

**LAW ENFORCEMENT PERCEIVED STRESS,
JOB SATISFACTION, AND BURNOUT**

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family; both in the United States and in Ghana. To my parents, Aaron Asare and Juliet Owusua Akwaboah, I thank God every day for having given you the authority to raise me into the exceptional woman that I will soon become. Furthermore, to my brothers, Aaron Twum and Lawrence, I am grateful to have had you both as leaders, supporters, and friends throughout my life's journey. I cannot imagine a world without older brothers and I am grateful to have had you both. Lastly, I dedicate this written work to all the past, present, and future students at Paula Eve's School in Chantan- Accra, Ghana. It is true when our ancestors once said, "It takes a village to raise a child," and with this in mind, the many blessings of life will come forth your way from those who are close to you.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Law Enforcement Perceived Stress, Job Satisfaction, and
Burnout

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Law enforcement is widely known as one of the most demanding and unpredictable occupations, and one where extensive job stress and burnout put law enforcement officers' mental and physical health at further risk. This study examined months on the job as an officer, organizational support, and gender differences as predictors of burnout and job satisfaction. As predicted, months on the job as an officer lead to job burnout and organizational support lead to job satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that there were no differences between male and female perceived officer stress. Several research implications and suggestions of the findings are discussed.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is an ample amount of interest and concern regarding the well-being of law enforcement officers. It has been well established that stress within police work fosters several negative consequences (Carlan & Nored, 2008). As a result, a growing amount of research has been examined over the years identifying specific factors that are correlated with stress (Abdollahi, 2002; Anshel, 2000; van Gelderen, Heuven, Veldhoven, Zeelenburg, & Croon, 2007; Violanti & Aron, 1995). With police work among the most demanding and dangerous occupations in modern society (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006), high levels of stress are often experienced by law enforcement officers which induce a plethora of health and on the job consequences.

Job stress, which is the psychological discomfort and physical tension from exposure to a variation of stressors within the occupation (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985), has been said to be a predictor of burnout (Maslach, 1982). Inherent stressors, and more precisely, organizational stressors, are considered common contributors to the

psychological problems exhibited by law enforcement officers (Abdollahi, 2002). The negative impact on the mental well-being of an officer can cause a sense of job dissatisfaction that is often projected as poor job performance and, in some cases, mental and physical health complications.

Burnout is one of the most notable consequences that results "from the long-term imbalance of demands and resources, from prolonged job stress" (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996, p. 317). Burnout is a stress-related syndrome that often affects personnel working with demanding populations that require high interpersonal communication, idiosyncratic situations, and highly loaded emotional work. An officer is responding to the chronic emotional strain of extensively dealing with people who are in need of assistance (Alexander, 1999); emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment can occur as a result of an individual experiencing burnout. Such consequences can affect work performance detrimentally in ways that can ultimately cause the individual who is experiencing the discomfort, as well as those around him or her, to fall victim to danger.

Problem Statement

One of the major problems faced by law enforcement officers who experience stress is the overall negligence towards the underlying concept of mental and physical health. Law enforcement officers who fall prey to high levels of stress are oftentimes reluctant to deal with the symptoms in an appropriate manner. Oftentimes, officers will choose maladaptive coping strategies such as substance abuse, smoking, gambling, and withdrawal from friends and family in order to cope with the interim negative effects of stress and burnout (He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002). In many cases, regardless of such troubling consequences, a number of law enforcement officers will continue to interact with their communities on a daily basis, which poses a high risk of danger to themselves as well as the population. This poses a threat to themselves as well as the community because the projection of maladaptive behaviors can be unpredictable, and therefore unstable.

It is clear that, law enforcement officers are an occupational group at risk for work-related stress injuries (Patterson, Chung, & Swan, 2014). They are frequently exposed to traumatic events; therefore, months on the job as an officer may add to the distinct formation of burnout.

The constant social interaction between the officer and those in need is one of the main factors that separates the concept of burnout from every day stress. A pattern inclusive of emotional and successive emotional exhaustion is the foundation of the burnout syndrome (Alexander, 1999).

In addition to the dilemmas faced by law enforcement officers, lack of organizational support also fosters a great deal of stress. Adverse working environments, autocratic leadership, and lack of recognition are all contributing factors to those who experience stress on the job. The constant need for organizational support increases the outcome of perceived job dissatisfaction (Violanti & Aron, 1993). Furthermore, gender specific stress such as sexual harassment and the underestimation of physical abilities can add to the increase of stress and burnout on law enforcement officers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to elucidate long-term stress among male and female law enforcement officers as a predictor of burnout. This thesis also sought to contribute to the context of the steady developing literature on law enforcement occupational stress, as it could bring forth

insight to organizational support as a predictor of job satisfaction. Furthermore, understanding whether there are differences between male and female perceived stress was conducive to understanding gender differences – which could infer a difference in interventions.

Another important consideration integral to this study was understanding whether there were preventative measures that could have been put in place in order to manage stress, job dissatisfaction, and burnout that would deter the negative consequences that were experienced by law enforcement officers. The decrease of maladaptive behavior such as misconduct and unhealthy coping are essential to the safety of officers as well as the community.

Research Questions/Objectives

Archival data was utilized for the exploration of the following provoking questions:

1. Do the number of months on the job as a police officer predict burnout?
2. Does organizational support predict job satisfaction?
3. Is there a gender difference between males and females in officer stress?

The expectation was to understand the various themes that were associated with months on the job, organizational support, as well as exposure to stress across genders and how it affected law enforcement officers' overall well-being.

Understanding the abundance of stress and the manifestation of its outcomes can help constitute greater findings in the discussion of law enforcement health. Researchers, consultants, law enforcement departments, evaluators, doctors, and other professionals can subsume such data in order to implement further coping and treatment options. In doing so, an annex of new discoveries can help manage the amount of stress experienced by officers and their communities.

Delimitations

This study was conducted by using archival data analysis. The data included and focused on the following: male and female law enforcement officers (interchangeably used with the term police officers) ranging from different ethnicities (i.e., White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and other), age groups, educational backgrounds, and marital statuses. The exclusion of other data that was

not consequential to the study was made in order to simplify the arrangement of the data used in this study.

Assumptions

Stress as a predictor of burnout among male and female law enforcement officers is still largely unknown. Research in the past has indicated that a great amount of stress is experienced at elevated levels with high demanding professions such as law enforcement. With that being said, the assumption is that the negative effects of stress for extended periods of time add to the development of aversive responses (e.g., thoughts of quitting, cynical attitude toward others, etc.) that could ultimately lead to burnout in law enforcement officers. Further assumptions have also been made, including that organizational support can lead to job satisfaction. Nevertheless, it has also been hypothesized that different genders experience stress in dissimilar ways; for example, females report higher levels of stress than males. This assumption warrants further consideration into the specific contributing factors.

Definition of Key Terms

Stress: Stress is defined as a threat - real or implied, to the physiological parameters necessary for

survival, in existence of ongoing sequence of stressful events (Zingman, Hodgson, Alekseev, & Terzic, 2003).

Physiological Stress: Physiological stress is indicated by an unpleasant sensory, emotional, and subjective experience that is associated with potential threat to body tissue and bodily threat (Price, 2000).

Psychosocial Stress: Psychosocial stress is induced by situations of social threat including social evaluation, social exclusion, and achievement situations claiming goal-directed performance (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004; Pruessner et al., 2010).

General Adaptation Syndrome: The general adaptation syndrome occurs in three distinct phases: the alarm stage, the resistance stage, and the exhaustion stage (Rapo & Piot-Ziegler, 2013).

Eustress: Eustress is defined as a positive psychological response to a stressor, indicated by the existence of positive psychological states (Nelson & Simmons, 2011).

Job Stress: Job stress is defined as a psychological discomfort or tension resulting from exposure to work place stressors (Cullen et al., 1985).

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping: The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping theory allows for the possibility of cognitive and appraisal processes to evaluate harm and or threat of a potential stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Appraisal: Appraisal is the cognitive mediator of a stress' reaction (Gonzalez-Ramirez & Hernandez, 2007).

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): The PSS assesses the degree to which situations in an individual's life are assessed as stressful (Cohen et al., 1983).

External Stressors: External stressors are stressors that are beyond an individual's control and are induced by environmental conditions (Bhagat, 1983).

Inherent Stressors: Inherent stressors, also known as operational experiences, can be understood as the daily routine of law enforcement operations which may include the involvement in violence, time pressure, or the responsibility for actions (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006).

Organizational Stressors: Organizational stressors may include stressors such as departmental politics, irregular shifts, autocratic leadership and lack of opportunity for promotion and specialization (Bergmen, Christopher, & Bowen, 2016).

Women in Law Enforcement: Women in law enforcement may experience stressors relating to feeling less valued in in their organization or department due to their identified gender as well as the feeling of feeling non-inclusion with their male counterparts at work (Veldman, Meeussen, Van Laar, & Phalet, 2017).

Shift Work: Shift work is a term that refers to a range of work hour arrangements involving many shifts that differ on a continual basis that requires the worker to rest at erratic times of the day (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010).

Burnout: Burnout has been defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work in highly interpersonal fields (Maslach, 1987).

Law Enforcement: According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS] (2016), law enforcement describes the individuals and agencies that are responsible for enforcing laws, maintaining public order and public safety.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is the subjective and or perceived reflection of whether an individual's needs are or not being met by a particular job (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2002).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI): In order to measure an individual's perceived burnout experiences, an instrument developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was contrived and is referred to as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI consists of three sub-scales that exemplify the following dimensions: 1. Exhaustion a.k.a. Emotional Exhaustion (e.g., intellectual, emotional, or physical) 2. Depersonalization (e.g., emotional detachment), and 3. Personal Accomplishment (e.g., reduced personal accomplishment, helplessness, and low self-esteem) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, 1982).

Misconduct: Police misconduct is defined as the wrongdoing committed by a law enforcement personnel in relation to his or her official duties (Palmiotto, 2001).

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Nature and Origin of Law Enforcement

Modern day law enforcement can be highlighted and traced back to the earliest parts of the nation's history when autocracy leadership led the lives of its citizens. Before the means of today's police infrastructure, informal policing, in which community members would take equal responsibility for providing protection and overseeing order for their community, led the forefront of policing (Lundman, 1980). Injustices involving power and control led to a change from the informal policing structure into the more formal assembly (Lundman, 1980).

Johnson and Cox (2004) stated in their work that early American policing was highly influenced by the choice that public safety and the mandating of laws were to be the responsibility of the local government. This was the start of local entities decentralizing sectors that included and were not limited to agencies, departments, and coalitions. Systematic order granted policing on a federal, local, and state level in response to the nature of policing progressively changing due to the advancement of

technology, political uprising, and police professionalism (Walker, 1999). As a result, a quasi-militaristic design that centered on crime prevention, strategic patrol tactics, and formidable control was developed (Walker, 1999). This design accounts for the law enforcement system that governs much of America today.

According to the BJS (2016), law enforcement is best described as, the individuals and agencies that are responsible for enforcing laws, maintaining public order, and safety. In addition, the term *law enforcement* also includes the prevention and detection of a crime, and an investigation and the apprehension of individuals suspected of law violation (BJS, 2016). With the many roles that are mandated by law enforcement, officers are often faced with many threats that challenge their safety and wellbeing (Mumford, Taylor, & Kubu, 2015).

Academic literature on the topic of law enforcement stress is presently still underway. Although police work is knowingly one of the most stressful jobs in the United States, many individuals are unaware of the magnitude of stress that law enforcement officers encounter within their line of work (Bergman, Christopher, & Bowen, 2016). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2016),

states that the work environment of an officer can be physically demanding, dangerous and stressful; law enforcement officers, in particular, have one of the highest rates of bodily injuries and illnesses of all occupations.

The nature of police work can eventually lead to several dissatisfying and unhealthy outcomes. In fact, reports state law enforcement officers experience significantly higher rates of dysfunction such as drug abuse and marital divorce that resulting from occupational stressors than the general population (Chopko, Palmieri, & Facemire, 2014). In addition, mortality and morbidity rates of officers exceed the general population by far (Violanti, Vena, & Petralia, 1998).

For decades, advances to understanding such concepts were made in order to dismiss misconceptions about the health and safety of law enforcement officers; however, with the social imbalance created by public apathy, awareness is oftentimes dismissed. Nevertheless, explanations for the present state of law enforcement safety are largely attributed to employment screening and occupational assessments that often take place within the agencies and departments (Blau, 1994). In order to

highlight law enforcement stress as well as other key concepts, it is important to first divulge literature highlighting the foundation of stress. The present review of stress, job satisfaction, and burnout will focus primarily on the context of law enforcement officers; however, other academic disciplines will be reviewed in conjunction.

Stress

During a lifetime, most individuals may find themselves face to face with some type of social, physiological, psychological, and or emotional stressors in various situations. The stress model made up of the General Adaptation Syndrome was introduced in the early 1930s by endocrinologist Hans Selye (Selye, 1936) and has been adopted and used to explain a distinct bodily response that is all too familiar to man-kind. Such familiarity is known to most as stress.

Selye (1950) defined stress as a threat - real or implied - to the physiological parameters necessary for survival, in existence with an ongoing sequence of stressful events (as cited in Zingman, Hodgson, Alekseev, & Terzic, 2003). The general adaptation syndrome, which is initiated by brain recognition of a threat, underlies the

flight or fight reaction (Zingman et al., 2003) that is experienced after an alteration of bodily functions. According to the general adaptation syndrome, the body's response to stress occurs in three distinct phases of intensity and duration (Rapo & Piot-Ziegler, 2013). This triadic model is exemplified as

1. The alarm stage: Adrenal cortex hypertrophy provides energy to conquer and fight stress (e.g., The body prepares for a perceived threat).
2. The resistance stage: Involved in resolving the source of stress, leaving the body to return to its usual state (e.g., If stress persists, the body builds up a tolerance to its effects).
3. The exhaustion stage: The causes of stress are beginning to prolong and the body's ability to adapt has depleted. (e.g., The ability to memorize and think are starting to become impaired and anxiety and depression may arise).

The removal of the stressor in the first or second stages will eliminate the symptoms experienced in third stage.

Selye (1950) concluded this response theory by taking note of the interactions between rats and external stimuli. Experiments on rats demonstrated that if the organism is

severely damaged by acute agents such as exposure to cold or surgical injury a typical syndrome would appear (Selye, 1936). With this means of observation, Selye noticed that specific neurological, physiological, and endocrine modifications were made when an organism experienced stress (Lovallo, 2005). Thus, exposure to prolonged periods of stress in humans could manifest into an array of health problems such as cancer, infectious diseases, and ulcers (Selye, 1936).

Selye (1975) later highlighted an important stress response; eustress. In his literature, Selye (1974) stated that stress could have a positive impact on the body and the well-being of an individual. In the absence of distress, eustress is present to promote positive growth (Parker & Ragsdale, 2015).

Eustress is characterized as a positive psychological response to a stressor, indicated by the existence of positive psychological states (Nelson & Simmons, 2011). These positive states include emotions as well attitudes such as positive affect, meaningfulness, and satisfaction (Parker & Ragsdale, 2015). An increase in self-efficacy, improvement in cognitive processing and positive affect, all contribute to rebuilding other psychological resources

(Gross et al., 2011). According to this perspective, eustress contributes to a healthier well-being and better performance in social and professional settings (Edwards & Cooper, 1988).

Gross et al. (2011) pointed out from past research findings (Aspinwall, 1998; Isen, 2004; Isen & Reeve, 2005) that the allocation of cognitive processing and decision making could deplete within the individual, causing fatigue, and in chronic cases, distress. Stress is presented only if and when an event threatens the attainment of important goals or jeopardizes highly valued expectations (Gonzalez- Ramirez & Hernandez, 2007). The beliefs and expectations that an individual set forth constitute the degree of stress that may be imposed on him or herself. In fact, when high-risk professionals such as sexual assault nurse examiners, domestic violence workers, correctional health professionals, and law enforcement officers experience high levels of distress, their perception of life events may become less clear (Munger, Savage, & Panosky, 2015).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed a model referred to as the transactional model of stress and coping. This model allowed for the possibility of cognitive and

appraisal processes to evaluate harm and or threat of a potential stressful event (Rapo & Piot-Ziegler, 2013). This model defined the concept that is referred to as perceived stress. Thus, cognitive appraisal is the focal point within the transactional viewpoint (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Appraisal is the personal interpretation of an event or situation. It is a universal process by which people use personal evaluations about their surrounding environment for the betterment of their personal state and well-being (Gonzalez-Ramirez & Hernandez, 2007). In this case, perceived stress is seen to be linked to reduced life satisfaction (Matheny et al., 2002).

With stress being an essential part of life functioning, many areas within psychology have covered the topic of stress. Particularly in health psychology, Sarason and Sarason (1987) noted that researchers have reported evidence that the immunological system in human beings is affected by psychological, behavioral, and environmental factors (as cited in Gonzalez-Ramirez & Hernandez, 2007). In addition, health researchers have also referred to stress as a set of fluctuating perceived helplessness and discomfort that confronts an individual with intractable

events and challenges which intrude in their everyday lives (Rapo & Piot-Ziegler, 2013).

Of the many different concepts of stress derived from differential perspectives, the development assessments were introduced to add validity to the many observations being made. As a result, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) offers a self-report measure based on the psychological conceptualization of stress. The PSS assesses the degree to which situations in an individual's life are evaluated as stressful (Cohen et al., 1983). It specifically measures the extent to which life has been experienced as intractable, unpredictable, and overwhelming in the past month (Klein et al., 2016). Defined as a unidimensional construct, perceived stress is the foundation of the original scale that consisted of 14 items (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). Over the years, the PSS has been tested in numerous and various studies investigating the association of perceived stress (Klein et al., 2016) since its emergence in 1983. Perceived control, social support, and self-efficacy are consistent variables that assessed on the scale.

The importance of highlighting the different circumstances that cause a stress response in the individual holds a tremendous amount of insight as to how stress is elicited and perceived among different people. It is apparent that stress is a response that stems from an array of factors. Genetics, a change in the environment, psychological or mental strain, failed perceptions, social contact, and compensatory reactions are a few of the many stress induced responses that can occur within an individual (Goldstein, 1995; Seyle, 1950). Williams and Huber (1986) provide an extensive list of the symptoms of stress. Those symptoms include:

constant fatigue, low energy level, recurring headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, chronically bad breath, sweaty hands or feet, dizziness, high blood pressure, pounding heart, constant inner tension, inability to sleep, temper outbursts, hyperventilation, moodiness, irritability and restlessness, inability to concentrate, increased aggression, compulsive eating, chronic worrying, anxiety or apprehensiveness, inability to relax, growing feelings of inadequacy, increase in

defensiveness, dependence on tranquilizers, excessive use of alcohol, and excessive smoking. (p. 246)

A brief look at the causes of stress sets the foundation of understanding the ramifications that can take place within the individual who is under stress, as well as the effects upon others around.

There are two types of stress responses: physiological and psychosocial stress. Psychosocial stress refers to life events (stressors), while physiological stress refers to the perturbation of the homeostasis (Gonzalez-Ramirez & Hernandez, 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Psychosocial stressors may be referred to as internal stressors while physiological can be referred to as external stressors. Internal stressors are non-specific fears, which arise from an individual's perceptions of environmental threats. Such fears are indicated by an unpleasant sensory, emotional, and or subjective experiences that are associated with potential threat to body tissue and bodily threat (Kogler et al., 2015). The American Psychological Association [APA] (2013) exemplifies those bodily conditions as musculoskeletal tension, respiratory problems such as rapid breathing or

hyperventilation, cardiovascular issues, fight or flight arousal, etc.

External stressors are induced by environmental conditions and are beyond an individual's control (Bhagat, 1983). These stressors are induced by situations of social threat including social evaluation, social exclusion, and achievement situations claiming goal-directed performance (Kogler et al., 2015). If the gratification of these needs are somehow threatened, stress is induced (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). The need to be affiliated with others and to maintain the social self are core psychological needs (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). In situations that challenge psychosocial and physiological stress, survival is threatened (Kogler et al., 2015).

Job Stress. Law Enforcement officers are routinely exposed to high levels of job stress (Powell & Tomy, 2011). Cullen et al. (1985) defined job stress as a psychological discomfort or tension resulting from exposure to workplace stressors. In addition, job stress can be defined as the adverse physical and emotional responses of an individual that occur when the job requirements do not match the capabilities and resources of the employee (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014).

Job stress occurs when the source of the stress exceeds the individual's capacity to withstand (Yanan, Tianhong, & Quanquan, 2014). Professionals who work in high risk and demanding jobs may develop stress that is specific to their daily experiences among the interactions held within the job. Unlike most professions, law enforcement officers experience diverse negative physical and psychological experiences (Pasillas, Foltelette, & Perumean-Chaney, 2006). Research into the effects of law enforcement stress has mostly focused on deleterious effects that emanate from operational stressors (e.g., routine traffic accidents, domestic violence cases, etc.) (Burke & Paton, 2006).

Nevertheless, growing literature has indicated that the highly-imposed stress aspects of law enforcement work are just as likely to derive from experiences dealt with organizational standards within the workplace (Abdollahi, 2002; Burke & Paton, 2006; Paton, Violanti, & Dunning, 2000). Several studies have highlighted the extent to which job stress may arise from organizational structure as well as job expectations enforced by the organization (Abdollahi, 2002; Patterson, Chung, & Swan, 2014; Taris, Schreurs, & Van Iersel-Van Stilfhout, 2001).

Law Enforcement Stressors. For many decades, criminal justice scholars and psychologists have explored the causes and consequences of police stress, concluding that law enforcement is a highly stressful occupation (Anderson, Litzenberger, & Plecas, 2002; Carlan & Nored, 2008; Dantzker, 1987; Fell, Richard, & Wallace, 1980). When comparing law enforcement officers to other emergency personnel, police work tends to have more of a negative impact on the mental well-being of the individual (Pasillas, Foltelette, & Perumean-Chaney, 2006). In a study conducted by Brough (2004), organizational and traumatic stressors among primary emergency service organizations (police, fire, and ambulance services) were compared. In the study, it was found that police work predicted psychological strain in a different manner from both firefighters and paramedics (Brough, 2004). As noted, stress in law enforcement has been attributed to a variety of factors (Carlan & Nored, 2008). When performing police work, various emotionally demanding interactions take place (van Gelderen et al., 2007). For instance, psychological injury from exposure to traumatic case material may occur (Powell & Tomyn, 2011). For example, law enforcement officers are five times more likely to witness traumatic

events than other professionals in the field of child abuse investigations (Brough, 2004), leaving officers susceptible to nightmares, elevated levels of anxiety, and disturbing flashbacks.

In an effort to understand law enforcement stress, Symonds (1970) proposed one of the first parsimonious models that exemplified the sources of stress. He developed two categories that are described as the nature of police work and the nature of the organization (Symonds, 1970). One of the first empirical studies in this area was conducted by Kroes, Margolis, & Hurrell (1974). In his research, he supplied a questionnaire to 100 patrol officers, asking four questions about police work in relation to their personal feelings of stress. The outcome of the study was not significant due to the general nature of questions and limitation to the Cincinnati Police Department (Kroes, 1976). However, this particular study, along with others, paved the way for the classifications of law enforcement stress that is used today.

Inherent Stressors. One of the classifications used to exemplify law enforcement perceived stress is referred to as inherent stress. Inherent stressors, also known as operational experiences, can be understood as the daily

routine of law enforcement operations which include the involvement of violent occurrences, time pressure, and the responsibility of actions (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006). This in another sense can be explained as the nature of police work (Symonds, 1970). For example, the nature of police work often compels law enforcement officers to display certain emotions in order to appear professional (van Gelderen et al., 2007). The stigmatization surrounding law enforcement oftentimes reinforces this behavior. It is therefore not surprising that the suppression and expression of a variety of emotions is a substantial factor in police work performance (van Gelderen et al., 2007). This type of quintessential officer reflects the police culture (Dick, 2000) that is ingrained within society today. In doing so, these types of experiences expose them to an array of psychological and organizational stressors, such as the assignment of disagreeable duties, inadequate or poor quality equipment, and confusion of duties (Pasillas et al., 2006).

Inherent stressors for many years have assumed to be the principle determinant of adverse impacts on law enforcement officers' well-being (Burke & Paton, 2006). However, until recently, literature has constituted that

operational experiences are rather hassles that make differential contributions (Burke & Paton, 2006) to both positive and negative outcomes (Hart, Wearing, & Heady, 1993). This distinction has been identified as significant due to the often-positive experiences that may sustain the role of an officer. For example, an officer can save a member of the public or testify in court, which could add to the betterment of the state's prosecution. Operational instruction adds to the identity and the expectation of the officer which constitutes positivity of the role of an officer therefore, in some cases inherent stressors may be the driving force behind an officer (Dunning, 2003).

Organizational Stressors. Organizational stressors emanate from the organization's overall structural makeup. The structural make up of an organization may be threatened by inadequate leadership, insufficient resources, or an absence of career advancement opportunities (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006). The organizational climate of these stressors also encompasses the bureaucratic and political aspects of organizational life. Core aspects of organizational culture include supervisors and managers who perform in an autocratic manner (Burke & Paton, 2006). As seen in many cases, most officers are expected to tolerate

particular organizational structures assuming that most ranking officers have come through the ranks, therefore they are understanding of the conventionalized culture (Alexander, 1999). Ayres (1990) concluded that several practices set by management induced high levels of stress among law enforcement officers. Those practices included quasi-militaristic models of management (Alexander, 1999), such as autocratic and hierarchical structure, lack of input on policy and decision making, lack of administrative support, adverse working schedules such as shift work, unfair disciplines, performance evaluations, and promotion practices.

The actions conducted by the law enforcement organization provides the context in which the officers will interpret their job role and experiences (Paton & Violanti, & Smith, 2003). The procedures placed must align to the employees' occupational expectations and experiences (Burke & Paton, 2006). This balance between expectations and guidelines promotes occupational coherence for working personnel (Burke & Paton, 2006). Dunning (2003) states that coherence allows the actions of employees to be grounded with purpose, identity, as well as hold a context of the developing future. This allows the organization to function

in a more coherent and effective manner because all of the expectations are clear and precise (Burke & Paton, 2006). Prior studies also conclude that organizational factors contribute more to the extent of perceived stress rather than specific job related duties and factors (Manzoni & Eisner).

Social Stressors. The death of a partner, taking a life during the line of duty, and other violent injuries constitute some of the stressful critical events experienced by law enforcement officers while on the job (Menard & Arter, 2014). In addition, critical incidents outside of the line of duty may occur, thus creating aversive reactions to stress both on and off the job. Critical incidents may include situations that are outside of the usual scope of experiences of an officer that have the potential to exhaust the officer's coping mechanisms and psychological defense barriers (Menard & Arter, 2014). An example of social stressors includes isolation from family due to shift work, conflicting schedules, rejection by friends and family, as well as public apathy and verbal abuse (Anshel, 2000). Experiences outside of the job can harness an officer's perception of stress and can ultimately affect his or her job performance.

Shifts Work and Rotating Shifts. Shift work is a term that refers to a range of work hour arrangements involving many shifts that differ on a constant basis that requires the shift worker to rest at unpredictable times of the day (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010). According to Hurrell (1986), rotating shift work was adopted by police departments assuming that it would ensure adequate numbers of officers on each shift in order to prevent corruption (Alexander, 1999). However, this assumption was found to be more detrimental than helpful for most law enforcement agencies and their officers. Many studies conducted have acknowledged the harmful outcomes that can occur among individuals who are assigned to such work arrangements (Brough & Williams, 2007; Cullen et al., 1985; van Gelderen, 2007). Fatigue due to lack of sleep and constant disruption of wake and sleep cycles can cause officers to lose energy when patrolling and securing the communities.

Sleep is eminent for generalized health and functional capacity (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010). Sallinen and Kecklund found that loss of sleep results in disturbances in many basic bodily functions, such as glucose metabolism excretion of hormones and dysfunctions of the autonomic nervous and immunological systems. Like many individuals

have experienced at some point of their lives, sleep restriction over a period of time can result in various side effects such as headaches, loss of cognitive functioning, and irritable moods. Over time, such sleep deprivation can result in a risk of diseases such as coronary heart disease (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010). For instance, when a law enforcement officer has inadequate amounts of rest, this can result in lower energy levels at the start of the work shift (van Gelderen et al., 2007), increasing the level of psychological strain.

Sleep restriction has also been shown to affect basic cognitive functioning and alertness (Goel, Dunner, & Dings, 2009). This serves as one of the many explanations as to why such effects of sleep loss can increase the risk of occupational accidents (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010). Incidences of unintended sleep and severe sleepiness during shifts can occur, thus resulting in occupational hazards (e.g., use of force, misconduct, failed judgement). The prevalence of severe sleepiness rates from 50% and 25% in both the night and early morning shifts, while the rate for sleepiness during the day and evening shift is around 5% (Harma, Sallinen, Ranta, Mutanen, & Muller, 2002). The daytime oriented circadian rhythm of alertness that is

innate within human beings constitutes for the explanation as to why it is difficult to sleep during the day and to be alert during the night (Sallinen & Kecklund, 2010).

Nevertheless, the timing of an officer's shift is not the only significant factor in the officer's sleep cycle. Knauth and Hornberger (2003) stated that there are several other important shift system characteristics and they are noted as: the direction and speed of shift rotation, the length of the recovery period in between two successive shifts, the distribution of rest days during the shift system, the length of shifts, the number of consecutive work shifts, and the timing of change-over. Thus, such disruption may add to the dysfunction of an officer's work performance.

Job Satisfaction

Outcomes of stress include psychological strains; one noted psychological strain that is often defined as a deviation from normal functioning is dissatisfaction (Edwards, Caplan, & Harrison, 1998; Yanan et al., 2014). In these terms, job stress is viewed as an antecedent of job satisfaction (Yanan et al., 2014). Job satisfaction is defined as the subjective and or perceived reflection of whether an individual's needs are or are not being met by a

particular job (Lambert et al., 2002). Job satisfaction represents the interpersonal evaluation of job characteristics such as working conditions, cooperation with workmates and or supervisors, promotional opportunities, organizational structure, etc. (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006). Satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction are both seen as a function of a relationship between what an individual wants as well as perceives to be getting from the job (Yanan et al., 2014).

Job dissatisfaction can derive from a plethora of problems within the work environment itself, as well as an individual's perspective on changes at the job, emotion irregularity, and community pressures. Job dissatisfaction can lead to several consequences for law enforcement agencies, such as increased truancy and turnover of law enforcement officers (Hartley, Davila, Marquart, & Mullings, 2013). When the truancy and turnover rate is high, morale in the workplace may suffer, thus affecting the agency as a whole. For instance, frequent turnover results in a loss of officer expertise, which will lead to an increased overhead expenditure incurred from having to train new officers (Hartley et al., 2013). Past research suggests that satisfied employees are a lot more efficient,

likely to minimize their sick leave time, and have lower turn-over intentions (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolntsky, 2002). In addition, higher levels of job satisfaction have been associated with greater compliance with rules, deadlines and goals, more positivity towards the job role, and increased departmental commitment (Hartley et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2002).

Social support is also a critical determination of job satisfaction. Lack of social support in both an officer's micro and macro work community can induce stress and dissatisfaction. Past research has indicated that a major source of law enforcement stress experienced emanates from the unbalanced relationship with their supervisor or departmental bosses (Abdollahi, 2002; Alexander, 1999). Not being able to receive support from administration can cause a disconnection between the officer and their organization. Reports of lower levels of stress and higher levels of satisfaction are given by officers when trust has been established with their supervisor as well as when support is given (Hartley et al., 2013).

Cohen and Wills (1985) stated that social support bolsters the perceived ability to deal with imposed demands and prevents a situation from being appraised as highly

stressful (Alexander, 1999). When officers are dissatisfied and lack social support from their agencies, adverse judgment may develop, which can often stand in the way of protecting and serving the community. Therefore, police officers who are psychologically healthy are far more likely to provide high-quality services to their communities (Karmena, Gentz, Hays, Bohl-Penrod, & Greene, 2011). Research shows that officers with poor social support report more severe symptoms of PTSD, along with many other psychological strains (Stephens, Long, & Miller, 1997).

Gender in Law Enforcement

Interest in gender-related perceived stress is highly warranted due to its overwhelming impact on law enforcement functionality. It has been long-standing that women in many male dominant professions experience high levels of stress. Martin (1991, 1992) highlights some of the stressors experienced by female officers. Lack of acceptance, negative attitudes from male officers, sexual harassment, and feeling the need to prove oneself are some of the stressors perceived by female officers. Martin (1991) reported that there was a gross underrepresentation of women in law enforcement which significantly affected

opportunities for growth (promotional opportunities) and future recruitment. According to the BJS (2010), women represent about 20% of sworn officers in the United States. While progression towards increasing the number of female officers have been made, many of the same stressors are still prevalent (Violanti et al., 2016). Women are still very much minorities within this profession, which in many cases, is likely to contribute to the stress of the job (Menard & Arter, 2014).

Morash, Kwak, and Haarr (2006) found that women officers reported significantly higher levels of harassment, bias, underestimation of physical abilities, language harassment, and lack of influence than their male counterparts. Kurtz (2008) found that women officers were more likely to report that they were treated differently by supervisors (administration) due to their gender. Haarr (1997) reported that women felt that male officers questioned their abilities to complete tasks as well or as effectively fulfil the requirements of the job. Furthermore, Haarr (2005) found harassment and gender discrimination as a primary factor in female recruitment dropout.

Prior studies have had mixed reviews concerning whether the stress experienced across genders was embedded in nature or simply a response to a high stress environment (Kurtz, 2008). Nonetheless, in a recent study conducted by Yoo and Franke (2010), it was found that female police officers had higher levels of stress than male police officers as well as higher levels of hypercholesterolemia and diabetes than the general female population. Contrary to these findings, other research has found contradictory support in regards to women having higher stress levels (Kurtz, 2012). Worden (1993) found little difference in the way men and women saw their roles, clientele, or departments. Research findings in Morash and Harr (1995) found unique stressors for women officers; however, observed stress levels were overall the same for men and women.

Nevertheless, external factors outside of the job such as family life may present as a unique stressor for both women and men (Kurtz, 2012). Stress resulting from problematic family relationships is; however, reported at higher levels than males; in addition, female officers indicate that stress from their work duties is related to family and partner relationship problems (Menard & Arter,

2014). Prior research also indicates that women are still managing the vast majority of feminized labor tasks regardless of their outside professional roles, thus, adding to their professional stressors (Kurtz, 2012). In this case, women may experience greater levels of stress stemming from both the workplace and their external social networks.

Burnout

The adaptation process that is accompanied by mental and physical symptoms is referred to as stress; however, burnout can be considered as the final stage in a breakdown in adaptation that results from the long-term imbalance of prolonged job stress (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). In the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD), 10th revision, burnout is coded as Z73.0, problems related to life management difficulty and is defined as a state of vital exhaustion (as cited in Ratnakaran, Prabhakaran, & Karunakaran, 2016). Freudenberger (1974) initially identified the concept of burnout after making observations in a free clinic where he worked. He noted how the depletion of energy, loss of motivation, and commitment affected most of the staff (both paid and volunteer personnel) (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). In

his article on staff burnout, Freudenberger indicated that those who were highly committed and dedicated were the most susceptible to burnout. Furthermore, he defined the behavioral cues (inability to control feelings, frustration and quick anger, paranoia, rigid thinking, negativity, risk-taking behavior, depression) and physical attributes (headaches, fatigue, insomnia, stomach pains, persistent illness) as characteristics that signified burnout.

After sparked interest towards the way in which people in the human services field coped with emotional arousal on the job, Christina Maslach (1976), a social psychologist, later adopted the term burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). In one of the first major studies investigating this phenomenon, she generalized the term burnout to include health service professionals who worked intensely with others, learning about the psychological, social, and or physical needs of individuals (Maslach, 1976). Short of a decade later, Maslach and Jackson (1981) qualified burnout as a syndrome that entailed emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that could occur among individuals who did work that involved people (Maslach, 1987). It was a negative response to the continuous emotional strain of extensively servicing others

who were in troubled situations and resulted in discomfort, dysfunction, and/or negative consequences (Maslach, 1982).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory. Burnout is quite unique because the stress derives from the social interactions between the worker and the recipient. In other words, burnout is an interpersonal experience involving feelings and expectations (Maslach, 1982). The MBI, a 22 item self-report inventory consisting of three sub-scales, is a widely-used instrument used to measure burnout in individuals. These subscales include Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and (reduced) Personal Accomplishment.

Emotional Exhaustion. Farber (1983), noted that burnout consists of feelings of hopelessness, physical depletion, emotional drain, negative attitudes towards work in general, and disillusionment. Further discussion states that burnout on extreme levels represents a breaking point where the ability to cope with the environment is obstructed (Alexander, 1999). When this is experienced, emotional exhaustion (or fatigue), feelings of lack of energy, and lower work activities arise (Volpe et al., 2014). The Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale describes feelings of emotional exhaustion as well as the exhaustion level of one's work; higher mean scores in this subscale

correspond to higher degrees of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Depersonalization. The Depersonalization sub-scale describes what is characterized as the unfeeling and impersonal response towards an individual's recipients of care (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Higher mean scores in this subscale correspond to higher degrees of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Depersonalization refers to the development of negative attitudes towards an individual's work environment (Volpe et al., 2014). According to Maslach (1976), individuals that work with others tend to cope with the stress of burnout by a form of distancing that is detrimental to both themselves as well as their clients. Depersonalization can manifest itself in an individual by having a callous attitude toward people who are around (Hollet-Haudebert, Mulki, & Fournier, 2011). The development of a cynical attitude, blaming others for creating difficulties, labeling clients in diagnostic terms (i.e., "the disenfranchised," "my caseload") and an aversive demeanor towards work are often results of depersonalization (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Professionals can also distance themselves by minimizing contact and avoiding any conversations or

interactions with others. They can exhibit this by creating strict boundaries between work and their personal lives and minimizing physical contact (e.g., standing at a distance, neglecting to shake someone's hand). Applying stereotypes and generalizing others can also lead to detachment.

Personal Accomplishment. The Personal Accomplishment sub-scale describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in an individual's work with people (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). On this particular sub-scale, personal accomplishment is reversed (i.e., lower scores indicate higher degrees of burnout). Thoughts of personal accomplishment are often the drive within professionals when it comes to their specialized line of work. Conflict within this area creates feelings of helplessness in regards to the amount of work/effort that they are putting in at work.

Burnout and Law Enforcement. Police work is often considered a very stressful job. Specific to law enforcement agencies, Blau discovered in 1994 that supervisors are often insensitive to the stresses suffered by their officers, which inevitably puts officers at risk for burnout (Alexander, 1999). This implies that the lack of social support from organizational heads creates

stressors and demands that are often predictive of burnout. For instance, lack of participation in decision making, career disproportions (e.g., unfair wage), ethnicity, and gender disparities are all of the few stressors that are also experienced by law enforcement officers (Alexander, 1999).

To illustrate this point, in a study by Wang et al. (2014), policemen and policewomen were both examined in regards to the relations between police stress, job satisfaction, job burnout, and locus of control. The study was able to assess burnout-related stressors by the use of questionnaires; Police Stress Questionnaire, the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and the Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scale (Wang et al., 2014). The results indicated that police stress was positively related to job burnout. It was also shown that police officers of a basic level, who had higher job stress, took a dehumanizing view of others and were further dissatisfied with their work (Wang et al., 2014).

Schaufeli and Van Dierendonck (1993) showed the discriminant validity of burnout as measured by the MBI. In these findings, it was noted that everyone can experience job stress, while burnout can only be experienced by

individuals who entered their careers with high expectations (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). Individuals without such expectations experience job stress instead of burnout (Pines, 1993). Therefore, the development of negative attitudes that occur among initially highly motivated individuals (i.e., law enforcement officers) experience burnout at much higher rates.

Van Gelderen et al. (2007) examined the relationship between psychological strain (emotional dissonance, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization), emotional dissonance, and emotional job demands on military police officers. Results showed that police officers who started the work shift with more psychological strain were more vulnerable to the experience of emotional dissonance than officers who started the shift with less strain (van Gelderen et al., 2007). These results support the theory that individuals who have an increased level of psychological strain at the start of their shift are more vulnerable to future defeat (van Gelderen et al., 2007). Individuals who generally feel more exhausted are less able to put much effort in regulating their emotions which can lead to an increase of a negative attitude. For instance, when officers feel negative emotions, they seem to put

feeling better as a priority, thus abandoning their self-control (van Gelderen et al., 2007). This makes law enforcement officers more susceptible to maladaptive coping methods, all in lieu of mediating their emotional dissonance.

Maladaptive Coping Strategies

Law enforcement officers inevitably cultivate coping strategies to regulate their stress. Generally, the strategies often used are avoidance or action-orientated. Action-orientated strategies are tactics that confront the situation or problem, while avoidance strategies allow officers to avoid the underlying problem (Carlan & Nored, 2008). Haarr and Morash (1999) identified from supplemental studies that avoidance strategies are the most utilized maladaptive tactic. These maladaptive tactics include substance abuse, smoking, gambling, and withdrawal from friends and family (He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002). These maladaptive practices oftentimes provide interim relief, and when executed, the indelible consequences exacerbate the latent causes at hand (Carlan & Nored, 2008). Haarr and Morash (1997) concluded that officers with high levels of stress were more likely to rely on escape measures, seek support from micro community, and give off the expression

of anger toward coworkers (Carlan & Nored, 2008). It was discovered that high levels of stress decreased, but only when officers took proactive measures to lessen their stress (Carlan & Nored, 2008).

When proactive measures are not used and high levels of stress are not decreased, officers may engage in harmful acts that can ultimately result in infidelity of a significant other, domestic or spousal abuse, self-hatred, depression, suicide ideation, and ultimately suicide completion. Another thought to consider are the effects that can be placed on an officer's family and lifestyle. The lifestyle of an officer is one that is filled with unexpected occurrences on a revolving cycle. Workplace violence may arise at any time while on the job (Hartley et al., 2013). This can agitate the relationships that are in the home or with others that care for the officer. Stress at this level is often not only experienced by the officer, but by the individuals who are close to the officer. Friction can warrant both sides to react irrationally when tasks such as not being able to attend family functions; poor health and habits are developed, and anger is exhibited toward individuals who are around the stressed person.

Misconduct. Palmiotto (2001) classified misconduct as the wrongdoing committed by a law enforcement personnel in relation to his or her official duties. This may arise at the hands of an individual's character and emotional imbalance of stress, as well as the organizational culture in which an officer may be a part of. The act of misconduct is exemplified as an officer engaging in an act that he or she knows is improper or illegal, as well as failing to report unethical behavior (Fitch, Means, & Seidel, 2013). In many cases, misconduct is used as a tool to lessen stress. Receiving gratification for acts such as opportunistic theft, internal payoffs, disclosure of information, and discrimination can provide a temporary relief of stress (Klaver, 2013). Avoiding the realities of stressful situations in order to develop a fantasized phenomenon often explains the act of misconduct. Nevertheless, law enforcement officers are expected to follow their department core values with professionalism, even when compliance conflicts with personal values or self-interests (Gamez & Collins, 2013). For some officers, this often causes an imbalance with their perception of the job and dishevels their judgement.

Summary

In conclusion, high levels of stress experienced by law enforcement officers can result in an array of consequences that can affect both on and off the job practices. Organizational support, number of months on the job, and job satisfaction were commonly cited in the law enforcement stress literature as factors in law enforcement officer stress.

In addition, burnout was highlighted as one of most notable consequences that resulted from prolonged job stress. Understanding the main indicators of stress, particularly burnout, can constitute greater findings in regards to the types of interventions that can be used to balance workplace stress. Furthermore, the previous literature review indicates that there is a lack of research regarding gender perceived stress. Only two research studies examined gender perceived stress among female officers (Kurtz, 2012; Yoo & Franke, 2012). The current study seeks to add to the understanding of male and female law enforcement perceived stress, job satisfaction and burnout.

Chapter 3

METHOD**Participants**

An archival data set was used. The sample of participants consisted of a total of 281 law enforcement officers from several local law enforcement agencies in Southern California. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 59 ($M=34$, $SD=7.72$). A total of 72% ($n=201$) were male and 27% ($n=77$) were female. Ethnicity breakdown was as follows: A total of 12% ($n=33$) were Black American or African descent, 35% ($n=98$) were Hispanic/ Latino, 38% ($n=106$) were Caucasian/ White, 10% ($n=29$) were of Asian descent, .4% ($n=1$) were of Native American descent, and 5.0% ($n=14$) Other ethnicity. Education breakdown was as follows: A total of 7% ($n=20$) had received a High school/GED education, 28% ($n=78$) Some College education, 15% ($n=42$) AA/AS degree, 42% ($n=117$) BA/BS degree, 8% ($n=22$) MA/ MS degree, and .7% ($n=2$) Doctorate degree. Marital status was as follows: A total of 38% ($n=105$) single, 48% ($n=136$) married, 3% ($n=7$) separated, 9% ($n=26$) divorced, 1% ($n=4$) rather not say, and .7% ($n=2$) domestic partner.

Instrumentation

Archival survey data of law enforcement officers' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational support was used in this study. The survey contained demographic information that included: gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, and education level. Participants from the original study were asked survey questions (e.g., I feel burn out with my current job; I am satisfied with my job; I feel supported by my organization, etc.) (Appendix A). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Procedure

The research study did not require going to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) because the research conducted was archival data. Archival data was analyzed using IBM SPSS statistical program. The data was analyzed to examine law enforcement burnout, job satisfaction, organizational support as well as differences among male and female officer perceived stress.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS 24 statistical program was used to analyze the quantitative data within the archival data set. All data was screened for univariate, bivariate, and

multivariate outliers. A linear regression was used to examine the extent to which the number of months as a police officer predicts officer burnout. A second linear regression was conducted to examine the extent to which organizational support predicts job satisfaction. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine between group differences in gender on officer stress.

Chapter 4

RESULTS**Results**

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which the number of months on the job significantly predicted job burnout. It was hypothesized that the number of months employed as a police officer would predict job burnout. Results indicated that the number of months on the job as a police officer significantly predicted job burnout. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 277) = 17.21, p < .001$), with an R^2 of .06.

A second linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which organizational support significantly predicted job satisfaction. It was hypothesized that organizational support would predict job satisfaction. Results indicated that organizational support significantly predicted job satisfaction ($F(1, 278) = 138.22, p < .001$), with an R^2 of .33.

An independent samples t -test analysis was conducted to compare gender differences between male and female on

perceived officer stress. It was hypothesized that females would report higher levels of stress in comparison to male counterparts. Results were not significant ($p > .05$).

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

This study was conceived to examine analytically the presence of law enforcement stress, job satisfaction, and burnout. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the implications of high levels of stress and its role on law enforcement officers and their workplace practices. Research highlighted in this study covered specific stress agents such as job stress, job satisfaction and burnout in order to elaborate on the risk factors and outcomes that are weighed upon law enforcement officers. Prior research for example, found that behavioral cues (frustration, rigid thinking and the inability to control feelings) and physical attributes (fatigue, headaches, and insomnia) to be notable components of burnout (Freudenberger, 1974). Furthermore, research conducted by Maslach (1982) qualified that people who work in high demanding fields such as law enforcement may develop the burnout syndrome which encompasses emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Additional studies addressed organizational stressors and the detrimental impact that can be made on law

enforcement officers' perceptions of work and job satisfaction (Alexander, 1999; Burke & Paton, 2006; Hartley et al., 2013; Manzoni & Eisner, 2006; Pasillas et al., 2006). For instance, Ayres (1990) concluded that several practices set by management include high levels of stress among law enforcement officers, thus conflicting with their perception and satisfaction of the job. In support of understanding gender perceived stress, Martin (1991) highlighted specific stressors experienced by female officers which include and are not limited to: lack of acceptance, negative attitudes from male officers, sexual harassment, and the negative impact of being underrepresented within the profession. In support, Morash et al. (2006) found specifically that female officers reported significantly higher levels of harassment, bias, underestimation of physical abilities, language harassment, and lack of influence than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis one examined the extent to which the number of months on the job as a police officer predicted burnout. Results indicated that the number of months on the job as a police officer significantly predicted job burnout. Hypothesis two examined the extent to which organizational support influenced levels of job satisfaction. Supporting

this hypothesis, results indicated that organizational support significantly predicted job satisfaction.

Hypothesis three was examined to compare gender differences between male and female on perceived officer stress.

Particularly, it was hypothesized that females would report higher levels of stress in comparison to male counterparts.

Contrary to the predicted results, results showed that there was no significant difference between males and females on perceived officer stress.

Conclusions

The first two hypotheses were consistent with the results of the study; however, the third hypothesis was not. The number of months on the job as a police officer as a predictor of burnout once again, reinforces the statement of law enforcement being a highly stressful occupation (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006). The number of months on a job exposes officers to a plethora of stressors, both of which are inherent and external aspects of the job. The everyday stressors of an officer can lead to high levels of stress and the development of the burnout syndrome.

Organizational support proved to be a predictor of job satisfaction. This demonstrates that officers value support from their organization in order to feel satisfied at their

job. It also asserts that the structural makeup of an organization can threaten an officer's perception of the job, thus leaving them dissatisfied.

There was no gender difference between males and females on officer stress. While some evidence was found in support of gender differences between male and female officers (Haarr, 1997; 2005; Kurtz, 2008; Morash et al., 2006; Martin, 1991), later research found these assertions to be contradictory. For example, Worden (1993) found little difference in the way men and women see their roles, clientele, and or departments. In addition, research findings in Morash and Harr (1995) found unique stressors for women officers; however, the overall stress level for men and women were not found to be different, but were rather the same.

Recommendations

Recommendations for this study include: obtaining a larger sample from an assortment of different law enforcement departments, offices, and or stations around the U.S.A., as well as acquiring more in depth surveys and or interviews that ask comprehensive questions in order to achieve significant results. The possibility of changing the methodology to qualitative rather than quantitative

could also be a benefit. In doing so, innovative ideas and concepts for dealing with law enforcement stress, job satisfaction, and burnout could be made. Furthermore, new coping techniques and preventative measures can be developed from the results, thus providing a closer insight to the needs of a healthier lifestyle for law enforcement officers.

Limitations and strengths

The findings of this study indicated several strengths and limitations. In examining the demographics, the archival data sample appeared to be representative of law enforcement officers. However, the sample was derived only from several law enforcement agencies in Southern California.

Future Research

In regards to assessing the number of months on the job, a comprehensive longitudinal study should perhaps be considered. It would be beneficial to assess the origin of law enforcement stress and burnout from the beginning of an officer's tenure. It would also be fortifying to understand why an officer may terminate his or her job and or choose early retirement as opposed to retiring at the designated time. These are essential questions that may add to the

development of positive practices to help mediate stress levels, job satisfaction, and the development of burnout.

Additional recommendations for future research should explore the role of both inherent and organizational stressors together as to how they can both influence job satisfaction. Understanding whether inherent stressors may outweigh organizational stressors or vice versa can help establish support tactics specific to each of the components' characteristics. In addition, observing officers who are mostly confronted with inherent stressors (patrol/field officers) counter to officers who work primarily in office settings can help establish a new way of understanding stress specific to each group of officers. Lastly, further research on gender differences pertaining to officer stress should be made in order to conclude if there are undeniable gender differences on officer perceived stress. The research found can help desensitize the negative stigma towards differential gender stereotypes in law enforcement. In addition, this can help alleviate the amount of negative perceived stress in the workplace. Nevertheless, this can also help develop trainings and assessments as well help promote a healthier workplace and lifestyle for law enforcement officers.

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