cases because interviewing may be seen to some as a more feminine task. By being expected to handle these types of cases predominantly, female officers can believe that they are stereotyped

and as a result can have a harder row to hoe in the effort of fitting in and being "one of the boys."

According to Rose & Unnithan (2015), it has been found in gender research documents that focus on the stress that women experience more stress in male dominated professions than they do in professions that are more equally distributed among the genders. Issues regarding gender roles can begin as early as the recruit training process. According to Chu & Tsao (2014), the female recruits contended that females are as competent and physically capable as men are. However, the male trainees had a lack of confidence in the females' competence and physical capabilities. Although little research is available within the training setting, this behavior can follow recruits after graduation and in their roles at their career agencies as sworn law enforcement officers. Morash & Haarr (2011), added that women often are found needing to resist stereotypes imposed on them by their respective department which may urge them to suppress or emphasize their gender differences with the male majority.

Schulze (2014) argued that females in law enforcement have an advantage because femininity leads to preconceived notions of women and that "nobody, but nobody believes that they are being spied on by a woman." This can work to a woman's advantage in the policing field because they can fit positions in which they can behave outside of traditional gender roles and norms. Spasic, Djuric, & Mrsevic (2015), believed that a glass ceiling remains intact for women in policing. Women can be discouraged from attempts for promotion within the agency because of family obligations and child care but, Spasic et al. argued that this is a conscious avoidance of the glass ceiling to

avoid negative experiences and likely obstacles. This conscious avoidance can be a critical stress factor for women in law enforcement because they are suppressed from goal setting and achievement to avoid obstacles that are in their path.

According to Haarr and Morash (2013), numerous studies of female law enforcement officers have found that they experience high levels of gender prejudices and low levels of social support on the job. Furthermore, those women that report gender bias at work correlate with having high levels of poor health as a result. This poor health can lead to low levels of productivity, turnover, and absenteeism. The women that have achieved high ranking positions in police agencies have reported that a successful coping mechanism is to use straight talk when confronted with coworkers that were mistreating them. Straight talk in this context is to confront the issue of male coworkers being hostile to them head-on and "giving it right back to them." Haarr & Morash further found that using straight talk from the start of a career in policing may enable women to have more opportunities to move up in rank.

Agencies' firearm "carry" policies can be stressful for female law enforcement officers. According to Tobin (2013), some agencies have mandated "carry" policies for officers while both on duty and off duty. This can be more stressful for female officers over male officers because male civilian clothing may make it easier to conceal a weapon while off duty. Males reported much higher levels of carrying a weapon off duty at all times when compared to female officers. A mandated "carry" policy can cause stress because concealing a weapon for a female while wearing a dress can make it difficult to conceal a weapon successfully, whereas a male in a suit can easily conceal a weapon.

According to Harrison (2012), strong workplace bonds can mitigate existing gender differences of staff in law enforcement roles. These strong social bonds can reduce the effect that sexual harassment can have on job satisfaction. Women can feel embarrassed when considering the need to report sexual harassment in the workplace for reasons that include that they may believe that they somehow have contributed to the treatment. Another reason is that they are concerned that it will come to a situation when it will be their word against the word of the person harassing them. An additional reason would be that they are putting their professional status in jeopardy. However, if women in law enforcement fields have strong social bonds that can mitigate the effects that sexually harassing behavior can have on the individual that may lead to higher retention levels of women in law enforcement careers.

Reports of behaviors that can be considered sexual harassment of women by men in the law enforcement field continue to exist. According to a mixed methods study conducted by Lonsway, Paynich, & Hall (2013), over three-quarters of the women surveyed had heard dirty stories or jokes in the workplace as well heard statements that "put women down" or heard or were addressed with sexually suggestive remarks or crude or obscene gestures.

Support Structure

It has been argued that some of the reasons for stress for women in law enforcement can be due to a lack of a solid support structure. This support structure can be lacking for some in both the home and in the workplace. Historically, women still tend to be the primary child-rearing parent with the lion's share of the responsibilities that are

attached to that. In that vein, when women have work obligations and requirements, they less often have someone to rely upon for child care and other homemaking related duties.

According to Guajardo (2015), part of the lack of support structure in the workplace can be due in part to the lack of females in leadership and command positions. This lack of support in command and supervisory roles can severely limit the number of mentors that are available to female law enforcement officers with hopes of aspiring to supervisory roles. Also, females can be discouraged from taking opportunities for advancement because they will be required to work hours that will not be coinciding with family and home responsibilities. For a female officer with children, promotions traditionally require a schedule change to night work for an extended period. Also, there can be resistance and obstacles in place that are not there for their male counterparts. Policing is still a male dominated career choice, and although some agencies are more accepting of gender, others are not as accommodating. Because of these factors, few viable female candidates are considered for promotion opportunities.

Women in policing are a relatively new occurrence, chronologically speaking. Just as few as 40 years ago, it was quite rare to have females working in any law enforcement arena. Most of these changes resulted from civil rights laws being introduced as well as the Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 which continued the changes for females first addressed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2010), women represent 1/5 of the sworn officers in the United States, and therefore they are still under represented in the profession when

compared to the United States population which is 49.1 percent male and 50.9 percent female.

Although women are the minority gender in the police force throughout the United States that does not mean that they are the minority with work-related as well as home-related stressors, according to Menard & Arter (2014), policewomen report higher levels of stress and different stressors than their male counterparts. Some of the work-related stressors that females experience that are unique to their gender are sexism, negative attitudes from their coworkers, lack of role models and mentors, and lack of acceptance. This lack of acceptance can stretch outside of the policing subculture and can extend out to their home and personal lives. Also, compared with males, females have reported being treated differently solely based on their gender to include peers and superiors underestimating their physical abilities and ability to get the day to day job of policing done appropriately.

Internal solidarity among police officers has been a common phenomenon across police agencies regardless of geographical area. The thin blue line is a common phrase that represents solidarity and well as the support of police officers. According to Andersen & Papazoglou (2014), officers who feel this support may be better able to cope with organizational stressors and more regular exposure to traumatic experiences. Due to the unique nature of trauma that police officers' experience due to their frequent exposure to traumatic events, law enforcement officers have a higher likelihood of experiencing Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, and those symptoms might grow into full-blown Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Furthermore, if the officers are experiencing internal

stressors, this may exacerbate the likelihood of mental health symptoms following traumatic exposure. Andersen & Papazoglou state that officers that were highly stressed and tried to use internal avoidant coping mechanism were more likely to experience burnout. As a result, officers have internal coping mechanisms such as gallows humor to assist them in coping with the stress of policing. These coping mechanisms help to enhance resilience and reduce anxiety by creating bonds between law enforcement officers akin to their unique situation that is different than the private citizen.

Burnout has also been found to be present at high levels with female sergeants over male sergeants. According to McCarty (2013), female sergeants reported higher amounts of emotional exhaustion and lower levels of depersonalization than their male counterparts. This may be due, in part, to gender role theory which is theorized to be inclusive of behaviors that include outward emotional expressions which are more likely to be displayed by females over males who are instead more likely to internalize their feelings.

According to Biggs, Brough, and Barbour (2014), law enforcement officers have a unique burden as their stress levels could be aggravated to the acute level because of their regular exposure to stressful situations. Law enforcement officers have the dynamic responsibility to assist in a multitude of situations to include traffic accidents, natural disasters, and domestic disturbances, all of which could include loss of life of vulnerable populations including children. The stress of repeatedly being placed in these situations can take a toll on an individual if they are not equipped with the tools to alleviate or cope with these situations that can arise in any given workday.

Work/Life Balance

Work/life balance is something that is a common struggle with law enforcement officers. Trying not to take their work home with them can be just as much of an issue as getting family members and spouses to be a sounding board for work-related issues. It is hard to close one door and open another for many sworn law enforcement officers and non-sworn family members and spouses can find it hard to support the unique needs of their sworn family member.

This is especially prevalent, according to Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015), because of the weekend and shift work that is required of the profession. These scheduling requirements can be a strain on families where one significant other is not in the law enforcement field and works more traditional hours. Also, according to Karaffa et al. (2015), law enforcement jobs also have been known to strain marriage not only due to the hours but, issues with perceived personality changes in the spouse. This can be due, in part, to the coping mechanisms that are used by law enforcement officers to deal with the stress of the profession which can be quite different than the coping mechanisms that are used by others in more traditional professions. Law enforcement officers have continuous and regular exposure to stressful situations and as a result, can have high levels of exhaustion and jadedness.

Work/life balance can be different for female law enforcement officers than male law enforcement officers. Additionally, women are the individuals responsible for carrying and bearing children to grow their family. This is regardless of the makeup of the relationship. In that vein, female law enforcement officers, if they choose to have a

biological child, are the ones that become pregnant and bear the children in the relationship. Langan, Sanders & Agocs (2016) argued that this puts female police officers at a disadvantage because they believe that they must prove themselves as a valuable member of the agency before becoming pregnant. Becoming a mother too quickly in their tenure as an officer can result in being seen in a negative light.

Police Culture

It is widely understood that policing is a highly stressful profession. This is due, in part, to the danger that is associated with doing the job of policing the public daily. Safety and security are a regular concern, and a constant need is present to be aware of one's vulnerabilities. This is a common thread among all sworn law enforcement officers, and this commonality has led to behaviors that are present among sworn law enforcement officers that are rare to their career. Some of these behaviors include being less than comfortable with trusting those outside their career field and their reluctance to share more information than is required.

According to Kuo (2014), policing is one of the most stressful professions in modern society. This type of occupational based stress is one of the precursors to job satisfaction; therefore, because this is a likely side effect of this profession, it can lead to consequences of job-related stress which include high job turnover as well as suicide and PTSD. Furthermore, Kuo (2014) was able to conclude that three specific stressors, officers' relationships with their peers, relationships with their supervisors, and their perceptions about their promotion potential were the most likely stressors that had a bearing on job satisfaction. To add, Basinska, Wiciak, & Daderman (2014) stated that the

promotion potential stressor can lead to emotional exhaustion and psychological distress for officers because it can result in negative emotions that can influence an officer's daily work and interaction with the public.

Covey, Shucard, Violanti, Lee, & Shucard (2013) added that these stressors that permeate into the day to day performance of an officer can cause negative effects and with time and no easing of stressors can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD has been reported to be at levels from 7-19% in law enforcement officers and can be higher if the officer originally had partial PTSD symptomology. However, Dabney, Copes, Tewksbury, & Hawk-Tourtelot (2013) was quick to point out that this is under the assumption that the measuring of stress can be done in a one-size-fits-all model and they argue that a more appropriate measure would be obtained by considering the nature of the police work being measured and then also considering the context in which that work is conducted. In the Dabney et al. study, stress was measured specifically on officers that are working in the field of homicide and the investigations of such. To break out the specific fields that law enforcement professionals work in would be a better way to get a more accurate understanding of the causes of stress.

Increased stress can lead to other negative dangers in law enforcement officers. According to Fekedulegn et al. (2017), occupational stressors for law enforcement officers can lead to chronic fatigue and an increased likelihood of on the job injuries. Although Fekedulegn et al. recognized that the literature on this topic is scarce, it was stated that the nature of police work with its long hours, shift work, and varying schedule can contribute greatly to cases of chronic fatigue and workplace injuries.

Some experts, Terpstra & Schaap (2013) included, believed that some officers use a stress-coping model to deal with the unique nature of the demands and tensions of the policing career. It is further argued that this unique career path has these coping mechanisms in place due in part to the wholly unpredictable and risky nature of police work and the unique culture of living and working in that environment daily. A common belief among law enforcement officers is that their work is difficult to quantify to those outside their profession.

Part of the police culture involves how law enforcement officers view the public, the need to adhere to the thin blue line, physical toughness on the job, solidarity among officers, tolerance of misconduct of fellow officers, and current policing initiatives. Cordner (2017), found that female officers were less likely to need solidarity and both female and African American officers had more positive views of community policing initiatives as well as were less likely to see a need for physical toughness. With Cordner's findings, it could be argued that if the nation's police force was more gender as well as racially equitable, law enforcement may be more open to more modern policing views.

Recruit Training

Recruit training is more of a paramilitary environment in most cases with the recruits being required to wear a uniform, march in formation, and follow prescribed protocols. The dynamic of recruit training is a network within a network is often present. The recruits have a kinship with one another as well as being responsible for one another's successes and shortcomings.

Doreian and Conti (2017) argued that the recruit class within a training academy creates a dynamic within that group in which they are responsible or even loyal to one another. This can be an interesting dynamic because sometimes they are required to work cooperatively or collaboratively and other times, they are competing for the top spot. This can be the highest academic achievement or best shooting average on the range.

Another issue with the rigors of recruit training is the selection process. Simply because a recruit meets the minimum criteria to enter the law enforcement academy and completes the academy, does not mean that a law enforcement agency will hire them for employment as a sworn law enforcement officer. According to Annell, Lindfors, and Sverke (2015), a rigorous selection process is used that can vary from agency to agency but, this process is typically made up of cognitive tests, medical examinations, personality inventories, and interviews. Furthermore, Lawrence, Christoff, and Escamilla (2017) found that psychological examinations have value in determining behaviors and qualities that would be conducive to the community policing side of law enforcement. Characteristics such as empathy, friendliness, and respectfulness were viewed as desirable for those recruits to reinforce the desire to be more community focused.

In a longitudinal study of police trainees completed by Patterson (2016), an investigation was completed on coping strategies used over a seven-month long law enforcement recruit training program. Coping strategies were examined based on the rigors of the training program. Trainees felt pressured to drink more when socializing with other trainees especially after a testing session. Patterson found stressors decreased from the start of the training program to the end of the training and use of coping

strategies varied throughout the training. Patterson found that the decrease in stressors could perhaps be due to the recruit learning to internalize their emotions which can cause maladaptive and negative coping behaviors to become learned behavior as they progress forward to law enforcement officers.

Sometimes the background of the recruit can lend valuable insight into the way the recruit perceives the policing profession. Fekjaer (2014), found that recruits that have highly educated parents generally also have participated in higher education themselves. Fekjaer believed that this possibly may be linked to a positive view of policing and criminal justice education.

Also, necessary to consider when looking at police recruits, is what were the factors that motivated the trainees to enter the police profession in the first place. In research done by Todak (2017), many prospective law enforcement trainees are drawn to the profession by watching television shows like Criminal Minds or Law and Order. A smaller number were attracted to the field through high school and college level criminal justice programs.

The screening process, according to Lough & Von Treuer (2013), included psychological screening which is a common cause of stress for recruits. Some screening processes including the one discussed in this article, are used to predict future sick leave usage and risk to claims of injury. These types of screening processes can be high stakes because of the usage of the findings.

An interesting research study was completed by Phillips (2013), regarding trainees' stance on the use of force. This research was conducted on trainees in their first

week of training in a regional police academy. The trainees were given a survey that was designed to measure their view of the use of unnecessary force by another officer and their likelihood of reporting that behavior to their superiors. The findings were that the great majority of the trainees were not likely to report the use of unnecessary force, therefore, reinforcing that a perceived "code of silence" exists within police recruits as they enter the law enforcement academy. Since the trainees enter the academy with this preconceived notion of a code of silence among law enforcement officers, it is vital that the instructors and all those that have a position of authority in the academy, exhibit behaviors that unaccepting of unnecessary force, even in the mildest forms to reduce this acceptance of the practice.

Davies (2017), found that when recruits faced training on use of force decision-making skills in the simulation setting, it may encourage appropriate use of force decision making decisions. As a result, Davies discovered that law enforcement instructors have an opportunity to modify the learning environment to scaffold the recruit's learning to build a better understanding and increase the confidence level when faced with use of force decisions.

However, this change in training practices to create more negative outlooks on unacceptable behaviors needs to carry through to the agencies themselves. According to Wehr (2015), policy change needs to have a top-down change. For instance, if the trainees graduate from the academy and have more positive outlooks on the use of force only to have those interpretations not reinforced at the agency, it will be for naught because the trainee will want to adhere to the agency's outlook to fit in. The field training

officers, as well as leadership personnel, must also reinforce positive behaviors to the trainees to make the desired behaviors reinforced as learned.

Recruits tend to establish a bond with their fellow trainees. According to Oberfield (2012), this is due to shared exposure to new experiences and new surroundings. This camaraderie aids the recruits in navigating expectations and understanding of where their role in the agency is. Another group that recruits look to are the veteran officers. This is because this is what they aspire to become, and these individuals have been through the rookie experience and have been successful at it which is clear through the years of experience that they have under their belts.

The recruit training process can be stressful for the trainees throughout the process of training and into the start of their careers as sworn officers. According to Richter, Lauritz, de Preez, Cassimjee, & Ghazinour, (2013), police recruits must adapt to the sudden events of short duration that are more common in the policing profession over others and the resulting psychological and physiological reactions that go hand in hand with these sudden events. An adaptive behavior change can be necessary for these recruits to better cope with their new roles as law enforcement officers.

Coping Strategies

The coping strategies that are employed by law enforcement officers are different at the beginning of their training to the strategies used at the height of their careers, and different still when they are near the end of their careers. Some coping skills are positive. However, some are negative and destructive to the law enforcement officer overall.

According to McCarty & Lawrence (2014), coping avoidance strategies were used more commonly by recruits, and these strategies can cause maladaptive results. Also, female recruits were more likely to be more emotionally sensitive, leaning towards using a more emotion-focused approach to coping whereas men were more likely to use a problem-focused approach to coping with stress. As recruits progress through the training process, trainees learn to use more adaptive coping strategies such as task-oriented coping strategies that can result in more positive results regarding job satisfaction.

In a study by Balmer, Pooley, & Cohen (2014), it was argued that approach based coping strategies are favorable over emotional based coping strategies. However, this lean towards approach-based coping can result in a denial of officers being skilled in managing their emotional reactions to the stressors of police work. To discourage emotional responses, the officer's emotional health can suffer as a result and can lead to the officer opting to use avoidance based coping strategies to mute an emotional response.

Hope (2016), pointed out that an officer's response to stress can be different based on a variety of contextual factors which can include stress level, experience, and fatigue. Effects of stress may negatively affect how an officer responds to a situation. If the officer is going from one stressful situation to another without having time to decompress, it can be a factor in performance in a host of law enforcement related incidents.

Yun, Kim, Jung, & Borhanian (2013), added that an individual's coping strategies can vary for a host of reasons but can be grouped into two types: constructive coping and

self-destructive coping. Constructive coping is shown to include problem-solving techniques and talking with peers, family, and friends and is more effective at reducing job-related stress. Self-destructive coping to include drinking, drug use, and avoidance techniques are shown to be more destructive and less effective.

Exposure to traumatic events is something that is expected in the law enforcement field. According to Pasciak & Kelley (2013), even the toughest law enforcement officers can suffer a negative emotional experience from a traumatic event. These events can cause anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or even depression. To combat this, many agencies are encouraging or even requiring officers to participate in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) when they have been exposed to a traumatic situation.

Perceived Stress

As any law enforcement officer will tell you, the policing profession, at least some of the time, is stressful. This is an inevitable piece of baggage that comes with starting and sustaining a career in law enforcement. Due to this, police recruits need to be aware of this and be given tools on how to manage this stress to prevent medical issues, mental health issues, and burnout risk. According to Papazoglou & Andersen (2014), this disconnection can be motivating to officers to participate in the treatment program in the first place. It is difficult to help someone that is not subscribed to the need for help. Perhaps requiring officers to participate in these programs would remove the stigma that trainees are afraid of being attached to if they opt to participate in these types of programs. Services that are geared towards stress reduction have an opportunity to increase officer resilience by making it part of their way of life.

Burnout of law enforcement officers can not only affect the law enforcement officer themselves but, how law enforcement is perceived in the community. According to Schaible & Six (2015), the adverse effects of burnout can have a significant influence on the community that they serve. Evidence exists suggesting that officers who have higher levels of burnout and stress are more likely to behave aggressively. However, some officers can handle the psychological and physiological rigors of police work and can minimize the burnout symptoms.

According to Blumberg, Giromini, & Jacobson (2016), psychological evaluations are a key requirement in the recruiting process for new law enforcement officers to see how potential officers can handle potentially stressful situations and how they can employ strategies to cope with stress and maintain good health.

Organizational cynicism is something that starts at the trainee level. According to the findings of Enciso, Maskaly, & Donner (2017), this is something more common in male recruits over female recruits. However, females become more cynical than males when they get further along in their careers. This was considered to perhaps be due to the differential treatment of females in male dominated professions. The authors did not have any concrete findings as to why but, addressed the need for further research into this topic.

Even more specifically, what is it that motivates women to the policing field. This is something that Schuck (2017) argued has changed with time. Modern day women enter the policing profession for similar reasons as to their male counterparts. Especially, the lure of job stability, benefits, income, and opportunities for career advancement.

Gachter, Savage, & Torgler (2009) stressed that this is due in part that the conditions of the role are both physically and emotionally taxing. Because of this, the turnover of sworn law enforcement officers is high. There has been research that has found that these high turnover rates are due to low levels of job satisfaction. Poor job satisfaction can be due to low levels of social capital or lack of a solid support structure and colleagues with which to vent or share similar experiences.

Furthermore, Van Gelderen, Konijn, and Bakker (2016) found that the more committed the law enforcement officer is to their job and to serving their agency, the more stress they may feel from the job when they are unable to produce satisfactory results (i.e., solve the case, help the citizen, etc.). Essentially, the officer that is goal oriented on doing their job well will perceive more stress when they are unable to do that to their personal or their agency's expectation level. Public perception of law enforcement can have a role in this perceived stress as well. By teaching officers how to positively influence the perceptions of the community of their law enforcement representatives, the officers can believe that they are personally contributing to a culture that has a positive perception of law enforcement.

Stress can cause great distress on officers' working memory, and this is something that can be a greater issue with seniority. According to Gutshall et al. (2017), senior officers have higher levels of perceived stress with lower levels of resilience. However, the coping strategies that were used were detrimental to their health and wellbeing. These coping strategies include alcohol use and abuse, nicotine products, medication abuse, and avoidance behaviors.

Stress can come from various locations and can affect new officers as well as seasoned officers. Rose and Unnithan (2015), found that a link between an officer's position in the agency and that officer's level of occupational stress. A link was present between the possibilities that the agency itself may enhance stress on those that have served longer even as their activity with the subculture may be decreasing.

According to Patterson, Chung, & Swan (2014), officer exposure to stress can vary for a variety of reasons. Some of the possible variables are age, rank, tenure with their agency, law enforcement service years, gender, race, and even personality type and personal coping mechanisms. Personal stressors can also affect law enforcement officers. These stressors, according to Mumford, Taylor, & Kubu (2014), can be due to an individual's coping mechanisms and individual responses to stressors. Coping strategies used by officers are critical components in understanding the relationship that exists between stressors and health outcomes.

The stressors associated with the policing field are unique when compared to other non-law enforcement fields because the stressors are occupational specific. According to McCreary, Fong, & Groll (2017), police experience occupational specific stressors which can be unique to their profession which include role overloading, the rigors of shift work, and self-sacrificing behaviors. McCreary et al. goes on to state that the stressors may be experienced differently by males and females in the beginning, but later their findings are that male and females experienced these stressors similarly with time in the field.

It is safe to say that when one is satisfied with their job, their stress levels are reduced. Higgins, Ercikti, & Vito (2013) found that job satisfaction in policing is growing and believe this is due in part to positive changes in working groups, supervision, and incentives but the growth in satisfaction is higher in male police officers over female police officers. When males were less than satisfied with their jobs, they more often chose to change to a different law enforcement agency whereas the females chose to leave the policing profession altogether. Jo & Shim (2014) examined whether community characteristics have a bearing on police officers' work satisfaction and found that neither community characteristics nor demographics have a bearing on job satisfaction levels.

Kurtz, Zavala, & Melander (2014) added that prior strain that the officer experienced in their lifetime can influence the strain experienced in their current profession as a law enforcement officer. Because of their study, the authors found that men had lower levels of stress compared to their female counterparts and the prior strain was reported in events that included youthful strain events and child abuse exposure.

Van Gelderen & Bik (2016), found that police officers that have a high level of strain at the start of their work shift can have a strong correlation with the levels of burnout perception that the officer experiences and that can have a negative result on the officer's wellbeing and energy levels. This strain may come from the workplace but can also be rooted in the officer's personal life and conflicts at home.

Violanti et al. (2013) argued that when stress becomes a chronic occurrence, hormone levels can become imbalanced in the brain and as a result, the individual can develop depression symptoms. Depression symptoms, when gone untreated can lead to

an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Because law enforcement officers are regularly exposed to stressors regularly, this risk level can be higher as a result.

Violanti et al. (2016), further examined more specifically the five most frequent stressors that affected law enforcement officers as well as the five highly rated occupational stressors and analyzed further based on gender differences. Those five frequent stressors were dealing with family disputes, responding to a felony in progress, fellow officers not doing their job, making critical on-the-spot decisions, and insufficient personnel. The five highly rated occupational stressors were exposure to battered or dead children, killing someone in the line of duty, situations involving the use of force, a fellow officer killed in the line of duty, and physical attack on one's person. Of the five frequent stressors, the officers in the study reported that they experienced those stressors at least one time per month. The highly rated stressors were reported in a wide range from 0.3% to 59% per month. Overall, gender differences in this study were not present. However, some varied responses in the prevalence, rating, and frequency of some specific stressors existed. Female officers more highly rated stressors involving fellow officers not doing their job, inadequate support from their supervisors, poor quality equipment, and situations regarding use of force as more stressful then as reported by their male counterparts. Female officers had a high level of reported inadequate support. Women also reported the need to use force being more personally stressful than their male coworkers.

Wirth et al. (2017), looked further into the stress-related symptoms that can be associated with law enforcement working conditions. Wirth et al. found that shift work

that disrupts the circadian system can cause an increase in the likelihood for law enforcement officers to take more sick leave and likelihood of on the job injuries. The officer examined in their study had elevated white blood counts which may, in turn, be a reason for an increase in stress-related symptoms.

Limited information exists regarding the difference in stress levels for women and men. According to Kurtz (2012), this lack of attention may lead to false determinations of stress levels due to a male-only model of policing. With the increasing levels of women entering the police force, it is important to consider the differences in stress level based on gender. Maran, Varetto, Zedda, & Ieraci (2015) countered that researchers have found that female law enforcement officers are exposed to more stressors which may stem out of their desire to gain acceptance of their colleagues and leaders within a profession that has been historically male dominated. Maran et al. went on to state that these types of findings may encourage policing agencies to find ways to appease stressors and the consequences of those stressors. Some of these strategies could include training courses to improve stress management skills or increase abilities in coping with difficult psychological conditions and distress that work against social functioning.

The Current Literature Research-Based Description

The themes that are present in this review reflect that much research has been completed on gender differences in policing as well as the stressors involved with a career as a sworn law enforcement officer. Research is also present on how sworn law enforcement officers often struggle with a work/life balance as well as fitting into and finding their place in the police culture. Limited research exists on the training setting,

and no existing research was present regarding stressors at that level. This was valuable because a desire is present in the policing community to make the sworn police force more gender equitable but, not as many measures are in place to keep the recruits that are attracted to the field enough to go through training to remain in the career long term.

What is known about the themes is that policing is a stressful profession on its face but, one must fit into the policing subculture as well. Both females and males must perform the same duties as sworn law enforcement officers but, women solely based on their gender have a more difficult time fitting into the subculture of policing. A need exists to walk a tightrope of being feminine enough but not too feminine. To be tough enough but not too tough. When you add this need for balance on top of all the stressors that are already associated with the career choice of a sworn law enforcement officer, it can be a discouragement for females as males do not have to perform this balancing act as the profession is already seen through a masculine lens by society.

The most significant findings in this study were that little research exists on law enforcement recruits in the training arena where problems are likely to begin, and the seeds are initially sown. Most of the research that is being done is done after the law enforcement officers are sworn in and hired to perform the role of officer or deputy sheriff. Many students complete the academy training but are never hired by a sworn law enforcement agency. This may be because the trainee is not selected for employment, but it also may be because the trainee changed their mind after training about becoming a sworn law enforcement officer. More research needs to be done on why that occurs.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Introduction

My purpose in this chapter was to describe the research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study. In this study, I attempted to determine the nature of stress at the academy training level and to compare how stress is perceived by females and males. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how stress originates when trainees first pursue a career as a sworn law enforcement officer at the training level. The applicability of phenomenology and a view through a feminist lens allowed for a better understanding of stress and its influence on an individual who is attending law enforcement training based on their gender.

The research design allowed me to explore a problem in law enforcement academy training. The problem that I addressed is that female recruits have more stressors than male recruits do. According to Violanti et al. (2016), these internal stressors can include pressure to succeed, adherence to scheduling constraints, and pressure from male counterparts. Outside stressors can also be based on strained relationships between family and friends, social commitments, and being able to maintain an effective work/life balance. According to Archbold and Schulz (2012), females pursuing a career in law enforcement are faced with the added stress of being less capable of performing different aspects of police work as effectively as their male counterparts. This is theorized to be due to the familial obligations that females have regarding childbirth and child-rearing as well as outsides stressors that result from females embarking on a male dominated profession. These stressors will be present in both males

and females but will be more prevalent in females compared with males in a significant

way.

According to Schwandt (2000), in qualitative research, the role of the researcher

is important to note. The constructivist paradigm holds that knowledge is socially

constructed by people who are personally active in the research process and that

researchers should try to better understand the circuitous environment of personally lived

experience from those who live it. The role of the researcher in this qualitative study will

be one of a facilitator of multivocal reconstruction. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) stated

that constructivist researchers acknowledge that their background shapes their

interpretations and therefore they are positioned in a way within the research to

acknowledge their own personal cultural, social, and historical experiences.

The setting that I used was the basic law enforcement academy classes at a

southeastern U.S. training center. The sample was composed of students who were

pursuing a certification as a sworn law enforcement officer in the state in which the

academy is located. The students were both males and females of varying ages. The data

collection procedures that I used was in-depth semistructured interviews using

predetermined questions. The data analysis method that I used included coding the data

by hand.

To establish trustworthiness, Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) explained that

acceptable standards to use are those that best ensure that the research is valid and

reliable. If the research that is being completed has reliability, then one can assume that if

another researcher were studying the same phenomenon, they would come to similar

conclusions as the other researcher. The protection of the participants' rights is important to ensure that U.S. federal regulations are followed. This study included only adults, and a consent form was signed by each participant, which stated the exact reason for the study, that they had the option to opt out of the study, and what would be requested of them.

Research Design and Rationale

I chose a qualitative design and employed a phenomenological exploratory approach to understand the experiences and impressions of recruits who were experiencing stressors while in the law enforcement basic training academy. Two research questions were used to guide this study to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon of stress that I was studying:

1. RQ1: How do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include family, friends, social commitments, and home/work balance.

2. RQ2: How do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment in the workplace.

The central theme of this study was that a problem exists in law enforcement academy training. The problem, more specifically, is that female recruits experience more stressors than male recruits do. My purpose in this qualitative case study was to investigate the stressors on female recruits when they are held to the same standards as

males and to determine whether some of that stress is self-imposed or from outside influences at the academy training level.

The research method that best answered my research question was a qualitative approach. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), this is the more appropriate approach because the concept of stress is more of a phenomenon that is understood by understanding the lived experiences of an individual. When attempting to quantify how one experiences stress, it can be approached in a myriad of ways. Attempting to understand how stress is experienced through the approach of grounded theory would be to attempt to generate theory from the data presented. The shortcomings of this approach are that substantive theories are already associated with stress. When looking at this study through a case study approach, research is needed to be collected through multiple methods, and this may be excessive in demand on the students that will be examined because of the rigors of law enforcement academy training. To look at stress through an ethnographic lens would be to study a group in its natural setting. This method would not be appropriate here because not all the students in the group participated in the study. Also, the type of questions that I asked may have been uncomfortable to answer in their peer group and asking such questions would be more appropriate in a one-on-one setting. To examine stress through action research would be inappropriate as well because the learning is based on the participants developing solutions for the issues that arise and that would not be appropriate in the current study.

The phenomenological approach is the most appropriate approach for this current study because it is an approach that is geared toward the lived experience of people.

Stress and the perception of stress is a phenomenon that is experienced and can be perceived in different ways by different individuals. In phenomenological research, the researcher takes on a reflexive stance reflecting on themes that they find present that helps to explain the nature of the phenomenon. Therefore, in this study, I identified themes and then I attempted to best explain those themes by categorizing them and then developing a structural description of the experiences that the interviewees shared with me. I then produced a description that attempted to convey the overall crux of the phenomenon. This approach attempts to offer a perception from the interviewee that is unique to the individual interviewee. I attempted to identify similarities between the interviewees but, in the effort to find similarities, it is important to understand the unique way that a phenomenon affects a person. I assumed that there would be themes present among the interviewees, but I hypothesized that the themes would be similar based on gender and the use of phenomenological research is the best way to investigate that.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was to be a participant observer with an emic point of view. An emic point of view was used due to lived experiences being a female working in a public safety profession with similar exposure to the field and the public. However, it was more of an observer role because the observer never attended a law enforcement academy. In this study, I drew meaning from experiences but, at the same time, I employed a flexible position that was open to changes as they came along through the uncovering of data. A reflective point of view and opinion was used while recognizing what personal values I bring to the study as an observer. To do this, any

biases and assumptions were described as well as the expectations and experiences that may affect how research was conducted and how the findings were evaluated.

The role of the researcher in the data collection procedure was that the researcher met with the students individually to conduct interviews with in-depth, open-ended questions to obtain more specific insight into how stress begins to affect the individual at the academy level. The methods of gathering the research was flexible in that they were adaptable based on results that emerged out of the interviews. Specific attention was given to rich detail and meaningful and emotional content to further carry along the study's path.

As researcher, I have the additional role of working at the institution where the students attend the basic law enforcement academy. The instruction for criminal justice fields at the institution are broken into two distinct paths, vocational and college credit. The law enforcement academy is vocational training. The program in which the researcher is employed is the college credit program. I share a building with the students but, I am not their instructor for any portion of their training and the only time they interact with me would be passing in the halls. The students are not permitted to take college credit and vocational training at the same time. Therefore, I was never their instructor while they were in the law enforcement academy.

In this study, researcher bias was controlled in this study by not communicating the nature of the research with the student participants beyond the instructions and the questions that were specifically asked of them in their interviews. Power relationships were avoided because the researcher has no authority or certification to teach the

students. Other ethical issues that were present is that this study was conducted within the researcher's work environment which is a training center. The subjects that were used were enrolled in a vocational law enforcement training program. These students were enrolled in a program that is housed within the public safety department. However, the program is not a program in which I am qualified to teach in or have any other role within.

Describe the Setting and Sample

The data was gathered at a basic law enforcement academy class at a southeastern U.S. training center. The data was gathered in a neutral room which was not the researcher's office nor a classroom or training room that the students use for class. The data was collected either before the student starts class, after the student completed class, during their scheduled lunch break, or at another prearranged time decided on by the students and the researcher. The institution at which the subject attend classes was used for the convenience of the student and access to meeting rooms. The sampling strategy that was used was quota sampling. In the law enforcement academy class that was included in the sample, thirty-two students were enrolled. All trainees were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. The quota sampling strategy was used because although thirty-two students are enrolled in the class, it would be appropriate to have twenty students in the study. The students were free to choose to participate or not. If more than twenty students agreed to participate, I determined that quota sampling would be used to fill both the male and female categories of the study as equally as possible.

The population that was studied was students that were actively attending basic law enforcement academy classes at a southeastern U.S. training center. The academy is a vocational program that is approximately six months in duration and is held Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 4:45 pm. After the students complete the law enforcement academy, they are eligible to be employed by a state approved agency. The study was presented to all the students that were in the class to participate although it was up to them should they choose to do so. Each student in this class was appropriate to use as a subject in this study. According to Ravitch & Carl (2016), quota sampling is appropriate to use when the researcher needs to include certain categories in the study.

The quota sampling strategy is appropriate because although all the students would be appropriate for this research, all did not agree to participate, and their numbers are too large for a phenomenological study. It was not prudent to discriminate between the students and it was a more prudent choice to cast a wide net to ensure that the desirable group was attainable after the students decide if they were willing and able to participate. The eligibility criteria for this study was that the student was willing to dedicate approximately 15-20 minutes of their time to the study. The study cannot be done during class hours. The student was required to be actively enrolled in the basic law enforcement academy class at the institution. Gender, age, and race were not a disqualifier but both genders were needed to be represented in this sample, and it was determined that it would be best to have as close to a 50/50 mix of students as possible. With the current gender makeup of the thirty-two students, this was not possible to accomplish with a selected group of twenty participants in the study. The selected sample

was made up of students that were attending a basic law enforcement academy class at a southeastern U.S. training center. The students were approached face to face in the classroom before a scheduled break. The students were given a brief explanation of the research being conducted, the benefit of the study, their potential role, and the time needed on their part to participate in the study. The consent form was covered with the students and then handed out to the students with a request to return to the researcher within 48 hours. The students were given contact information for the researcher to respond if they chose to participate. The participants were identified first by those that respond in the affirmative to the request to participate.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection methods that were used were audiotaping, notetaking, and a set of semi-structured interview questions that were established before the interview with the addition of follow up questions. A journal of each interview was kept that encompassed the date and time of the interview, impressions of the interviewee, and any questions asked by the interviewee. The data that was collected was organized through electronic file collection as well as hard copy notes that were transcribed first verbatim. According to Ravitch & Carl (2016), it is important to have a verbatim transcription of the data to ensure the fidelity of the participants' experiences, words, and general articulation of their personal experiences.

By transcribing a verbatim transcription of the data, there was no data that was lost in the translation. However, after the verbatim transcription was completed, the precoding process followed immediately after. In precoding, the researcher engages with

the data to familiarize themselves with the data and help the data seem less vague and rather make it follow a more lucid pattern. The open coding process began following the completion of the precoding. According to Bloomberg & Volpe (2016), open coding allows for refinement of the data to reach the final coding schema. The data collection instrument that was planned to be used was NVivo 12.1 qualitative data analysis software. NVivo 12.1 was created by QSR International, and the date of release was June 26, 2018. However, after the data collection took place, this software did not get used.

Content validity was established by engaging in prolonged participation at the study site. According to Mertler (2019), a key way to ensure that the researcher is enhancing the validity of the research data and findings, the researcher needs to use several different strategies and techniques to collect the data. The data was collected through observation data, open-ended questions, and audio recordings. The interviews were conducted at the site where the students were attending the academy, as I work in that same building, I was able to interact with them as an uninvolved observer. In this position, I am familiar with the culture of the academy setting as the students attend class down the hall as well as my office is in a close physical location to those that are responsible for running the day to day operations of the law enforcement academy.

Culture-specific issues that are specific to the population being studied revolve around the culture that the students are there because they desire to pursue a profession in law enforcement in the current climate where social scrutiny has existed and persisted regarding law enforcement overreaching their use of force rights and further allegations of brutality based on race. These individuals are unique in that they have chosen to

pursue this profession despite the current climate. The geographical area in which the academy is located is not immune to cases regarding law enforcement and use of force into question. The geographical location in which this study was completed has had its share of high-profile national news stories.

Data Analysis

The data collection process that was used in this study will be followed by pre-coding and then two rounds of coding. Saldana (2016) states that one should never overlook the opportunity to pre-code the data while collecting that data when something strikes you or stands out to you as worthy of attention. Open or initial coding was used to align the data. Descriptive coding was used to compile the main topics of the interviews with students. In the following round of coding, pattern coding was used to identify patterns in the data that has been collected. Following that, the data was classified into categories that have were identified that belong in similar groups together. This is when themes emerged in the data. Following this step, the saturation point in the data was expected. The saturation point in the data was when no new data emerges from coding.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, credibility also is known as internal validity, and according to Ravitch & Carl (2016), credibility is based on the researcher's ability to consider the host of complexities that present themselves in a study. For the intent of this study, credibility was achieved through saturation and member checking. Member checking was used to guarantee the veracity of the data which had been recorded. The student participants were polled to determine if any misunderstandings or misinterpreted

information that had been collected through the interview process existed. By polling the participants of the study, the risk of excluding pertinent information that applied to the study was reduced.

Transferability in qualitative research is also known as external validity and according to Patton & Patton (2015), transferability deals with the issue of generalization regarding case to case transfer of information. Transferability, in this case, is based on providing the readers enough information on the case that it being studied to determine how the findings can be transferred to other studies or further research. Students that attend the basic law enforcement academy class at a southeastern U.S. training center were recruited for this study. The area this study was conducted in is a densely populated suburb of a major city in the southeastern United States. The college at which this data is collected has a diverse population of students. Thick description was used. According to Ravitch & Carl (2016), thick description is a way of putting the data into context so that the readers can make comparisons to other contexts based on as much information as possible.

Dependability refers to how stable the data is as well as ensures that the data that is collected is consistent and answers the research questions that are asked. Dependability necessitates that a reasonable argument for the method that that is being used to collect the data exists and that the data are rational with the researcher's argument. An audit trail was maintained of the steps followed in conducting this study for this objective.

Confirmability is compared to the qualitative equivalent of the term objectivity. Confirmability considers that qualitative researchers do not claim to be objective but,

instead have data that is confirmable. Routine and constant reflection on the part of the qualitative researcher is necessary and was completed regularly as a part of this research study.

Ethical Procedures

The American Psychological Association is the entity that sets the ethical guidelines in the field of criminal justice. These guidelines set specific requirements for researchers to follow when working with live subjects for data collection. Therefore, researchers are required to diminish the possible risk to study participants by providing them with informed consent all the while maintaining confidentiality, representing the statements of participants in a true and accurate way, and suitably debriefing participants before, during, and upon completion of the data collection process (American Psychological Association, 2017b). Approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board was obtained before recruiting possible participants. Participants were recruited using a solicitation letter that was handed out in class by the researcher which accompanied a short presentation by the researcher. Potential participants were informed that their participation in this study was strictly voluntary, that their responses would not be shared with the college or their instructors, and that there would be no adverse treatment from the college or myself for opting not to participate.

Each participant received an informed consent form. This form described the participants' rights and all the relevant information linked to this study. The informed consent form contained information regarding the anticipated outcomes of the study, a detailed outline of the data collection methods that was used, the anticipated amount of

time that was dedicated to participating in this study, a statement of confidentiality, and an area stating that the study was voluntary to participate in as well as how to opt out of the study.

Regarding confidentiality, participants in this study were made aware that a coding system was used to identify them as a participant in their study instead of their name. By using a coding system, the researcher can assure anonymity and reinforce the confidential nature of the study. By ensuring confidentiality regarding the student's anonymity, participants can be more forthcoming and authentic with their responses. Any data that is collected through electronic means was done on a device that was password protected, and all documentation completed on paper along with flash drives was locked in a secure location. The data will remain secure for five years and after that time will be destroyed.

Summary

My purpose in this chapter was to relate the research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study. This study is an effort to determine the nature of stress at the academy training level and how stress is perceived by females and males both similarly and differently. It is believed that this approach allows for a deeper understanding of how stress originates when trainees first pursue a career as a sworn law enforcement officer at the training level. The applicability of phenomenology and a view through a feminist lens allows for a better understanding of stress and its influence on an individual that is attending law enforcement training based on their gender.

Chapter 4: Results

My purpose in this phenomenological study was to investigate the stressors on female recruits when they are held to the same standards as males and to determine whether some of that stress is self-imposed at the academy training level. In Chapter 4, I presented the results from the analysis of the responses to the interview questions by the participants. I also discussed the research setting, participant demographics, and the data collection process in this chapter. I have included evidence of trustworthiness and the methods that I used to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

I explored two research questions in this study:

1. RQ1: How do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees?

2. RQ2: How do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees?

The data collection process went in accordance with the initial plan from Chapter 3. After presenting the study to the students, 12 students agreed to participate in the study. The gender breakdown of the 12 participants was three females and nine males. The original plan was to obtain 20 students; therefore, after the 12 interviews were completed, I again presented the study to the students on March 28, 2019, and six more students agreed to complete the study. That grouping included one female and five males. With that grouping along with the prior 12 already interviewed in the study, the study included all the females in the class. After conducting the interviews on the additional six students, I determined that similar information was being reported from the males and I decided

that enough data existed to go forward with 18 participants. The final gender makeup of the participants was 14 males and four females, which was close to the gender makeup of the sworn law enforcement community in the United States; therefore, this sample was a simple representation.

I asked both males and females the same questions in the same order. I used this method because a need existed to identify what specific stressors affect both males and females. By being able to collect those stressors, it allowed those stressors that affect both genders to be excluded to obtain the stressors that are unique to females.

I conducted the interviews as planned in Chapter 3 with no deviations. The coding process went as planned as well; however, I did not use NVivo software at any time in this study. When it came time to consider using this software, I believed that coding and analyzing the data were personally more informative and conductive to my personal familiarity with the data. A consultation was also completed with a colleague who instructs classes in NVivo software. This colleague concurred with me that the use of the software was not needed as a complete effort in coding and collection of themes without its use.

Overview

I did not use a pilot study because only four females were enrolled in the class being studied and conducting a pilot study would have exhausted the population available. I conducted the interviews in person in a vacant office with a closed door within the building where the participants attend academy training but, in an office suite away from their classrooms. I conducted these interviews in this fashion to promote a

sense of confidentiality and anonymity as well as convenience for the participants. I conducted the interviews before class, during scheduled meal breaks, and after class based on the interviewee's availability. Semistructured interviews permitted open dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee and the closed door allowed for sensitive topics to be discussed openly. The participants were candid in their responses, which demonstrates the suitability with the setting used for the interviews.

Four women and 14 men who were actively enrolled in a law enforcement academy participated in this study. This population represents 22% of the participants being female and 78% of the participants being male, which is relatable to the current population of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States, which is approximately 80% male and 20% female.

My preliminary goal was to interview 20 participants. After presenting the students with the invitation to participate, 12 responded in the affirmative. After completing the 12 interviews, I again presented the students an invitation to participate to determine whether final interest existed after I completed the 12 interviews, and six more responded in the affirmative. Because the 18 participants who were collected represented a similar gender makeup of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States, I decided that 18 was an appropriate number with which to proceed.

Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (No. 03-14-19-0641881) for this study was given on March 14, 2019. The process to invite the participants took place on March 18, 2019. I presented the students with an invitation to participate in the study in their academy classroom. I reviewed the consent form with the

students and I handed out this form during the presentation for participants to peruse at

their leisure. The consent forms included an explanation of the purpose of the study and

the approach that would be taken as well as the voluntary nature of the study. Interested

participants contacted me face to face with their consent forms outside of academy hours

and we set an appointment time and date for the interview to take place. All participants

in the class who were invited to participate in the study were eligible for this study.

I asked the participants semistructured questions, which afforded me with the

opportunity to ask appropriate follow-up questions and allowed the participants to

elaborate as needed. I recorded all of the interviews on a handheld audio recording device

as well on an iPhone app called Voice Recorder. During the member check process, I

reviewed the points that I discussed with the participants to confirm that the information

that I conveyed was understood accurately by the participants. At this time, the

participants elaborated where appropriate.

Once the interviews were completed, I downloaded transcriptions from Voice

Recorder and transferred them to a Word Document that I stored on a secure thumb drive.

Then I downloaded the voice recordings from both Voice Recorder and the handheld

audio recording device onto the same secure thumb drive immediately after the

interviews and I deleted them from both recording devices. This process left the only

copy of the interviews and transcriptions on a secure thumb drive, which I locked in a file

cabinet securely when I was not using them.

I corrected the transcriptions downloaded from Voice Recorder for errors. I then

transcribed the interviews immediately after the interview was completed using Voice

Recorder. These transcriptions needed extensive editing by hand, which I completed through listening to the audio recordings to obtain a verbatim transcription. During the interviews and immediately following the interviews, I conducted precoding. After I completed transcription, the open-coding process began. Open coding, according to Saldana (2016), is completed to assist in the breaking down of qualitative data into discrete parts, examining the data closely, and then comparing the data for differences and similarities. I completed open coding using the transcriptions to break up the transcribed data into individually coded segments. After I completed open coding, I used descriptive coding to summarize the main topics of the interviews with students into a word or short phrase. At this point, I had completed the first cycle coding process. In second cycle coding, I used pattern coding to group the data into a smaller number of categories to identify patterns in the data. I then classified the data using categories that had been identified as belonging in similar groups together. The saturation point was reached when no new data emerged in the coding process and themes were beginning to emerge in the data as I discussed in Chapter 3. The 12 themes that emerged were akin to what Saldana (2016) called an *extended phrase* or *sentence* that identifies what a unit of data is about and what that unit of data means to the researcher. The theme process included constant reflection by the researcher on participant meanings and outcomes.

Setting

The study was conducted at a southeastern United States training school at which students attend vocational classes to pursue their state certification for law enforcement to be eligible for hire as sworn law enforcement officers. The thirty-two students that were

in this class in which the study was conducted on were all in pursuit of this certification. The program is approximately six months in length, and the classes are typically held Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 4:45 pm. No personal or organizational conditions that influenced the participants or their experience at the time of the study existed. I am not qualified to teach vocational classes to obtain this certification. The students were free to participate in this study if they chose to do so and were not given any consequences for opting not to participate. The students were given a 10.00 gift card for their time for participating in the study which was outlined in the consent form. I conducted the in-person interviews in a vacant office with a closed door within the building where the students attend academy training but, in an office suite away from their classrooms. I conducted the interviews in this fashion to promote a sense of confidentiality and anonymity as well as convenience. I conducted the interviews before class, during scheduled meal breaks, and after class based on the interviewee's availability. Semi-structured interviews permitted open dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee and the closed door allowed for sensitive topics to be discussed openly. The participants were candid in their responses, which demonstrates the suitability with the setting used for the interviews.

Demographics

Four women and 14 men who were actively enrolled in a law enforcement academy participated in this study. This represents 22% of the participants being female and 78% being male which is relatable to the 2019 population of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States which is approximately 80% male and 20% female.

Participants of all genders combined ranged in age from 21 to 49, and the mean age was 27.5. Female participants ranged in age from 21 to 30, and the mean age was 24.5. Male participants ranged in age from 21 to 49, and the mean age was 28.4. The total gender makeup of the 32-person class was 28 males and four females.

The ethnicities of the participants included African American, Caucasian, Asian, and Hispanic. Within this group of eighteen, some participants were married with no children, married with children, in relationships with no children, and single with no children. Five of the eighteen participants held employment outside of the academy and worked on their off time. Ten of the participants held high school diplomas or general education diplomas, four held associate degrees, and four held bachelor's degrees.

Data collection

Data was collected from 18 participants. Four of the participants were female, and 14 were males. Interviews began on March 19, 2019, and the final interview was conducted on March 28, 2019. I conducted the interviews in a vacant office in the building where the participants attend academy classes but, not near the classrooms where the academy classes take place to ensure anonymity but also for ease of access. Typically, two interviews were conducted per day but, the scheduling was based on the participants' availability and convenience. I scheduled the interviews for 30-minute blocks of time. Before beginning the interview, I gave the participants a copy of the consent form that they signed, and I asked them if they had any questions before the interview commenced. I recorded the data through note taking, the use of a handheld voice recording device, and an iPhone app titled Voice Recorder that had transcription

available. The only variation from the plan in Chapter 3 was the secondary recording device. No unusual circumstances that occurred in the data collection process existed. Three of the participants forgot the interview had been scheduled and did not attend but, rescheduled with me the following day. I found that that this occurred in all three instances for participants that initially had scheduled to come in at the end of the day and in rescheduling I determined that the lunch hour was a better time for all three.

Findings of the Interviews

Interview 1

Interviewee 1 was a female student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 1 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 1 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: family concerns, financial concerns, work/life balance issues, lack of sleep, fear of risk by family, perception of their danger, loss of friendships, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement officers, needing to perform soul searching, getting past negativity, missing family obligations, being confined in the academy for large amounts of time, adjusting to shift work, issues with scheduling conflicts, and being unreachable for family needs.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 1 in response to RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: being there for family needs, being seen as the weaker sex, concern over current or future children, not being able to be in two places at once and being the victim of stereotyping as a female.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 1 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 1 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: Concern over directions and navigation of the field, concern over going on domestic violence calls, internalizing stress, lack of confidence, concern over superior's judgment, worry, concern over reliving stressful calls, concern over child calls, lack of promotion potential and fear of inadequacy.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 1 in response to RQ2, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: loss of appetite, negative peer judgment, being accused of mothering the male trainees, lack of sleep, being seen as the weaker sex, being seen as not being able to handle herself physically, future job risks associated with pregnancies, an in equal distribution of responsibilities in her household, needing to take the primary role in the household regardless of workload outside the home, being a female in a male dominated field, and hesitation to grow family based on potential future job repercussions.

A direct quote from Interviewee 1, personal communication, March 19, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> Something that a family member brought up the other day was if we were going to have another kid and I was like well, at least not for two to three more years because I don't want to be put out of work because the cop is pregnant, so I have to change my family plans because of my career choice.

Interview 2

Interviewee 2 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 2 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 2 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns, school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement officers, desire to pursue passion, and physical rigor.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 2 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 2 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Work/life balance and concern over directions and navigation of the field.

A direct quote from Interviewee 2, personal communication, March 19, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> Keeping work and life separate is stressful. Not bringing work home. I have close friends in the field, and I can talk to them about the gruesome stuff. Keep it compartmentalized without having to stress the significant other about all of the horrible things that we are going to see.

Interview 3

Interviewee 3 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 3 was asked five interview questions with

follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 3 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, perception of their danger, anticipate future stress, desire to pursue passion, isolated feelings because of career choice, treated different because will be a law enforcement officer, and dealing with those that are anti law enforcement.

A direct quote from Interviewee 3, personal communication, March 20, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> I see some obstacles. Some social obstacles. I'm not a sociable person. But if I want to go out and try to make some friends, I know it is going to be hard because I know not everyone wants to hang out with the cop.

> To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 3 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 3 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: School stress, lack of confidence, issues with command presence, internalizing stress, public perception, worry, concern over going on domestic violence class, and concern over child calls.

Interview 4

Interviewee 4 was a female student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 4 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 4 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: family concerns,

financial concerns, fear of risk by family, perception of their danger, lack of family support, tearing down by family, family disagrees with career choice, lack of confidence, judgment by others, jealous significant other, vulnerability, and overcoming personal negative experience.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 4 in response to RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: concern over current or future children, being seen as the weaker sex, being the victim of stereotyping as a female, ridicule by family, being a female in a male dominated field, and pressure to conform to traditional gender roles.

A direct quote from Interviewee 4, personal communication, March 20, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> My husband knows that it's a man's career. We talked kind of extensively on how I want to do SWAT, that's one of the lofty goals but, he fears that I will just be rejected, just based on the fact that I'm a female. Basically, I wouldn't have the same opportunities as a man because I'm not as strong as a man or even because of my height.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 4 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 4 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: internalizing stress, work/life balance, age issue, and isolated feelings.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 4 in response to RQ2, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: being accused of mothering the male trainees, being seen as the weaker sex, being seen as not being able to handle herself physically, an in equal distribution of responsibilities in her household, needing to take the primary role in the household regardless of workload outside the home, pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, separation from children, pressure to workout, physical rigor, missing family obligations, being stereotyped, males not seeing females as equals, assumptions based on gender, own gender does not relate, negativity about being an alpha female, guilt based on gender norms, worry over weakness, excluded based on gender, getting past negativity, work never is done, needing to ask permission to take care of family obligation, relying on others, and being singled out as a female.

Interview 5

Interviewee 5 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 5 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 5 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns, school stress, physical rigor, isolated feelings because of career choice, fear of being treated differently because will be law enforcement officer, dealing with those that are anti law enforcement, needing to perform soul searching, getting past negativity, issues with scheduling conflicts, being confined in the academy for large amounts of time, being unreachable for family needs, and training stress.

A direct quote from Interviewee 5, personal communication, March 21, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> My family is all for me becoming a police officer, as far as my immediate family, like my mom and dad. But, my cousins and friends, they don't like it. They don't like me being a police officer at all, just in general. I'm from ___ and the police down there are pretty rough. No one likes the police, so I'm labeled a snitch now.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 5 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 5 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Concern over directions and navigation of the field, concern over child calls, financial stress, and concerns over the climate of law enforcement in society.

Interview 6

Interviewee 6 was a female student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 6 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 6 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: family concerns, work/life balance issues, fear of risk by family, perception of their danger, issues with scheduling conflicts, school stress, role model pressure, lack of personal time, training stress, peer perception, treated differently because law enforcement, internalizing stress, unique stress for law enforcement, physical rigor, pressure to work out, and anticipate future stress.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 6 in response to RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: concern over current or future children, being seen as the weaker sex, being the victim of stereotyping as a female, being a female in a male dominated field, pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, males not seeing females as equals, overcoming preconceived notions, desire to prove them wrong, changed family plans because of career, weakness in role, and being seen as able to handle herself.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 6 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 6 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: lack of confidence, lack of promotion potential, fear of inadequacy, work/life balance, age issue, isolated feelings, training stress, school stress, public perception, fear of the unexpected, psyching self out, and worry over command presence.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee6 in response to RQ2, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: negative peer judgment, being seen as the weaker sex, being seen as not being able to handle herself physically, future job risks associated with pregnancies, being a female in a male dominated field, hesitation to grow family based on potential future job repercussions, pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, physical rigor, being stereotyped, males not seeing females as equals, assumptions based on gender, guilt based on gender norms

excluded based on gender, enduring jokes based on gender, change family plans based on gender, and fear of future family plans.

A direct quote from Interviewee 6, personal communication, March 21, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> I'm concerned over people not taking me seriously if I pull someone over. Just thinking, oh, it's just a chick, she's not going to do anything. I feel like it might be a little more dangerous, just people thinking that they can take advantage of you. If they see a big guy coming at them they might listen but, if they see a little girl, they're going to be, like oh, I can do this, I can run or fight.

Interview 7

Interviewee 7 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 7 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 7 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, desire to pursue passion, isolated feelings because of career choice, fear of being treated differently because will be law enforcement officer, dealing with those that are anti law enforcement, loss of friendships, pressure to workout, family disagrees with career choice, lack of family support, unique stressors for law enforcement officers, work/life balance issues, missing family obligations, lack of sleep, internalizing stress, tearing down by family, lack of confidence, judgment by others, and adjusting to shift work.

A direct quote from Interviewee 7, personal communication, March 21, 2019, in relation
to RQ1 was:

> Friendships cause stress because once you enter law enforcement, people seem to
> change because you're representing something, and they may break the law also,
> so you don't want to associate yourself with them. So, I think that stresses you out
> too, not having relationships with people when you know you are kind of like
> alone and no one wants to be with you like that. Because when you get in this
> field, you are going to lose relationships, you are going to lose whoever you are
> with, so you kind of have to be prepared for that.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement
trainees, Interviewee 7 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The
responses that Interviewee 7 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by
females regarding the same questions were as follows: School stress, worry, concern over
going on domestic violence calls, fear of the unknown, lack of promotion potential,
isolated feelings, fear of inadequacy, concern over supervisor's judgment, and tearing
down by supervisors.

Interview 8

Interviewee 8 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect
female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 8 was asked five interview questions with
follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 8 gave to those five interview questions that
were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns,
family concerns, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, dealing with

negative opinions of law enforcement, issues with scheduling conflicts, and work/life balance issues.

A direct quote from Interviewee 8, personal communication, March 22, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> Time management causes me stress. I'm really busy all of the time. I have a job outside of here, so it's like having two jobs at the same time.

> To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 8 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 8 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Concern over directions and navigation of the field and the fear of the unexpected.

Interview 9

Interviewee 9 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 9 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 9 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, physical rigor, dealing with those that are anti law enforcement, being unreachable for family needs, training stress, pressure to work out, and adjusting to shift work.

A direct quote from Interviewee 9, personal communication, March 22, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

I usually try to keep current on the news and everything and unfortunately, I have

seen the rise in the climate that's almost, anti-police as opposed to people saying,

"hey, thanks for you being out there" type of a thing.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement

trainees, Interviewee 9 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The

responses that Interviewee 9 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by

females regarding the same questions were as follows: Work/life balance issues, lack of

confidence, worry, concern over child calls, fear of inadequacy, tearing down by

supervisors, age issue, and training stress.

Interview 10

Interviewee 10 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors

affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 10 was asked five interview

questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 10 gave to those five interview

questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows:

school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, perception of their danger, desire to

pursue passion, isolated feelings because of career choice, issues with scheduling

conflicts, training stress, work/life balance issues, lack of sleep, lack of confidence, and

lack of personal time.

A direct quote from Interviewee 10, personal communication, March 22, 2019, in relation

to RQ1 was:

One thing I think about is scheduling. Like, I would like to have at least one kid,

and it's always been a question of mine, was how a police officer makes time for

their kids? If they are younger, who picks them up from school? Who takes them? Because you don't have a regular 9-5. Sometimes you work night shift or day shift, so that is one of the concerns of mine.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 10 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 10 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: School stress, internalize stress, worry, concern over going on domestic violence calls, concern over child calls, fear of inadequacy, concern over supervisor's judgment, tearing down by supervisors, concern over reliving stressful calls, and psyching self out.

Interview 11

Interviewee 11 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 11 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 11 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns, school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, physical rigor, perception of their danger, anticipate future stress, desire to pursue passion, fear of being treated differently because will be law enforcement officer, needing to perform soul searching, issues with scheduling conflicts, training stress, loss of friendships, pressure to workout, unique stress for law enforcement officers, issues with work/life balance, internalizing stress, peer perception, vulnerability and role model pressure.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 11 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 11 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: Concern over going on domestic violence calls, concern over child calls, fear of inadequacy, concern over supervisor's judgment, and the fear of the unexpected.

A direct quote from Interviewee 11, personal communication, March 25, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> Main things that worry me, like triggers, I don't know if I have any of those yet. My big nervousness is having one that I don't realize and horribly mishandling a situation based on it. Like walking into a really bad domestic violence situation and then just losing my stuff.

Interview 12

Interviewee 12 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 12 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 12 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, dealing with negative opinions of law enforcement, anticipate future stress, isolated feelings because of career choice, fear of being treated differently because will be a law enforcement officer, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement officers, issues with scheduling conflict, training stress, unique stress for law

enforcement, work/life balance issues, missing family obligations, lack of sleep, and peer perception.

A direct quote from Interviewee 12, personal communication, March 26, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> My family is not 100% behind law enforcement, and they do not really see law enforcement like I see law enforcement. They see law enforcement as racially motivated; there are racial problems. With me going into law enforcement, they feel like I'm becoming a traitor, so that makes me feel isolated and causes me to stress out about their opinions.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 12 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 12 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: worry, fear of inadequacy, and training stress.

Interview 13

Interviewee 13 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 13 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 13 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: fear of risk by family, family concern, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement officers, physical rigor, desire to pursue passion, dealing with those that are anti law enforcement, issues with scheduling conflicts, and pressure to workout.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 13 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 13 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: concern over going on domestic violence calls, concern over child calls, and training stress.

A direct quote from Interviewee 13, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

Any cases with children I know for a fact that's going to be one of my toughest cases. Domestic violence cases will depend on the level of it. If the person isn't there, that I can deal with what is in front of me. If the person is there, I need to figure out how to assess and move the person out.

Interview 14

Interviewee 14 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 14 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 14 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns, fear of risk by family, family concern, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement, desire to pursue passion, dealing with those that are anti law enforcement, issues with scheduling conflicts, and loss of friendships.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 14 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 14 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by

females regarding the same questions were as follows: concern over directions and navigation of the field, internalizing stress, worry, concern over going on domestic violence calls, concern with child calls, lack of promotion potential, concern over supervisor's judgment, and psyching self out.

A direct quote from Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> I experience stress like internally sometimes. Like I may take something a little too personally. If someone says something negative to me, sometimes that really bothers me. If a sergeant like reprimands me that might bother me a little bit.

Interview 15

Interviewee 15 was a female student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 15 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 15 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: family concerns, financial concerns, work/life balance issues, fear of risk by family, dealing with negative opinions about law enforcement officers, being confined in the academy for large amounts of time, issues with scheduling conflicts, family disagrees with career choice, school stress, training stress, unique stress for law enforcement, desire to pursue passion, negative opinions of law enforcement, anticipate future stress, isolated feelings because of career choice, and social concerns over being a law enforcement officer.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 15 in response to RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: being seen

as the weaker sex, being a female in a male dominated field, males not seeing females as equals, overcoming preconceived notions, wanting to prove them wrong, and feeling pressure to change family plans because of career choice.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 15 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 15 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by males regarding the same questions were as follows: concern over going on domestic violence calls, internalizing stress, lack of confidence, concern over superior's judgment, fear of inadequacy, work/life balance, training stress, psyching self out, the climate of law enforcement in society, financial concern, fear of the unknown, and tearing down by superiors.

The unique female stressors reported by Interviewee 15 in response to RQ2, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, were as follows: being seen as the weaker sex, being seen as not being able to handle herself physically, pressure to work out, physical rigor, being a victim of stereotyping, and males not seeing females as equals.

A direct quote from Interviewee 15, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> I think my gender is going to be in the way only because I've talked to sergeants, who are female, and they are kind of looked down on by the men regardless of their position, so I think that could be an obstacle. I don't do well with people

doubting; I just love to prove people wrong so yeah, I think my gender will

probably be an obstacle.

Interview 16

Interviewee 16 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors

affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 16 was asked five interview

questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 16 gave to those five interview

questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows:

school stress, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, perception of their

danger, work/life balance issues, and lack of confidence.

A direct quote from Interviewee 16, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation

to RQ1 was:

> I'm sort of a shy person, but I can hold a conversation but, I tend to have a harder
>
> time initiating the conversation. Just need to work on that more. I am a little
>
> concerned about learning the area in regard to directions and navigation that I will
>
> be working in that can be stressful at first.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement

trainees, Interviewee 16 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The

responses that Interviewee 16 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by

females regarding the same questions were as follows: worry, fear of inadequacy, and

training stress.

Interview 17

Interviewee 17 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 17 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 17 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: financial concerns, school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, physical rigor, anticipate future stress, issues with scheduling conflicts, being unreachable for family needs, training stress, pressure to workout, unique stress for law enforcement, work/life balance issues, missing family obligations, and adjusting to shift work. A direct quote from Interviewee 17, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation to RQ1 was:

> Financially, we've gone down to one income because I'm not working right now. Plus, I'm a little stressed because I know what my income is going to be as an officer and it's less than what I was lined up to make in the job that I left to do this. I was able to be promoted to manager in my last job and I would've gotten a pay raise, so I know that going in as an officer I will be making less than what I would've made as a manager so sure, that caused increased stress plus shift work is an added stress that I did not have in my previous job.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 17 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 17 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by

females regarding the same questions were as follows: concern over supervisor's judgment.

Interview 18

Interviewee 18 was a male student. To answer RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 18 was asked five interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 18 gave to those five interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: school stress, fear of risk by family, family concern, social concerns over being a law enforcement officer, perception of their danger, getting past negativity, training stress, family disagrees with career choice, work/life balance issues, internalizing stress, jealous significant other, and overcoming a personal negative experience.

A direct quote from Interviewee 18, personal communication, March 28, 2019, in relation to RQ2 was:

> I think when I'm a cop, the only other thing I can see becoming very stressful
> would be probably with a girlfriend in a situation where there are other female
> officers that I work with, like a partner or something, and it can cause a situation
> where my girlfriend can get worried and jealous. I have another stressful factor
> for me becoming a cop. I grew up in a family that experienced domestic violence
> with new boyfriends that my mom has had, and I can kind of related to people and
> getting domestic calls. They can be very scary, that's probably the only thing.
> That's probably why I'm a little wary of those calls. It can be a little stressing just
> figuring out what's going on and knowing that everyone can be a potential

suspect. So, that would probably be the only thing that would make me open up my eyes to be more focused of every surrounding.

To answer RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees, Interviewee 18 was asked three interview questions with follow-ups. The responses that Interviewee 18 gave to those three interview questions that were shared by females regarding the same questions were as follows: worry and tearing down by supervisors.

Results

Regarding RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, the results show that they are affected in how they believe they are seen in society, how they are perceived in their role in the family, and how their peers view them as a fellow future law enforcement officer. Regarding RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, the results show that they are affected by being the sexual minority in their career field, by negative male peer perception and the treatment by male peers, by the treatment and acceptance by their superiors, by the potential career risks of this selection, and by the lack of time they have to take care of their personal well-being. When compiling the data, the stress that both males and females similarly reported was excluded to get to the unique stressors that are felt solely by females. In that effort, nonconforming data resulted. Three unique stressors existed that were reported by males but not by females, resulting in unique stressors for the males. These stressors were, for RQ1, that males report feeling safer in the law enforcement role than in a non-law enforcement role and finding that their friends change

after their choice to become a law enforcement officer. The stressor for RQ2 was that

males found the need to compartmentalize their lives to keep work at work at home and

home.

Table 1

Theme and Description Related to RQ1

Theme	Description
Sources of outside stressors	
Theme 1: Society view	Includes pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, females in a male dominated field, and males not seeing females as equals.
Theme 2: Family/friends view	Includes ridicule by family, being a member of the weaker sex, overcoming preconceived notions, and the desire to prove them wrong.
Theme 3: Consequences of choice to be a law enforcement officer	Includes the fear of future family plans, missing family obligations, pressure to change family plans based on gender, and separation from children.
Theme 4: Family needs their mother	Includes being there for family needs, children concern, and not being able to be in two places at once.
Theme 5: Opinions of male peers	Includes concern of both themselves and how others see them being able to handle themselves in a physical confrontation, fear of weakness in role, and being stereotyped.
Theme 6: Responsibility as head of household	Includes work never done, relying on others, in equal distribution of responsibilities in household, and female takes primary role regardless of workload outside home.

Table 2

Theme and Description Related to RQ2

Theme	Description
Concerns over career longevity and acceptance	
Theme 7: Sexual minority in career field	Includes getting past negativity, female in a male dominated field, being seen as the weaker sex, and pressure to conform to traditional gender roles.
Theme 8: Peer perception	Includes how others see them being able to handle themselves in a physical confrontation, negative peer judgment, being stereotyped, and males not seeing females as equals.
Theme 9: Treatment and acceptance by superiors	Includes physical rigor and singling out based on gender.
Theme 10: Treatment by male peers	Includes assumptions based on gender, being accused of mothering, and enduring jokes based on gender.
Theme 11: Potential career risks	Includes job risk associated with pregnancy, requirement to ask permission to take care of family obligation, hesitation to grow family based on career repercussions.
Theme 12: Lack of time for personal well-being	Includes pressure to workout, loss of appetite, and lack of sleep.

Data Analysis

After each interview was completed, the interviews were transcribed. This was done by the researcher with the assistance of a transcription provided by an iPhone app, Voice Recorder. Voice Recorder was used to record the audio of the interview and then takes the audio interview and transcribes it into text. These transcriptions needed extensive editing by hand which was completed by the research through listening to the audio recordings to get a verbatim transcription. While the interviews were taking place and while transcription was occurring, precoding took place when something noteworthy was identified.

After transcription precoding was completed, open coding began. Open coding, according to Saldana (2016), is completed to assist in breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, examine it closely, and then compare the data for differences and similarities. After open coding was completed, descriptive coding was used to compile the main topics of the interviews with students, and finally, pattern coding was used to identify patterns in the data. The data were then classified into categories that have been identified that belong in similar groups together. This was when the themes emerged in the data as expected in chapter three. The saturation point was reached when no new data emerged in the coding process.

Stressors did emerge that were similar for both males and females. The following were the stressors that were reported by both genders in the interview process in response to interview question 1: financial obligations, school stress, fear of risk by family, concern by family, social concern over risk in law enforcement field, negative opinions

of law enforcement officers, physical rigor, perception of danger, anticipation of future stress, desire to pursue passion to become law enforcement officer, isolated feelings because of career choice, treated differently because becoming a law enforcement officer, feelings of those anti law enforcement, need to do soul searching, getting past negativity, issues with scheduling, being confined for hours in the academy setting, being unreachable for family needs, stress related to academy training, loss of friendships, pressure to workout, family disagrees with career choice, lack of family support, unique stressor for law enforcement officers, work/life balance issues, missing family obligations, lack of sleep, internalizing stressful feelings, tearing down by family, lack of confidence, judgment by others, adjusting to shift work, lack of personal time, peer perception, role model pressure, vulnerability, jealous significant other, and overcoming personal negative experiences.

The following were the stressors that were reported by both genders in the interview process in response to interview question 2: work/life balance, issues with directions and navigation in field work, school stress, lack of confidence, issues with command presence, internalizing stress, public perception, worry, concern over going on domestic violence calls, concern over going on calls involving danger to children, financial stress, the negative climate of law enforcement officers in society, the fear of the unknown in responding to calls, lack of promotion potential, isolated feelings, fear of inadequacy, the judgment of superiors, tearing down by superiors, reliving stressful calls, psyching themselves out, issues with increased age, fear of the unexpected, and training stress.

After identifying theses codes and determining that they were the same for both genders, they were extracted from the female stressors to identify what stressors were unique and additional for females. The following were the stressors that were reported by solely females in the interview process in response to interview question 1: concern over children, being there for family needs, being a member of the weaker sex, not being able to be in two places at once, being stereotyped, ridicule by family, being a female in a male dominated field, pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, males not seeing females as equals, overcoming preconceived notions, feeling the need to prove them wrong, pressure to change family plans because of career, fear of weakness in role, and concern of both themselves and how others see them being able to handle themselves in a physical confrontation.

The following were the stressors that were reported by solely females in the interview process in response to interview question 2: loss of appetite, negative peer judgment, being accused of mothering, lack of sleep, being a member of the weaker sex, concern of both themselves and how others see them being able to handle themselves in a physical confrontation, job risk associated with being pregnant and growing family, the in equal distribution of responsibilities in the household, the female takes the primary role as decision maker in the household regardless of workload outside the home, female in a male dominated field, hesitation to grow family based on career repercussions, pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, separation from children, pressure to work out, physical rigor, missing family obligations, being stereotyped, males not seeing females as equals, assumptions based on gender, own gender does not relate, negativity about being

an "alpha" female, guilt based on traditional gender norms, worry over weakness, exclusion based on gender, getting past negativity, work never being done at home, needing to ask permission to take care of family obligations, needing to rely on others, being singled out for being a female, enduring jokes based on gender, pressure to change family plans based on gender, and fear of future family plans.

After learning the stressors that were unique to females, when exploring the outside and job-related stressors that affect female law enforcement recruits, it was important to understand where those stressors were originating, and through this research, twelve themes emerged.

Relating to RQ1, which explored how outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, the following themes emerged: society view, family/friends view, dealing with consequences of choice, a family's needs of their mother, opinions of peers, Responsibilities as the head of the household. Relating to RQ2, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, the following themes emerged: minority group in career field, peer perception, superior's judgment, treatment by peers, potential job risk, lack of tending to personal well-being. These themes are as listed and as described in Tables 1 and 2.

Evidence and Trustworthiness

Credibility was achieved, as planned in chapter three, using saturation and member checking. Member checking was conducted while in the interviews with each participant. Periodically, the researcher repeated back what the participant said to them to ensure that the information was understood and collected accurately. By polling the

participants in this fashion, the researcher can determine if any misunderstandings in the data collection existed. Saturation was reached when all four of the females in the class were interviewed and fourteen of the males. At this point, the gender makeup of the participants was 22% female and 78% male which was a close representation of the gender makeup of the sworn law enforcement population in the United States which is approximately 20% female, and 80% male. The study had initially planned to interview twenty students. However, the remaining students in the class were male and data saturation had occurred at this point as repeat information was presenting itself in students seventeen and eighteen.

Regarding transferability, this research could be used in a gender-neutral study of stressors on law enforcement academy trainees. This research has identified 61 different areas of stress that are the same for both genders. With further examination, there may be ways uncovered to appease those stressors. Another means of transferability of data would be to complete a longitudinal study to examine what stressors that these participants experience after some time has passed after working as sworn law enforcement officers.

Dependability ensures that if another researcher were to conduct this same study on similar participants, similar results would be found. The processes used to complete this study have been documented in detail which would allow this replicating to take place by a future researcher. Confirmability considers that qualitative researchers do not claim to be objective but, instead have data that is confirmable. Routine and constant

reflection on the part of the qualitative researcher was completed regularly as a part of this research study.

Summary

Research Question 1

In relation to the findings for RQ1, how do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, it was found that females do have unique stressors that are present for their gender that are not present for males. These stressors are based on how they are seen in society's view, how their family and friends view them, being required to deal with the consequences of their choice to be a law enforcement officer, the unique responsibilities associated with motherhood, the opinions of their peers, and their responsibilities as head of the household.

Society view

In relation to society view, this is considered on a macro level, and the stressors here include pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, the burden of being a female in a male dominated role and males not seeing females as equals.

A direct quote from a male student regarding issues that he believes that the opposite gender experiences in the policing profession was:

> I think most female officers don't really get the respect that they need. Like I could be doing the job and a woman doing the job twice as hard as I am, and she still doesn't really get the credit and appreciation that I would as a man.

Family/Friends View

In relation to the view of their family and friends, the stressors here include ridicule by family, being seen as the weaker sex, overcoming preconceived notions, and desire to prove them wrong.

A direct quote from a female participant regarding issues of ridicule by family was:

> My mother would compare me becoming a cop to a Charlie's Angel and say like you wanting to be a police officer is like equivalent to a Charlie's Angel, and she used to make fun of me in front of the whole family.

A direct quote from a female participant regarding overcoming preconceived notions and the desire to prove them wrong was:

> It's been mentioned to me that I might have some problems, that people may give me a hard time but, my parents are supportive even though I am a female and it makes me feel like I have something to prove now.

Deal with Consequences of Choice

In relation to dealing with the consequences of one's choice is a unique stressor that was uncovered for females. Females reported stress from being separated from children, missing family obligations, developing future plans for family, and the need to change their family plans based on their gender.

A direct quote from a female participant regarding developing and changing family plans was:

> My family plans changed because I don't want to have to take time of out of the career. If I sit behind a desk, I fall behind. I can't move up the ranks as fast. It's

like once you are pregnant, you are off the street and you work a desk job. I never

wanted to do a desk job. I want to try to move up but I can't if I am in the office

all the time not out on the road getting stuff done.

Family Needs of their Mother

In relation to family needs of their mother, motherhood does not stop for a career,

and the unique stress that women experience based on this include pressure and desire to

be there for family needs, concern over the well-being of their children, and the stress

from not being able to be in two places as once.

A direct quote from a female participant regarding family needs of their mother was:

We are supposed to be the ones who do it all. It's funny to talk to other people;

they're like I went home and slept, what did you do? And I'm like, I jumped into

the mom role. Making dinner, bath time, and bedtime routine. Then I would wash

all the clothes, do the laundry. I do like three to four loads a day after I get home.

Opinions of Peers

In relation to opinions of male peers, this causes unique stress for women because

they desire to be seen as equals and the women report being stereotyped, not being seen

as being able to handle themselves, and weakness in the role as a law enforcement

officer.

A direct quote from a female participant regarding stereotyping, being able to handle

herself and weakness in role:

Like in foot pursuits, stereotypically, we are not as fast as men, so I feel like

they're going to immediately think that we're not doing our job or have heart

enough to do it and that is kind of stressful. Not being able to do what they do, to the capacity that they would like, or if we have to lift somebody out of a car and they're much bigger and taller, I don't know if I'll personally be able and that's stressful.

A direct quote from a male participant regarding stereotyping, women being able to handle themselves, and weakness in role:

Females definitely get a bad rap. Like females can't do what males do. Males are stronger, faster, stuff like that. Like there's a 6'5" dude, and I'm not big, but I'm sure I can handle more than someone like a female that's like 5'1" 120 pounds like that.

Responsibility as Head of Household

In relation to females being the main decision maker in the household, females reported stressors that include the belief that work is never done, the stress of having to rely on other people to accomplish household duties, the in equal distribution of responsibility in the household, and the stress of taking on that primary role in the household regardless of workload outside the home.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to responsibility as head of household was:

Definitely, we have different responsibilities in the household. I don't want to say men don't do anything but, men have less responsibly when it comes to parenting. I mean he will help me but, I have to tell him that I need the help first.

Research Question 2

In relation to the findings for RQ2, how do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees, it was found that females do have unique stressors that are present for their gender that are not present for males. These stressors are based on how they are considered the sexual minority in their career field, how their peers perceive them, the treatment and judgment that they receive from their superiors, their treatment by peers, their potential career risks, and their lack of time to tend to their personal wellbeing.

Sexual Minority in Career Field

In relation to females being the sexual minority in their career field, females reported stressors that include getting past negativity, females in a male dominated field, being perceived as the weaker sex, and pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. A direct quote from a female participant in relation to pressure to conform to traditional gender roles was:

> My mom wanted to know why I would want to go into something where we wouldn't necessarily wear a lot of makeup, or we wouldn't be as pretty. She was more about using my looks to get ahead in life because that's what she did.

Peer Perception

In relation to females and how their peers perceive them, females reported stressors that include the belief that they are not able to handle themselves physically by their male peers, general negative peer judgment, being the victim of stereotyping, and males not seeing females as equals.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to general negative peer judgment was:

> I get stress from the peers around me. Like their opinions, what they say, what they say that they think you can't hear. The chitchat they talk amongst each other about other people's performances on tasks that it kind of gets in your head, like what are they going to say about me when I go up and do it.

Treatment and Acceptance by Superiors

In relation to treatment and acceptance by superiors, females reported stressors that include superiors' judgment, being tested on physical rigor, and being singled out for being a female.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to superiors' judgment was:

> I think I will also definitely get stress from my superiors. I'm just worried about, you know, what they are going to say, what they think about me, how they feel about me, like how I've handled the situation.

Treatment by Peers

In relation to females' treatment by peers, females reported stressors that include assumptions based on gender, being accused of mothering them, and enduring jokes based on their gender.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to assumptions based on gender was:

> People in my own class say it's going to be hard for me because I'm a female.

Potential Career Risks

In relation to potential career risks, females reported stressors that include job risks related to pregnancy, requirement to ask permission to take care of family obligation, and hesitation to grow family due to job repercussions.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to job risk related to pregnancy was:

I've talked to a lot of people, and they say that being in a relationship or married to someone that is not in the field, they don't really understand what you go through, so that's kind of stressful just knowing that and then, you know starting a family. I'm the female so, I'm going to have to carry a child at some point if that's what I want to do so it's kind of stressful in that aspect.

Lack of Time for Personal Wellbeing

In relation to lack of time for personal wellbeing, females reported stressors that include pressure to workout, loss of appetite, and loss of sleep.

A direct quote from a female participant in relation to loss of sleep and appetite was:

A lot of the stress is self-imposed for me. I lose sleep and have anxiety and don't eat. In the last couple of days, I have not been eating three meals a day. I might eat once a day. I am just not feeling hungry. That's probably from just stressing out. I don't have time for myself because once I get a day off, everyone wants my presence and attention and then I feel selfish because I take an hour for myself.

Conclusion

This study was an effort to determine the stressors that are unique to females over males in the law enforcement academy setting. If researchers can understand what

stressors affect females over males, researchers can work towards alleviating or minimizing them to attract more females to the sworn law enforcement profession. The results showed that areas of unique stress to females over males existed. However, many of those themes were interrelated.

Regarding RQ1, main stressors were based on how others perceived them. The desire to be viewed and accepted as a good mother, a good daughter, a good significant other, a good officer, and a good co-worker. These results were in line with what was expected at the start of the study. Another main area of stress that was related to RQ1 was stress from responsibility and sacrifice. By choosing to pursue the position of sworn law enforcement officer, females felt stress from not being able to be available to their family and children, and this stress existed whether they already had children, or they planned to in the future. An added stressor existed based on the work of a female in the household that was reported as the female taking the primary role in the household regardless of workload outside the home. What was surprising with the results was some unique stressors for the males were present that were not present for the females. These were in much lower numbers, but these were not anticipated at the start of the study.

Regarding RQ2, main stressors were based again on how others perceived them but focused on the perception of superiors and peers. A theme of sacrifices that females would have to make to be a law enforcement officer because of struggles based on being a female were not present for males. This was mainly related to the female's role as the child bearing parent.

In chapter five, there will be an interpretation of the findings of the study. This will include the outcomes discussed in Chapter 4. Following that, there will be a section that covers all the data related to the research question. Next will be a summary describing how the findings confirm and extend knowledge in this discipline by comparing them with what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature described in chapter 2. Finally, there will be an analysis and interpretation of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework.

A discussion of the limitations, recommendations, and implications for social change will follow. A reflection of the researcher will follow to include possible personal biases or preconceived ideas, the possible effects of the researcher on the participants of the situation, and my thinking because of the study. Following that, a conclusion will be summarized.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

My purpose in this qualitative phenomenological study was to investigate how outside stressors and job-related stressors affect female law enforcement trainees differently than male trainees. The key phenomenon that I investigated in this study was stress and how it is perceived differently by males and females. I conducted this study to better understand where the stress originates for female trainees. If researchers understand where and how stress begins, they can plan for it and control it; therefore, making the path toward a career in law enforcement less difficult for females and it may attract more females toward the career path.

To understand the nature of the stressors that affect female law enforcement officers in the academy setting, I asked female and male trainees the same questions in a semistructured interview. I grouped the similar stressors that were reported by both males and females. Remaining were unique stressors that were solely experienced based on the trainee's gender. The findings in this study were that more numerous and unique stressors were present for female trainees compared with the males. Although 61 stressors were reported that were the same for males and females alike, 45 unique stressors were reported by females alone with three unique stressors reported by males alone. The 45 unique stressors were grouped into 12 themes, six relating to RQ1 and six relating to RQ2. The six themes related to RQ1 were society's view, family/friends' view, dealing with consequences of their choices, family needs of their mother, opinions of peers, and responsibilities as head of household. The six themes related to RQ2 were sexual

minority in the career field, peer perception, treatment and acceptance by superiors, treatment by peers, potential career risk, and lack of time for tending to personal well-being.

Although both males and female experienced stressors, females experienced more, and unique stressors compared with the males. I believed going into this study that the females were going to have greater and more unique stressors than their male counterparts.

The Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

Regarding RQ1 (How do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees?), the findings were based, in part, on how the female trainees were perceived by others. Wanting to be viewed and accepted as filling the role of mother, daughter, significant other, officer, and coworker well are main stressors for female law enforcement trainees. Females want to fit into their role as a wife, a mother, a daughter, and as a sworn law enforcement officer and want to be respected for their choice. However, the outside stressor of what others think of them and the negative feedback they receive based on that is important to them and affects their personal well-being and sense of belonging. The traditional gender roles in society are that males are the protectors and the ones that provide for the household. A woman in law enforcement is breaking both of those traditional roles and can experience negativity and pushback when they also would like to be a mother and have a family. Those traditional gender roles can remain in some household where the female officer works a full shift protecting the

public and then finds that she must take the largest share of the responsibility of parent and homemaker as well. Two of the four female participants in this study reported a stressor being the need to overcome preconceived notions and to prove them wrong. The preconceived notions were that they were not going to be able to become a sworn law enforcement officer and make a successful career out of it simply because they were a female. Going into the physical and mental rigors of academy training and field training, the females will be at a disadvantage with these negative perceptions weighing on them. While in training to become a law enforcement officer, a female finds themselves at a disadvantage because of how society views women in law enforcement.

The opinions of their male peers are also a point of stress for female law enforcement trainees. They want to be viewed as equals and work hard to earn that perception. However, the female trainees must overcome the stereotypes of females being the weaker sex before they are viewed as equals. This is not a stressor that is present for the male trainee. A male trainee may have a rough day at training, and it will likely be perceived as he is just off his typical behavior that day. A female trainee may receive the same perception from the male peers but, internally, there will be an added stressor weighing on her that she does not want to lose the equality that she has earned to this point by showing weakness.

Another main area of stress that was related to RQ1 was stress from home. By choosing to pursue the position of sworn law enforcement officer, females felt stress from not being able to be available to their family and children, and this stress existed whether they already had children, or they planned to in the future. An added stressor existed

regarding a female's workload was reported as the female taking the primary role in the

household regardless of their workload outside the home. Some females reported having

the added stress of what being a female law enforcement officer will have on their family.

By not being able to fill the role as a mother who is available as needed, females who

have children feel stress based on missing family obligations due to scheduling conflicts

and just not being able to be around their children as much as they would like. Those that

do not yet have children report similar stress regarding future plans for family and

children and some report changing those plans based on this career choice.

The findings of RQ1 confirm what I expected at the start of the study. I believed

going into this study that the females were going to have more numerous and more

unique stressors than their male counterparts. For RQ1, females have 14 unique stressors

that are not present for males. Males have one unique stressor that was not present for

females.

According to Alderden et al. (2017), more female recruits are needed to be

attracted to the law enforcement profession to make the role of sworn law enforcement

officer more representative of the population of the country; however, females

consistently do not choose to pursue careers as sworn law enforcement officers.

According to Violanti et al. (2013), gender inequality affects the diversity of law

enforcement agencies, their families, and their career promotion potential. These findings

will help to understand why females are not attracted to a career in law enforcement.

The findings of RQ1 are in accordance with feminist theory. Feminist theory

examines the position that females are required to fit into an environment that is male

dominated and designed for the needs of males and, as a result, females are required to modify to fit into that preconceived setting. For females to enter a male dominated field such as sworn law enforcement, they face added stressors that are unique to females compared with males. In Chapter 1, I theorized that males would have fewer stressors that can be related to work/life balance and family than females will report and that was the result of the findings. The feminist theory supports that the field of sworn law enforcement is more stressful for females compared with males because of the structure of the environment in which it exists.

Research Question 2

Regarding RQ2 (How do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees?), the findings were wholly based on the female trainees' perceptions and their treatment by their male peers. Stressors were based in part on what they believed the perception was by their male peers, specifically that they were not going to be able to handle themselves equally in the role of sworn law enforcement officer. Stressors were also centered on assumptions that the males made based on the gender of the females. Females want their hard work to be noticed, and they want to be seen as future sworn law enforcement officers, not future female sworn law enforcement officers. Females have the same rigor in the academy setting as the males, but assumptions that the females will not be as reliable as backup and be able to handle themselves in a physical situation can cause stress to the females, and it is believed that these stressors will carry forward into their careers and will grow with time.

An additional area of stress for female trainees was being the sexual minority in the field. Because the makeup of the sworn police force in the United States is approximately 80% male and 20% female, the in equal gender distribution is believed to be a stressor that will be present for years to come for females. However, many females are not used to being in a setting that is so predominately male until the academy. Therefore, adapting to that new environment added to the expected rigors of academy training on any gender is an additional stressor on female trainees.

Another main area of stress was the treatment by and perception of their superiors and the potential career risk associated with choosing a career in sworn law enforcement. Females want to know that this is a career where they will have an opportunity to grow and advance for themselves and their families. Some female participants had children, some did not, and some thought that they might want to have children or additional children in the future. Considering that they are the ones that carry the pregnancy to term in the relationship, caused stress on the female participants. Being given desk duty due to a pregnancy was also a stressor. How their supervisors would treat them while they were pregnant and out for maternity leave was a concern. The slowdown of their career advancement due to bearing a child was also a stressor.

A final area of stress that was unique to females was the lack of time to tend to their personal wellbeing and care. Female participants felt stress from having to work out on their off time to keep up with the academy rigor. With family obligations that were put aside to attend class, this time to work out felt selfish when their time with their families was so minimal. Female participants reported symptoms of stress such as lack of sleep

and lack of appetite. Female participants reported guilt and self-indulgence from their desire to take an hour to themselves with the pressure of home life.

The findings of RQ2 also confirm what was expected at the start of the study. It was believed going into this study that the females were going to have more numerous and more unique stressors than their male counterparts. For RQ2, females have 31 unique stressors that are not present for males. Males have two unique stressors that were not present for females.

According to Barratt et al. (2014), women have always been underrepresented within the ranks of the law enforcement profession when compared to the population that they are serving. Veldman et al. (2017), further found that female officers when compared with male officers, tend to feel less valued as well as report being dissimilar from the other team members resulting in a negative influence on their social identity. When this is taken into consideration, an effort is needed to make females feel more welcome to the team as well as give them the resources that they need to be successful in a career field where they are the sexual minority.

The findings of RQ2 are also in accordance with the feminist theory. According to Hughes (2002), the standard that Western society uses to create the standard has been based upon the white, middle-class male. When looking at the gender of those working in a field that is predominated populated by males such as law enforcement, it would be appropriate to consider that simply being assigned to the minority gender in the field would be a cause of stress for the future law enforcement officer. Law enforcement is a stressful field for a vast number of individuals that choose it for a career. However, the

feminist theory would support that this field is more stressful for females over males because of the structure of the environment within which it exists.

Limitations

The steps that were taken to reduce the influence of the limitations was to ask the students the same set of questions and a similar number of follow up questions. An effort was also made to ensure that the sample size was not too large to cause the resulting data to be difficult to code in a way that points the data towards a clear understanding of its relevance to the topic. A need to ensure that the sample size is not so small that it is hard to pick up on trends or themes when coding the data existed as well. Another limitation of this study is that it will not follow these students through their future careers to determine the stress that is perceived by the officers after their swearing in and employment as sworn law enforcement officers. The weakness and gaps in this study are that a limited number of females were enrolled in the class that was invited to participate in the study. Fortunately, all the females in the class voluntarily chose to participate in the study and the gender makeup of the study was similarly representative of the population of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States. The biases that could limit the study's outcome is that the researcher, being female as well, may relate more to the female trainees and the stressors that they are experiencing than the males.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research would be to complete a qualitative phenomenological study on the stress that is experienced after a period working in sworn law enforcement based on gender. Perhaps this same cohort would also represent a

difference between working in a small agency versus a larger one. These results would be best examined by the sworn law enforcement community to make strides towards making the police force more attractive to females. These results would best be disseminated to local, county and state law enforcement agencies.

Implications for Social Change

This study has social change value because it shows that females have more and unique stress than males as law enforcement trainees. This stress comes from how the opinions and views of society, their family and friends, and their peers affects them. This stress also comes from taking care of their family and their future family plans. Efforts need to be made to make females have a sense of belonging and identity in a male dominated field.

A step in that direction would be recruiting efforts that illustrate a female officer in uniform with her family. Also, by informing potential female recruits of how families are taken care of while one is in the career of sworn law enforcement officer. These efforts would illustrate to a potential female officer that it is a career path is supportive of those with a family or future family plans. Another effort that will attract more females to the career would be employment benefits that include child care benefits or subsidies, flexible work schedules that are complementary to an officer's family schedule, and a longer period of paid parental leave. A further positive effort would be for agencies to predetermine valuable roles that are the same for both genders when they are incapacitated for temporary physical situations such as an injury or a pregnancy that they can fill in the department that are not going to get in their way of promotion potential.

Furthermore, from the feminist theoretical perspective, the law enforcement profession is a stressful one as it is but, for females it is more stressful because they are attempting to fit into a role that is and continues to be male dominated. Making this field conform to the needs of females can be done and can be done well as researchers see from the success stories of females in sworn law enforcement. However, by making the role of sworn law enforcement officer more welcoming and desirable for females and their unique needs, more females may be attracted to pursue the career in the future. These efforts may result in strides towards making the police force more representative of the gender of the population of the United States.

Reflection of the Researcher

Approaching this study had personal value for me as a female working in the criminal justice field. Although I have never held the role of sworn law enforcement officer myself, many of my students are sworn law enforcement officers, and I find that I sympathize with what they must endure to achieve their career goals. I thoroughly enjoyed completing this research and interviewing trainees that were planning on becoming sworn officers. I have the unique role of helping them achieve their goals to further their careers as sworn law enforcement officers but, I do not spend time or instruct students while they are in the law enforcement academy, my role comes after that process. It was interesting to study what causes stress to these trainees while they go through the academy to become sworn officers.

The stress that both genders reported was interesting because some stressors that were reported by both genders, I thought would only be reported by females. For

instance, a male reported stress from a jealous significant other being fearful of them having an affair with a future partner or coworker and a male reported stress from his need to overcome a person negative experience with domestic violence. Women both reported this as well but, from a male, it was unexpected.

As a female, I went into this study being more sympathetic to the issues of females mainly because it is what I could relate to as a female myself. The females did have more and unique stressors from the males as I had believed at the beginning of my research, however, what I did not account for was the number of stressors that were similar in both genders. I believe that the students felt comfortable opening up to me in the research as I am not their superior or instructor. However, some students were short with their answers because they simply did not have much stress to report. I had changes in my thinking because of this study because I now realize that the stressors that females experience are present regardless if they have children or not. The females that reported stress from their children were no different from the ones that did not have children because they had stress from the plans to start a family and how it would influence their jobs.

Conclusion

By understanding the nature of stressors on female law enforcement officers at the onset in the training area, those stressors can be controlled for when they start their career as sworn law enforcement officers. A main area of stress for females is how others perceive them as sworn law enforcement officers. Considering that they are the gender minority puts them in situations where they are gender dissimilar to their peers and can

feel as though they are not a member of the team. Also, because the majority of sworn law enforcement officers are males, society, as well as their friends and their peers can have a distorted view of where females fit into the role and this can cause stress on the female trainee when these outside perceptions are shared with the female trainee.

Another main area of stress that female law enforcement trainees experience is the needs of their family and their future family plans. If steps were taken to make the law enforcement profession more focused on the needs of females and the needs of their family, it is likely that more females would be willing to choose the career of a sworn law enforcement officer.

Taking into consideration that law enforcement is a predominately masculine, male dominated profession can cause greater job-related stress to females through discrimination, harassment, or exclusion. Understanding this alone can be a valid reason as to why females are discouraged from pursuing a career in law enforcement over other career options. If agencies can reduce the male dominated perception of sworn law enforcement professionals as well as the actual occurrence of these behaviors by male sworn law enforcement officers, agencies may be able to attract more females to sworn law enforcement roles.

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<u>Appendix A: Interview Questions</u>

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Open-ended questions will be used to elicit responses that will be robust with detailed information. The questions that will be used are based upon the research questions, and then those questions will be elaborated upon to grant access for explanation and exploration of responses given.

Research Questions

RQ 1: How do outside stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include family, friends, social commitments, and home/work balance.

IQ 1: Tour Question (broad) Can you give me examples of areas in your everyday life that cause you to feel stress?

> IQ 1 Follow Up: Did those areas change after your choice to become a sworn law enforcement officer?

IQ 2: Can you give me examples of concerns that your family has had regarding your choice to become a law enforcement officer?

> IQ 2 Follow Up 1: Do your family's concerns include issues that may arise regarding your gender working as a sworn law enforcement officer (i.e., starting and managing a family, career advancement opportunities)?

> IQ 2 Follow Up 2: Do these concerns cause you to feel stress about your choice to become a law enforcement officer?

IQ 3: Can you give me an example of an incident or event that is not job-related that caused you to feel stress about your choice to become a sworn law enforcement officer?

IQ 3 Follow Up: How did that make you feel about your choice to become a sworn law enforcement officer?

IQ 4: Did you feel stress at any time regarding your choice to pursue a career in the law enforcement field with your current and future family plans and obligations? (i.e., becoming a parent, being available for familial obligations, balancing home and work life)

IQ 4 Follow Up: At what point in your pursuit of a career as a sworn law enforcement officer did you first feel this stress?

IQ 4 Follow Up 2: What do you think caused this stress to affect you?

IQ 5: What obstacles do you anticipate will be in your path regarding your future career in law enforcement?

RQ 2: How do job-related stressors affect female law enforcement academy trainees? These stressors could include pressure to succeed, adherence to the scheduling constraints, pressure from their counterparts of a different gender, and possible sexual harassment in the workplace.

IQ 1: Can you explain the job-related stress that you experience during your training to become a sworn law enforcement officer?

IQ 1 Follow Up: Can you give me an example of an incident or event that is job related that caused you to feel stress about your choice to become a sworn law enforcement officer?

IQ 2: What job-related issues in your future career in sworn law enforcement causes you to feel stress?

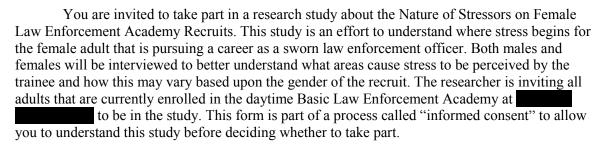IQ 2 Follow Up: Do you think this stress will be self-imposed or may there be others causing this stress?

IQ 3: What elements about a career in policing do you think will be stressful for you in particular?

IQ 3 Follow Up 1: Are there specific job-related stressors that you anticipate based on your gender?

IQ 3 Follow Up 2: Can you elaborate on issues that you think the opposite gender experiences in the policing profession?
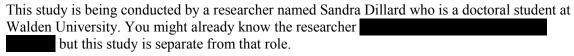
Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

████████████████████████
████████████

January 3, 2019

Dear Sandra Dillard,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Nature of Stressors on Female Law Enforcement Academy Recruits within ████████████████████████████. As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit students from the Basic Law Enforcement Academy for a semi-structured interview. The students will be recruited through the use of a solicitation letter that will be handed out in by the researcher which will accompany a short presentation by the researcher. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

I understand that our organization's responsibilities include: allowing the use of a vacant classroom or office space to conduct the interviews after class is complete. ████████ reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time if circumstances change.

As the primary researcher, you will be responsible for complying with ████████ research policies and requirements.

I understand that you will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

As ████ ████████ Institutional Review Board, I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

████████████ ████████████████████

Appendix C: Adult Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about the Nature of Stressors on Female Law Enforcement Academy Recruits. This study is an effort to understand where stress begins for the female adult that is pursuing a career as a sworn law enforcement officer. Both males and females will be interviewed to better understand what areas cause stress to be perceived by the trainee and how this may vary based upon the gender of the recruit. The researcher is inviting all adults that are currently enrolled in the daytime Basic Law Enforcement Academy at ▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Sandra Dillard who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓ but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to better understand what obstacles are in the path of females who are considering a career as a sworn law enforcement officer. If we understand what those obstacles are, we can attempt help alleviate them and potentially make the road to a career sworn law enforcement officer easier for females to pursue. Females are currently underrepresented as sworn law enforcement officers worldwide with the average number being under 20% of the current law enforcement officer population.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Answer questions in a one on one interview session with the researcher
- This interview is anticipated to take approximately 15-20 minutes
- This is a one-time interview to be scheduled before or after class

Here are some sample questions:
- Can you give me examples of areas in your everyday life that cause you to feel stress?
- Can you give me examples of concerns that your family has had regarding your choice to become a law enforcement officer?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at ▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. This study needs approximately 20 participants. Please note that not all volunteers will be contacted to take part. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether or not they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress or becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The benefits of this study are that you will be contributing to the effort to make the law enforcement community more mindful of how to best assist its sworn law enforcement officers to remain in their role for the length of their career. Your input will provide much needed insight into the perceptions of the law enforcement recruit, an understudied population in criminal justice education and research.

Payment:
Each student that agrees to participate in this study and completes the scheduled interview will receive a 10.00 gift card to Wawa.

Privacy:
Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure through the use of a coding system to identify the subject in lieu of their name. By using a coding system, the researcher is able to assure anonymity and reinforce the confidential nature of the study. Any data that is collected through electronic means will be done on a device that is password protected and all documentation completed on paper along with flash drives will be locked in a secure location. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via text message or phone call at ███████████ or email at ███████████████████████ If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is ████████████████████████████████ and it expires on ████████████████████████.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature