

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON LAW ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS
IN MIDDLE APPALACHIAN STATES

by

Timothy W. Roberts

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of
Philosophy in Criminal Justice Leadership

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing the operational procedures of law enforcement organizations across the United States. The COVID-19 virus has forced police administrators to rethink strategies and procedures dealing with law enforcement's multiple functions and roles in society. The pandemic is causing unprecedented challenges for law enforcement administrators to balance the organization's priorities and the safety of officers under their command. The police functions are adapting to include personal protection to prevent the spread of the virus among the law enforcement community. This multiple case qualitative study aimed to show the immediate operational changes in law enforcement since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from interviews with law enforcement officers were analyzed in this study to identify themes and patterns. The data showed significant changes in law enforcement policies and procedures occurring after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews included law enforcement officers with a minimum of five years of experience as full-time officers in the middle Appalachia region of the United States. Results provided details about operational procedures and how these changes affected law enforcement.

Keywords: Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, COVID-19, Police Procedures

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to:

Two of the most influential people in my life, my wife and son –

Mrs. J.D. Roberts and Mr. T.A. Roberts, and

To every active law enforcement officer in the United States –

Those currently involved with the criminal justice system,

Those previously involved with law enforcement, who made it to retirement.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

The criminal justice system is a balanced system of resources working together to enhance the safety of society and remedy potential threats to the security of the community. Resources are combined from numerous government and private institutions to fight outside threats that challenge the system's success. The criminal justice system is focused on providing people with safety by prosecuting and convicting those accused of committing acts against another with the intent of causing physical or mental harm. This system is comprised of interrelated components such as law enforcement, corrections, and the court system (Brandl, 2017). The issue for the criminal justice system is when an outside threat starts destroying the validity of the system. While external threats can come in many forms, one of the most destructive threats to the criminal justice system is the COVID-19 virus and the potential harm to public safety that results from it (Ashby, 2020). Although police operational procedures routinely change over time, during this pandemic, law enforcement organizations are rapidly responding to the pandemic by changing operations for officer safety (Maskaly et al., 2021).

This study investigated operational procedures of law enforcement in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Police administrators are dealing with a worldwide pandemic that is causing them to adapt to the situation that is ever-evolving (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). In response, police administrators are developing new procedures to keep police officers physically safe from an invisible enemy. The use of the N95 respirator mask has now been a controversial topic across law enforcement (Jones, 2020) as some police organizations have also made difficult decisions on forcing officers to wear the N95 masks as a precaution (Ashby,

2020). This study demonstrates the changes in operations police administrators have developed when dealing with a pandemic and the impacts of those changes on officers.

This study followed a multiple case study approach involving numerous law enforcement agencies and officers. Information about the current operations in law enforcement dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic is included. The purpose of this study is to show how law enforcement administrators have changed procedures to assist them in dealing with day-to-day operations. The policy and procedures of a police department dictate the organizational structure, officer actions, accountability, and operational decisions (Brandl, 2017), and all of these have been impacted due to the pandemic. The study was conducted through interviews with law enforcement officers, law enforcement executives, and research on department policies. The interviews included a set of questions that detailed how current changes have affected policing. An examination of department protocols and the current policies was examined from an administration outlook and patrol officer perspective. The comparison shows the differences and similarities of the department's employees through their thoughts, perceptions, and ideas. The data was drawn from police departments of various populations across Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. These states were selected due to their similarity in the number of deaths from the COVID-19 virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). These states border one another, and a comparison of law enforcement policies shows a drastic change in rural law enforcement after the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the study shows that law enforcement administrators changed operational procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic to respond to situational needs, and these changes impacted law enforcement officials and the communities they serve.

Study Background

The COVID-19 virus began in the last part of 2019, and by early 2020 it had spread around the world, causing the U.S. government to declare a global pandemic (Terry, 2021). Governments worldwide responded and altered nearly every facet of society and placed restrictions on how people carried out their daily lives (Petridou & Zahariadis, 2021). Facing the serious threat to individual lives, law enforcement organizations were forced to respond and adapt their procedures, as they have done when situations arise that challenge the nature of protecting and serving the public (Ashby, 2020; Bossert, 2020; Nowotny et al., 2020). Such challenges have included calls to reform criminal justice, social disorder, Supreme Court decisions, and now, a global pandemic (Petridou & Zahariadis, 2021). To ensure the public's safety, law enforcement must act quickly when these situations arise and strategize to resolve the issues efficiently.

Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic changed law enforcement's response to calls for service and their active patrols. The virus caused health concerns for a wide range of people, and medical professionals suggested that members of the community take numerous precautions, ranging from wearing personal protective equipment, isolating, taking a COVID-19 vaccine, washing hands regularly, and social distancing when out in public (Henry, 2020; WHO, 2021). Likewise, law enforcement officers were also required to adhere to these precautions and take the ever-evolving advice of the medical community. Therefore, law enforcement officers' daily activities were affected as they were required to social distance, wear personal protective equipment, and regularly sanitize (Ashby, 2020). Law enforcement organizations modified their policies and procedures to take into consideration these needed precautions.

Law enforcement is a dynamic field, and this study describes the difficulties officers faced protecting the community amid a global health pandemic. The ability to protect people is a primary characteristic of law enforcement officers, and consequently, law enforcement officers are willing to carry out tasks most people could not imagine completing (Agee, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed how law enforcement served the public. A role of law enforcement is to protect parts of society that cannot defend themselves against those who want to harm them. Law enforcement officers protect people by putting themselves in harm's way even during challenging and extenuating encounters. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became increasingly difficult for police officers to protect the elderly, handicapped, children, and other citizens because of the restrictions and precautions placed on them as law enforcement organizations altered procedures in consultation with medical professionals (Ashby, 2020; Boman & Gallupe, 2020; Bullinger et al., 2020). This study demonstrated how the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement officials' ability to perform their duties. The study examined literature concerning law enforcement operations concerning the safety of police officers and community members day-to-day. The study revealed how law enforcement changed their police operations for routine patrol and answering calls for service and explained the effect of those changes on the officers.

First, the study examined previous literature concerning law enforcement operations and the safety of police officers and community members. Two areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic included police operations for routine patrol and for responding to calls for service. Recent studies have determined, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed operations for officers on the street patrolling and for officers answering calls for certain types of crimes (Jennings & Perez, 2020). Law enforcement administrators researched the nature of a pandemic from a police

operational viewpoint to safely respond to community needs and keep the area saturated with officers to prevent crime (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). Researchers define area saturation as using police officers, security officers, and other government officials to enforce minor laws to decrease crime and restore tranquility to a targeted community (Barthe & Stitt, 2011) although the ability of law enforcement to reduce crime through officer presence and enforcement has been restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic (Jennings & Perez, 2020). According to Jennings and Perez (2020), law enforcement organizations have restricted officers from routine patrols, responding to misdemeanor complaints, and arresting suspects in high COVID-19 infected areas. Consequently, there has been an increase in crime in those restricted areas (Jennings & Perez, 2020), which is evidence that changes to police procedures have impacted communities.

Problem Statement

COVID-19 protocols and precautions changed police operations across the United States. However, what is currently unknown is whether there is a correlation reducing the functionality of law enforcement services (Ashby, 2020). This study identified adverse relationships between strict Covid precautions and police procedures when responding to calls for service. This qualitative study showed the challenge COVID-19 has created for law enforcement organizations to change operational procedures to protect officers and community members. The need for law enforcement in society has never changed, and if officers become victims of the COVID-19 virus, society will see an adverse reaction. Law enforcement officers reduce crime, protect innocent people, mentor young people, react to complaints, and patrol streets (Brandl, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic is creating a need for law enforcement to

change current policies and procedures to adapt to the given situation, which then influences the greater community.

Research in criminal justice on the effects of the COVID-19 virus is ongoing, with researchers suggesting reforms are needed (Jones, 2020; Ashby, 2020; Stogner, Miller, & Mclean, 2020). Criminal justice research evolves and adapts with the needs of society, and studies have focused on how law enforcement can serve people more efficiently as well highlighting the slight rise in crime rates in some geographical regions (Jones, 2020). A search for literature on the effects of Covid on police procedures and the effect on law enforcement resulted in numerous articles on Covid protocols, police procedures during pandemics, and police administrator's response to the virus (Ashby, 2020).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to show the immediate operational changes in law enforcement since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 virus has impacted policing in various day-to-day operations, and this study will show the importance of recognizing the impact of law enforcement operational changes and policing challenges. The study was a qualitative multiple case research study investigating police procedures and functional changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus was police operations and officer safety.

Research Questions

RQ1: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?

RQ2: What are the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ3: Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?

Nature of the Study

This multiple case study design included in-depth interviews from the law enforcement officers and administrators working in the targeted area to gain insight into the impact of COVID-19 on police protocols. The study examines the COVID-19 procedures employed at multiple sites by interviewing police officers from targeted departments. Semi-structured interviews included twelve open-ended questions, so the participants could fully express their thoughts. The interview protocol is informative and investigative, directed at showing the impact of operational changes. The qualitative analysis found themes in interview responses to compare and validate the study's research questions. Thematic analysis was applied to identify any themes among the survey participant's answers (Sherif, 2018). The study included research from law enforcement agencies which was analyzed using the same parameters from the previous questionnaire research. The research covered a four-state region with five law enforcement organizations of varying police department sizes from each state. The study included three officers from each of the four states. The study included operational research from November 2019 through March of 2022.

Research Structure

The study showed the impact of law enforcement changing police operations since the COVID-19 pandemic began and to answer this question, interviews were used with a thematic

analysis of the responses. The interview questions followed the procedures and methods for the study. The questions addressed the gaps in the literature on police operations and how they will impact future strategies when dealing with a pandemic.

Research Design

The study shows how effective the COVID-19 pandemic was at changing law enforcement policy and procedures in a four-state region of the United States. The research design focused on how the virus affected law enforcement both long term and short term. This multiple case study involved a thematic approach to explore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement policies and procedures. The research study used interviews with participants to elicit responses detailing law enforcement officers' experiences. The researcher looked at several different research styles to determine which research design would show the effects of COVID-19 on law enforcement. The multiple case study design was based on a phenomenological approach to show the COVID-19 pandemic effects on law enforcement and the phenomenon of a pandemic (Kelly-Quon, 2018).

Type of Research Design

Research design adapts a research question or questions to formulate a project to explain an occurrence or event (Robson & McCartan, 2019). This study incorporated an interview process designed with open-ended questions to gain knowledge about the experiences of law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The different types of research design considered for this study were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Pultz, 2018). This researcher explored the design options and chose a qualitative design method.

A qualitative design method uses a smaller number of participants to gain an in-depth understanding of specific characteristics of an occurrence (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research gathers data from observations and people's experiences to conclude a hypothesis (Pultz, 2018). This qualitative study used interviews to ask participants questions designed to elicit explanations. This design is subjective and helpful in guiding future research projects on the topics of COVID-19 and law enforcement.

Method of Research

This multiple case study used a thematic approach to understanding the relationship between COVID-19 and law enforcement policies. The study used twelve systematic questions with time restraints to allow participants to answer freely without pressure. The structure of the interview questions was to answer the twelve questions, one after another, until the participants had fully explained how they felt about working as law enforcement officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data was collected and transcribed into word documents to analyze in a computer software program called Dedoose. The Dedoose program analyzed the data by using coding designed to search for themes in the data (Stenfors, Kajamaa, & Bennett, 2020). The study used the thematic approach to find keywords, phrases, and questions in the data and analyze them to conclude the research purpose. Conclusions about the effects of the COVID-19 virus on law enforcement policies and procedures detail the immense changes. The research project's goal was to reach a point of saturation in the study to conclude the hypothesis (Pultz, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

To understand the changes in law enforcement operational procedures since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, stress for law enforcement officers needs further examination. Agnew's general strain theory can explain stress for law enforcement officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Robert Agnew's general strain theory refers to the notion that

some people react to various stressors they experience in life via unhealthy coping mechanisms (Broidy,2001). The coping mechanism for law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic is changing operational procedures to resolve issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theoretical framework incorporated by Agnew's general strain theory enlightened this researcher to associate those changes with law enforcement officers' stress when developing procedural changes while serving the needs of their communities.

Agnew's general strain theory applies to this study because if a person experiences strain and stress, they are at an increased risk of taking drastic actions to change their circumstances or environment (Olson, 2021). This study showed law enforcement officers taking drastic actions by changing their policies and procedures to resolve the strain placed on them by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study showed significant changes in law enforcement operational procedures, creating a unique environment for officers. One law enforcement officer interviewed in this study discussed how changing strategies led to hostility and resentment towards officers. He also stated officer's daily activities had changed due to these new procedures, and he had trouble adjusting to the changes, which resulted in stress. The COVID-19 pandemic strained law enforcement by changing police response from proactive to reactive, causing resentment by the general public, as suggested by several law enforcement officers.

Chapter One Summary

Chapter one discussed the complicated issue of dealing with a pandemic from a law enforcement perspective. Chapter one outlined the evaluation methods for the study and the evidence used to test for validity. Chapter one has an outline of the potential implications of police operations changes and their impact on policing. The implications of changing police

department operations are outlined in long-term goals. Chapter one also discusses how Robert Agnew's general strain theory applies to the study in the theoretical framework. Agnew's theory applies because of the law enforcement officers drastically changing operational procedures creating other issues resulting in more stress. Chapter two of the study contains a review of the literature on police operation changes during the time of a pandemic. Chapter two will discuss the gaps in the literature and the police officers' perceptions towards the law enforcement administration's handling of operations in the COVID-19 pandemic. The review of this literature is vital to the success of the research study because it shows a direct correlation between operational change and current impacts on policing. Chapter three will detail the method employed in the study while chapter four will present findings and chapter five will draw conclusions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic is still in progress, with numerous police agencies fighting to keep officers safe from the invisible enemy (Jennings & Perez, 2020). A systematic review of relevant literature found there is only a small amount of literature on changing police procedures and practices from the pandemic. The literature on changing organizational policies and procedures is primarily from health care practitioners and government agencies. The literature suggests that most law enforcement agencies have had to change past policies to keep employees safe and slow the spread of the virus (Nagar et al., 2020). Despite the existing research on the development of police procedures, very little research has been published dealing with a pandemic from a law enforcement perspective. This study addressed this gap in the literature and included different law enforcement agencies to show the correlation between changing organizational policies and procedures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic (Soltes et al., 2021).

Literature Importance

The literature on COVID-19 and the changing of law enforcement policies effectively highlight the importance of safety protocols. Researchers have completed short-term studies on the effects of the COVID-19 virus, while the long-term effect studies will still be years to come (Campedelli et al., 2020). Researchers studying the short-term results have produced interesting connections between safety protocols and employees' health (Osofsky et al., 2020). Ashby (2020) also produced a study that showed organizations were changing policies to adapt to

environments they are not familiar with, even though they have only a slight chance at a personal experience with a crisis (Ashby, 2020).

Agnew's General Strain Theory

Robert Agnew created his general strain theory in 1992 to explain criminal behavior as the result of stress in an individual's life (Davidowitz, 2017). This study shows that the theory can be adapted outside of the criminological theory. Depending upon the type of stress an individual encounters, there is a greater likelihood that specific individuals may choose an adverse action (Olson, 2021). The theory suggests stress strains the person, which requires a coping mechanism to reduce its influence. The coping mechanism in this study is changing operational procedures to respond to the strain's severity, increasing the stress risks for law enforcement officers. Operational and procedural changes for law enforcement result from techniques police officers use to manage stress as they serve the public. Consequently, how experienced law enforcement officers managed stress during the COVID-19 pandemic was explored. There is a need to examine specific stressors for police officers and how society responds to officers.

Agnew's theory guided the research by establishing a stress model, which assisted in gaining a deeper understanding of how experienced police officers coped with environmental stress related to COVID-19. Elements in Robert Agnew's general strain theory were used to understand the strain placed on law enforcement officers. Anger, frustration, and other negative emotions have added extra pressure on law enforcement officers to serve their communities (Davidowitz, 2017). Strain theory is applied in the research to show the experiences law

enforcement officers had during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting negative reflections by the public.

The elements of Robert Agnew's general strain theory greatly represent the strain law enforcement officers endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. This theory has three main suggestions or elements for negative correlations (Broidy, 2001). Agnew's general strain theory elements include the failure to achieve a set goal, the removal of positive impulses, and the existence of harmful impulses (Bishop & Boots, 2014). The elements of Agnew's theory are used in this study to conclude that operational changes in policing contribute to stress on law enforcement officers. The elements suggest a failure to obtain a certain goal. The study showed law enforcement officers could not keep the same police response which slowed down reaction times and public satisfaction. The positive attitudes about law enforcement were shown in the study to be decreasing in the target area of middle Appalachia.

History of COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus) is a potentially deadly contagion discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The virus attacks the respiratory system, resulting in various symptoms that resemble a cold or flu (WHO, 2021). The COVID-19 disease can also affect numerous other human body parts, such as the eyes, muscles, bones, and heart (WHO, 2021). The majority of people identified as victims of the virus have mild symptoms and recover fully with no long-term effects. The potential hazard with the COVID-19 virus is that some people who contract the virus become severe with potentially life-threatening issues if not treated promptly. Medical personal reported that people who have severe issues with the virus have a high percentage of the possibility of not recovering from the disease. The total number of deaths

resulting from the COVID-19 virus as of this report in March 2022, is 6,022,496, with 456,192,412 cases worldwide (WHO, 2022).

The COVID-19-infected people will transmit the virus to other people without knowing they are even infected because they are asymptomatic (Laufs & Waseem, 2020). The possibility of infection has changed millions of people's lives across the world. Medical professionals informed people that they need to wash their hands and regularly face, stay six feet away from other people not in their family group, and wear face masks covering the nose and mouth. Medical professionals have advised law enforcement to take precautions to slow the transmission rate between officers and the public (De Camargo, 2021). The development of vaccines has also decreased the rate of infections among law enforcement officers and is considered by medical personnel a safe and effective method to slow the transmission of the COVID-19 virus (De Camargo, 2021). Currently, three Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved COVID-19 vaccines are available in the United States: Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Moderna (WHO, 2021). The CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends law enforcement take the vaccines for protection against the COVID-19 virus (CDC, 2020).

COVID-19 Timeline

The COVID-19 virus was first reported in the Wuhan Province in China in December of 2019 when a small number of cases was reported after several people became ill with respiratory symptoms (WHO, 2021). They were treated at emergency care units with home follow-up care (Lotan & Shinar, 2021). The World Health Organization discovered a source of the COVID-19 virus in animals sold at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, China (WHO, 2021). In January of 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) sent an incident management support

team into Wuhan to assess the danger of the cases and any potential widespread threats. A couple of weeks later, the team reported that there had been several deaths related to a new virus that had begun to spread across the region. The WHO published the first outbreak news alert in January 2020, which contained a risk assessment and advice for the Asian region. The WHO also published the status of the virus and the response efforts in Wuhan (WHO, 2021). The WHO issued guidance to the world on detecting and what symptoms come with an infected person. The guidance included ways to test and manage virus cases, as seen in Wuhan (Lotan & Shinar, 2021). The WHO mobilized several emergency response units to the area to stop the virus's spread and contain the potential threat to China and the world (Drew & Martin, 2020).

The World Health Organization published the first guidance at combatting the deadly virus from Wuhan in January of 2020 (WHO, 2021). The recommendation was based on medical knowledge at the report and did not have much information as it later became known. The WHO published a direct statement on how people can protect themselves against the virus, including social distancing, washing face and hands regularly, taking multivitamins, wearing face masks whenever possible, and using protective gloves in high traffic areas (WHO, 2021). The WHO suggests that a person wear a face mask covering his face, nose, mouth, and chin. The International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Association of Police responded to the WHO's guidelines by presenting law enforcement across the United States with virus guidelines. The guidelines suggested that police officers take precautions against the virus (White & Fradella, 2020).

The precautions changed the daily procedures of law enforcement in the United States. Law enforcement officers were under the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and local

health officials to protect themselves. When possible, the CDC recommended law enforcement officers wear gloves, wear face coverings when interacting with a public member, maintain a six-foot distance from another person, sanitize hands and face regularly, and avoid entering non-sanitized residences (Jennings & Perez, 2020). These measures drastically changed police procedures when interacting with the public and responding to calls for service.

Law Enforcement Policies

The organizational structure of any law enforcement agency is a mixture of administrative oversight and management. Theories of agency design have changed over the decades from the early days in police reform dealing with the political control era to the professional era to the current era of community policing (Brandl, 2017). The change in policing has been a constant throughout the different eras of policing. Research has shown policing moving from one era to another due to calls for reform from society (Engel et al., 2020). One of the main topics in the history of police reform is the idea that society should hold law enforcement accountable. In the early days of policing in the political era, politicians and political influence impacted policing (Sierra-Arevalo, 2021). The political control of police officers came in favor of certain public members and inside the individual departments. Jumping from one era to another, reform in policing is consistently a topic discussed among government agencies (Engel et al., 2020).

Political leaders from local levels controlled the political era of policing from the federal level down to the local levels (Cox et al., 2020). Politicians exploited those hired by police departments to get certain community members prosecuted by the police in a court of law (Dempsy & Forst, 2009). One of the most talked-about and researched topics in the political era

was those officers being hired by politicians who had no formalized or professional training (Siegel, 2009). The officers hired by the politicians were under their control to perform and investigate crimes. The politicians decided whom the police officers would arrest and whom would ultimately be prosecuted in a court of law (Dempsey & Forst, 2009). The officers working in the political era had no real control over how to perform the simplest of tasks and were not adequately trained. The public felt the need for officers to receive formalized training in personal equipment (Drew & Martin, 2020). Research into the writings of August Vollmer brought attention to the fact that police officers needed a professional style of training that would prepare them for any situation. Vollmer is considered the Father of American policing and reformed law enforcement with his ideology (Brandl, 2017). The political era of policing was known for being under the control of politicians, who controlled law enforcement procedures. During the political era, the politicians changed and adapted the policies and procedures for their benefit. The members of the police department had little control over policies and procedures (Johnstone, 2017). The political era of politicians controlling policing is vastly different from the community policing era, where police officers and administrators had more input when changing policies and procedures (Cox et al., 2020).

COVID-19 posed a challenge for street-level politicians and police administration with the impact of the virus on employee health (Duckworth, 2021). Once suspected by the individual law enforcement officer and diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a COVID-19 test, the virus restricted the officer from working while under quarantine restriction (Duckworth, 2021). Street-level politicians are challenged to replace employees under this restriction, which affects the police response to complaints (Alcadipani et al., 2020). The financial burden placed on law enforcement agencies in a constrained setting has caused concern from the public for a timely

and productive police response. The concern from the public was the type of police response and if the officers would arrive at the complaint in their usual time frame. The main concern was directed at whether the officers would only respond to certain types of complaints. The Covid-10 virus changed the operational procedures by limiting the use of law enforcement officers, which challenged street-level bureaucrats to find financial resources to protect officers or replace employees (Alcadipani et al., 2020). The constraints challenged how the street-level bureaucrats operated and managed police organizations.

Development of Police Education

In times of traumatic events in the history of the United States, law enforcement adapts to the situations and finds possible solutions. The political era of policing showed the need for professional training, which is the current demand for police officers (Sierra-Arevalo, 2021). In the given situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, officers are not only dealing with how to interact with the public and suspects in different situations, but they also must add the necessary protective measures of a health crisis (Shukla et al., 2020). The demand for training on using the safety equipment while conducting traffic stops, searching vehicles, investigating crimes, interviewing witnesses, or being proactive is shown in the statistics of the line of duty deaths (Ashby, 2020).

The development of law enforcement across the United States has been depicted by research as a revolving circle of corruption, political control, public dissatisfaction, and civil protest (Dempsey & Forst, 2009). The history of policing shows a need for advancement using scholarly research to adapt and change current policies and procedures to become better public servants (Siegel, 2009). Vollmer, whom most researchers and historians consider the father of

American policing, changed the perception of police officers across the country (Siegel, 2009). Vollmer was credited with advancing the reform era of policing through the education and training of police officers. Vollmer had a career in policing, including becoming the Chief of police in Berkley, California, in the early 1900s (Lanham, 2021). Vollmer showed the need for police reform in police preparation through advanced education to ease the perception of police corruption. His ideas on higher education further advance this study by backing up the theory that law enforcement officers' higher education results in fewer complaints and decreases law enforcement fatal instances (Agee, 2020). Vollmer's work including developing a police training program and an ethically-based learning initiative to drive out the horrible perception of officers (Gardiner, 2015). Vollmer suggested that if officers obtained a degree from higher education, they would perform better and treat the public as equals instead of subordinates (Vollmer, 1931).

Law enforcement across the United States has been able to use different tactics to gain the support of the public for decades (Graham, 2019). One such way researchers found success at garnering public support for law enforcement was through cultural and individualized training. The training consisted of ethics, psychology, sociology, religion, and diversity types (Berlin, 2014). Professors taught the classes from higher learning academic institutions that were designed to be adapted to a law enforcement atmosphere. The unique training courses gave law enforcement officers insight into different lifestyles and cultures with which they were unfamiliar. The training courses assisted officers with developing skills to interact and communicate with people from multiple backgrounds (Gardiner, 2015). The Gardiner study did not adjust the findings to justify whether these particular training courses affected crime rates or traffic collisions. The study was designed to focus on the perception of police and how well the community-supported its officers. Gardiner concluded that these trainings courses changed the

perception of law enforcement officers in the community by 26 percent (Gardiner, 2015). The study also concluded the community approached officers more frequently and officers were able to build relationships with community members.

Police Training Programs

Law enforcement officers across the United States are trained by instructors using various methods and unique styles according to the cultural atmosphere and geographical location (Graham, 2019). Officers will receive training in multiple areas of law enforcement from domestic situations, theft complaints, critical incidents, communication, traffic enforcement, and now virus precautions (Graham, 2019). Police officers receive the majority of their training at basic police academies across the country, which are organized and operated by local governments, state governments, federal institutions, and academic institutions (Walters & Kremser, 2016). The training programs prepare police officers for fieldwork and teach each individual the skills necessary to serve the community.

One of the studies conducted on law enforcement operations was about the instruction on how police officers conduct traffic enforcement decreasing crime (Weiss, 2017). Officers are taught how to conduct traffic stops when it is warranted and with probable cause. They are taught how to conduct stops safely to protect all people involved, even themselves, while issuing traffic citations when a person commits a traffic violation. During the pandemic, the officer is also being trained to use a facial mask and quickly put a face covering on in case of a situation (Stogner et al., 2020). The officer is instructed on a legal cause for traffic stops and justifies their actions in a court of law. The traffic enforcement training is directed towards stopping traffic law offenders, ensuring public safety, and protecting the public against transmitting the virus.

Additionally, training now involves officers learning how to disinfect their equipment to prevent the spreading of the COVID-19 virus (Zolnikow & Furio, 2021) by being taught how to use disinfectant spray without contaminating evidence or harming themselves (Alvarado, Sutton, & Laborda, 2020). However, the research is lacking in this area, and future studies are needed to develop new programs to combat incidents of officers possibly transmitting the virus to members of the public.

The type of training at each basic academy is different with most academies specializing in one particular area (Blumberg et al., 2019). The training in some regions is based on the environment in that jurisdiction deemed appropriate within that culture. Wrede and Featherstone (2012) showed that police academies in rural areas are different from the academies in populated urban jurisdictions as the academies in rural areas attempt to build more diverse, and minority lead departments due to the staff. The same study showed that police academies in rural service areas stick to a basic training program, with enforcement and legal procedures the main topic (Wrede & Featherstone, 2012). Police officers are trained in multiple areas of policing, with numerous instructors coming from different backgrounds and experiences. Police academies teach officers the basic information they need to be successful as law enforcement officers (Blumberg et al., 2019). The basic training programs prepare officers for various encounters and use problem-solving skills to deescalate situations. The training police officers receive at the basic academy level assists the officers in becoming better officers, which is one of the reasons for the current study.

Advancements in Police Training

While police academies across the country prepare officers for police work, unfortunately, most young police officers find the responsibility of the profession overwhelming, especially in the time of a global pandemic (Edwards & Kotera, 2020). Personal safety is one area where officers can receive specialized training to help prevent an illness. This type of training is called personal protective specialization, which is currently being offered around the country (Sierr-Arevalo, 2021). The training consists of teaching officers how to use protective equipment, keeping a safe distance while interviewing people, thoroughly cleaning police equipment, and protocols to take if an officer is exposed to the virus (Jennings & Perez, 2020). Law enforcement officers are now being trained on using the internet and teleconferencing systems to handle calls for service. Training involves officers learning how to use video conferencing to gain the necessary information to file reports (Alvarado et al., 2020). Officers are using communication skills such as non-verbal and verbal communication styles to communicate with victims, witnesses, and suspects. In one training academy, officers are placed with police dispatchers to learn the use of police telecommunication devices and services to find adequate information, which involves teaching the officers how to multitask using computers and telecommunication software (Alvarado, Sutton, & Laborda, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how some organizations and training academies are educating the future of policing across the United States and the world. COVID-19 has government leaders discussing a single national police force that would be able to reinforce police units in different areas in times of trouble (Duckworth, 2021). The challenges and issues from the COVID-19 pandemic have brought attention to the need for one single law enforcement entity working together under a centralized command. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed these discussions along because government operational decision-making takes an exhausting

amount of time between agencies (Duckworth, 2021). Merging all the police forces into one entity would create comprehensive training opportunities for the multijurisdictional entity. The training would involve officers under one direction and one operational command structure instead of several because the health and safety of law enforcement officers take the top priority of the organization. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the operational effectiveness of agencies and management is threatening public safety (White, Schafer, & Kyle, 2021).

Evolving Operations

Law enforcement organizations have protocols and procedures they follow to protect the community they serve. Departments have to plan and strategize for any possible situation and organize all resources needed to carry out the organization's strategy (Bishopp, Klinger, & Morris, 2015). A law enforcement organization's policy and procedure manual are developed by the department's administration and leaders as a guide to enforce regulations and build partnerships within their respective communities (D'Souza et al., 2019). The guide is designed to assist agencies by laying a foundation to follow in every situation to succeed. The organization's policy and procedure manual can bring about confidence, self-awareness, department compliance, and develop professional conduct in the staff (Walker & Archbold, 2020). A well-developed policy and procedure manual can assist the law enforcement department in achieving goals and objectives when carried out correctly by employees. The policy and procedure manuals change over time when different situations arise that demand new strategies, and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced law enforcement organizations to change operational procedures to adapt to the evolving environment.

Law enforcement departments address key organizational issues in their policy and procedure manuals (Schafer & Varano, 2017). Police department administrators and managers process situations to look for ways to design protocols to resolve issues. Law enforcement organizations have several different parts of exploring when they design a successful manual (Schafer & Varano, 2017). These include a standard guide, procedural conduct, general orders, special orders, regulations, post orders, and an employee handbook (Walker & Archbold, 2020). Police administrators must first summarize what policies are effective and implement those procedures to develop these particular aspects. The policy manual must be written in a comprehensive manner, so the policy developers must be consistent with the current administration's philosophy, legal restrictions, and community standards (Haas et al., 2015). The police department's manual should be designed to guide employees to follow a path towards the administration's philosophy. The document is considered a living document that can be changed and adapted as the organization needs, so when developing situations are not outlined in the document, the administration must quickly adapt to resolve issues (Haas, Van Craen, Skogan, & Fleitas, 2015). In addition, the organization's policy manual must reflect local, state, and federal regulations. The policy manual is designed to bring situational awareness to employees to show accountability.

The rise in COVID-19 cases has caused some police administrators to put protective measures for all staff, including officers being required to take time off in instances of direct exposure (Dey et al., 2021). The direct exposure can be from close physical contact with an infected person, whether while responding to a complaint, interviewing people, or arresting an infected person. The chance for law enforcement to be exposed to the COVID-19 virus has increased in all geographic locations (Drew and Martin, 2020). In most instances, departments

require officers to quarantine themselves and take time off if they are directly exposed knowingly and have a higher chance of contracting the virus. The CDC reports that a person must be in close contact over 15 minutes with an infected person in an enclosed space. According to the CDC, the time required for quarantining is ten days (Centers for Disease Control, 2021).

Changes in Operational Policies

Police administrators must first develop a fair policy committee that is just and neutral to the organization and the community they serve before considering revising their policies (Bishopp et al., 2015). The department head or Chief must develop a formal committee within the department to change the policy, and the committee must have a writer, organizer, coordinator, reviewer, researcher, and outside community liaison (Maguire & Uchida, 2015). Working together, the committee must decide what changes need to be made and for what reason. If the department must make changes, the committee must decide for whom the changes will affect, and what the short- and long-term implementations are. The committee must research whether the positive outcome would outweigh the negative.

The committee must develop enough information on the topic or situation to merit a change, which can be determined after research has developed areas of interest that need to be addressed in the policy manual that are not currently present. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown researchers the need for medical emergency protocols needs to be developed and enforced. The pandemic showed the need to have medical procedures to protect employees and assist them in carrying out their duties (Haas, et al., 2015). The research must list requirements for the staff to follow and describe the individual officer's responsibility to be held accountable

to protect themselves and the public. Further, the committee must decide on what factors and resources are present that must be appropriated, and the committee's research must consider if any disciplinary actions must be taken if an employee violates the restrictions (Maguire & Uchida, 2015). The committee has the responsibility to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with the issue and any faults in employees related to the issue.

Once the committee decides on the change, members must then develop ways to implement the policy change. This includes the development of delivery methods to employees, whether a group meeting, individual setting, or just a preliminary document to review (Bishopp et al., 2015). The committee must decide which delivery method would be best suited for the organization and be more beneficial to employees, situational factors must also be considered when selecting the delivery method, such as medical situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee will also consider the mutual aid agreements in emergencies to deliver the policy change to those coordinating organizations. Once the committee has developed the procedures for delivery, the committee must decide how to receive feedback on the changes and revise the document when and if needed. If the policy change is warranted, the committee will place the policy change into effect (Maguire & Uchida, 2015).

Law Enforcement Procedures in a Pandemic

Law enforcement across the country is stressed and overworked during these difficult and troubling times. Furthermore, law enforcement is being challenged in multiple directions by the overwhelming demand for police reform and accountability (Caveney et al., 2019, Ashby, 2020). Over the past several years, police are being heavily scrutinized by the public, media, and oversight committees for actions being taken by individual officers. Officers are being held

accountable for their actions in use-of-force situations, both verbal and physical actions (Caveney et al., 2019, Cox et al., 2020). Law enforcement has undergone several challenging reforms due to incidents, such as the Michael Brown shooting, the Philando Castile shooting, the Eric Garner chokehold incident, and the custody death of George Floyd (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). These incidents have focused attention on the actions of police officers and how they interact with the public.

Stress Management

Being a police officer is a tough job that most people do not want to attempt or acknowledge. Being a police officer patrolling a high-crime neighborhood is cause for enough stress, but with the COVID-19 pandemic raging, police officers have the added anxiety of worrying about their health and the health of their loved ones at home. Police already work in high-stress environments, and when they arrive at a crime scene, they are usually in a hurry to respond and do not want to take the extra time necessary to use protective equipment (Jones, 2020). The officers are used to jumping out of their patrol cars and rushing to the scene without thinking about their personal safety. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how many police officers think on the job due to not wanting to contract the virus and possibly transmit it to a family member or friends at home (Lotan & Shinar, 2021). Being a police officer has increased the chance of infection, and officers must find ways to deal with the stress in their own way. Police work in a variety of situations where bad things can happen to them, members of the public, and even their families, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

The increase of stress on the well-being of law enforcement officers is bringing attention to some researchers and mental health professionals to find potential solutions. The emphasis on

the health and wellness of officers in the past year has researchers studying stress reduction programs for officers and their families. Osofsky et al. (2020) studied hundreds of officers and families across the country with interviews and questionnaires to find data that suggest a possible solution. The surveys have been designed to find similarities between department sizes, geographical locations, and family units. The research focused on shiftwork, overtime, public image, and several Covid cases in the area (Nagar et al., 2020). The research is directed at how to find officers who are having a difficult time dealing with stress. Unfortunately, the studies found that officers and their families are dealing with stress in ways that are not considered healthy (Soltes et al., 2021, De Camargo, 2021).

Medical Profession Influence

Law enforcement around the world has been adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic with guidance from multiple medical professionals. Law enforcement administrators have been looking for advice from the medical community to protect their officers and community. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has stated that the COVID-19 virus spreads when a person comes in close contact with another infected person. The reports also state that the virus will transmit through the air and contact an infected person (Molldrem et al., 2021). Police administrators look at what it takes to build a relationship with the community, work closely with them, and contact other individuals. According to the CDC reports, social distancing must be maintained to stop the spread of the virus (Center for Disease Control, 2020). Police administrators have to consider this when adopting the policy and procedure manual for this new world environment. The medical professionals have discussed several options law enforcement administrators to follow to keep officers safe (Maskaly et al., 2021).

After discussing the issue with the medical community, police administrators have discussed several officers' techniques and actions (Soltes et al., 2021). The policy manual of a law enforcement organization changes when these types of situations arise, and the medical professionals have given some insight into how to adapt the policy (Kyprianides et al., 2021). The medical community has suggested that all law enforcement officers must be supplied with the appropriate equipment such as gloves, sanitizing cleaners, facial coverings, and exposure protocols (Campedelli et al., 2020, Ashby, 2020). The changes are being implemented according to the guidelines being developed by the CDC and other medical personnel. The guidelines are changing policies that did not already have in place for hazardous exposure precautions. Additionally, the guidelines also instruct police administrators to properly handle officer exposure (Molldrem et al., 2021). The guidelines are a long list of actions that must be taken by law enforcement administration to minimize long-term effects. Medical professionals have been able to give clear guidelines to law enforcement, and those guidelines affect the advancement of policy and procedural changes.

The policy and procedure manual guidelines are causing administrators more work and being implemented while the pandemic progresses (Jones, 2020). Law enforcement administrators have taken the advice of the medical community and are changing exposure protocols by enforcing mandatory absences after possible close exposure, immediate COVID-19 tested, quarantining the officer, and disinfecting all of the officer's equipment (Jiang, 2021, Drew & Martin, 2020). The CDC reports that the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted on different surfaces with varying amounts of virus life span. For instance, on some surfaces such as metal, the virus's life span can be only a few minutes, while on some surfaces such as plastic or clothing, the virus can live hours, maybe even days (Center for Disease Control, 2020). When

developing a new manual, the hazardous duty exposure protocols in a law enforcement policy and procedural manual are now considering the exposure guidelines. The administration of a police department must take the responsibility of keeping officers safe even when the enemy to be avoided is invisible.

The policy and procedure manual change is now accounting for officers exposed and infected with the COVID-19 virus. The policy changes come in the forms of officers quarantining at home, receiving medical treatment if needed, and long-term symptom management in certain cases (Jones, 2020). The administration developing the policy manual dealing with medical conditions such as COVID-19 is unaware of the virus's long-term effects due to the unfulfilled pandemic research. The CDC reports that it will take several years, if not decades, to understand the health damage and effects of the COVID-19 virus (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). Therefore, the administrative officers in police departments are realizing this and taking the appropriate steps to protect officers. Besides basic medical care, organizations are developing long-term care protocols to assist officers with these types of conditions from the virus. Information from one police union has suggested early retirement for officers affected by long-term conditions with medical care and financial support (Jones, 2020). Overall, medical guidance from professionals has assisted law enforcement administrators in changing policies to protect officers.

Police Procedures

The past procedures for police officers have changed with time and in response to calls for police reform. To understand the significance of police reform so police officers can be trained to deal with a pandemic, this study will discuss past police procedures and compare them

to the current procedures after the COVID-19 virus. A look into the history of police procedures must be undertaken for researchers studying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on officers to be able to understand the ramifications and scope of changes the pandemic has initiated. The first aspect of police procedures to study is the dynamics of being a police officer. The time it takes to become a police officer varies according to each state's legislation. Each state has different certification hours, and training programs officers have to complete before they are considered certified. The average time it takes a person to become a police officer in the United States is sixteen weeks (Maciag, 2018, Brandl, 2017). Some police organizations require officers to complete a field training program once they are finished with a basic police academy. According to Maciag (2018), the field training programs now include the protocols for the virus, adding to the length of time the programs take to complete. According to the research, the average is now 12 weeks for agencies across the country (Maciag, 2018). The added amount of time has changed the amount of time to get an officer on the street.

The police training programs have also changed the academic section of police training. The academies across the country vary in types of training and the procedures for testing police recruits. The training process is meant to challenge a person mentally and physically to witness how a person handles stressful situations visually. Add this training style to dealing with a pandemic, and it restricts the success of some police recruits (Simpson & Sandrin, 2021). Research has shown that if a person fails parts of training or has issues completing training modules, it can result in officers failing at the professional level. The study suggests that the number of failures is increasing due to the COVID-19 issue. Another study showed that officers who struggle in basic training have a higher tendency to leave the profession or change one department for another department (Williams, 2017). The high turnover ratio for the police

department has not been considered or compared to the number of officers contracting the virus as of this date. Future research projects could answer one question and then conclude with viable data on whether it affects the number of officers leaving to protect themselves and their families.

Hiring Practices

Police agencies have lengthy hiring procedures with numerous testing sequences. Law enforcement agencies known to have a quick hiring process with no test for dedication, ethics, or community service, have a much higher tendency for poor performance (Williams, 2017). Research shows that since the demand for police reform is high and while the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging, there has been a decrease in the number of people applying for police positions (White & Fradella, 2020). Agencies mentioned in this study were shown to lose applications related to the number of people infected with the COVID-19 virus. The study showed a need to research the cause as to why people were not applying and if they are making it through training to become certified police officers. The data in the study also showed a decrease in the number of officers graduating from a police academy (Ashby, 2020). A law enforcement organization's integrity, service, morals, and stability come into question when police officers are hired without scrutinizing tests. Research has shown that the more difficult a person has in the hiring phase, the more likely they will perform better and remain in the police profession (Jones, 2020). The research is showing a need to study the hiring practices for officers after the COVID-19 pandemic.

One area of interest in the hiring practices of law enforcement organizations is the recruiting of college students. Higher education is now challenging the perception of police officers around the country due to the increasing demand for criminal justice reform and the

defunding the police movements (Boer et al., 2018). College students who receive a diverse degree in criminal justice are now challenging the perception by bringing awareness to the issue of police misconduct. According to the Perez et al. (2018), police officers with a four-year college degree are 84% less likely to receive a complaint against them as compared to 87% likely to receive a formal complaint against them if they do not have a four-year college degree. The study showed officers with a degree were less likely to receive a complaint against them from the public. Studies have concluded that officers with college degrees have fewer complaints, so with increased police accountability, some communities demand their officers have a college degree (Walters & Kremser, 2016). College students receive various instruction in numerous courses to assist them if they work in the police profession. The same study showed college students were better problem solvers, critical thinkers, culturally aware, and ethically sound than their counterparts. The study concluded that these officers were also less likely not to receive a promotion. The statistics for college students majoring in a law enforcement-related field of study were that 45 percent wanted to work at the local or state level rather than the federal level (Walters & Kremser, 2016). The interest in college students increased the need to have officers who can perform better at their position. The better officers are at performing their duties can directly affect the safety of a community. Officers dedicated to their community and striving to prevent a crime of any type are more likely to enforce traffic laws (Beck & Jaffe, 2019). The study proposed to find similarities in college students' data becoming police officers and better handling critical situations.

Police Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way police respond to calls for service. Law enforcement is now patrolling less and responding to fewer complaints than they did years before the virus. Law enforcement agencies are now looking into handling complaints to protect their officers while still maintaining a high quality of service for the public. One research study suggested that officers are now changing how they respond by not responding to certain types of complaints. Instead, officers will handle the calls for service over the telephone or other communication devices (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). Law enforcement agencies are changing how they receive complaints by allowing the officers to communicate with victims of certain types of crimes directly. One study suggested that if a call for service involves just a misdemeanor or incident, police do not respond, but rather they take the complaint over the phone. If the call for service is a felony or in need of critical response, police officers respond while wearing protective equipment (Farrow, 2020). The study suggested that only the crimes in progress or subject to being prosecuted received a police response.

The research on police response showed that most police agencies had started to revise their response protocols before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the virus pushed the urgency to change. Research showed police administrators had already taken precautions after the Swine Flu outbreak in 2009. Studies showed police had stopped responding to vehicle collisions unless someone involved required medical attention or the vehicles were left disabled blocking a roadway (Lieber & Wolff, 2020). The policies on response were becoming unwanted by some public members, reporting that they wanted a police response regardless of the situation. The public in some areas was demanding police respond to a complaint and file reports (Lotan & Shinar, 2021). The public had already been demanding a change to police procedures due to the officer use of force cases being heard across the country. The procedures were now being heavily

scrutinized, and public members failed to promote good relations with the police or support law enforcement (Jankovic & Cvetkovic, 2020). Research is showing that the relationship between the police and the public was becoming more negative than positive.

The methods by which police officers responded to complaints since the pandemic began have grown much skepticism. Police officers not responding to certain complaints have left the public wanting answers. According to Williams and Paterson, the research has shown a dramatic drop in support for police in the last year, with a 37 percent decrease in public support (Williams & Paterson, 2020). Williams and Paterson (2020) compared statistics from America and the United Kingdom to show implications and issues related to police officer support resulting in a greater call for law enforcement reform. With police officers failing to investigate crimes and perform routine random patrol, some researchers see an increase in crime in certain jurisdictions (Jones, 2020). The main principle in which law enforcement operates is to prevent crime from happening, investigate, and prosecute those who commit acts against another person (Brandl, 2017).

Law enforcement administrators have also changed the proactive style of policing in their respective departments, ceasing all traffic enforcement operations. The policies have put officers on strict guidelines on handling traffic in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Law enforcement is looking at ceasing operations to prevent the spread of the disease by limiting the number of proactive events for only critical incidents (Alvarado et al., 2020). Critical incidents discussed include felony situations and emergency response situations. The felony situations are restricted to felony crimes in progress witnessed by officers. The emergency response situations include driving while intoxicated and wanton endangerment incidents (Alvarado et al., 2020). The two

policing styles are proactive and reactive, and the COVID-19 virus is restricting the proactive approach to policing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how law enforcement operates and, in some instances, ceasing the community policing strategy in favor of a reactive technological driven response strategy (Mohler et al., 2020). The strategy is based on law enforcement reacting to calls for service with all preventive patrol and proactive policing strategies ceasing. Law enforcement organizations are implementing the strategy in an attempt to slow the transmission of the COVID-19 virus among officers (Mohler et al., 2020). In one research study, police agencies ceased community policing programs and restricted officers to social media through the internet. The social media platform has decreased the number of people reached in the community and decreased public support in neighborhoods (Liu et al., 2021). Officers are no longer making contact with people in the neighborhoods, and internet platforms have restricted communication. The lack of community policing programs is limiting the assistance law enforcement organizations are receiving from some communities. The lack of support results in a decreased arrest for complaints involving criminal mischief and thefts (Alvarado et al., 2020). The COVID-19 virus caused a cessation of community policing programs and is changing how law enforcement officers find information on complaints. In addition, witnesses to crimes are not reporting at the same level since before the community programs were ceased. Community members are not reporting what they have witnessed due to the availability of officers at community policing events (Liu et al., 2021).

The pausing of law enforcement's community policing programs due to the COVID-19 virus has been shown to increase operations related to police officer presence in certain places.

Police officers are now actively patrolling in police vehicles to increase their presence at shopping venues, hospitals, schools, and public places (Alvarado et al., 2020). The officers are restricted to staying in their patrol vehicles to limit the chance of exposure and spreading the virus and not conducting foot patrol unless the situation warrants it. The increase of police presence results in the officers being more visible in their patrol vehicles and increases the amount of time patrolling high incident areas (Alvarado et al., 2020). In another research study, it was reported that the time an officer spends patrolling the streets visible to members of the community results in people feeling more secure in their place of business, recreational areas, and their residences (Kyprianides et al., 2021).

Law enforcement administrators have changed operations to protect officers in a variety of ways (Mohler et al., 2020). Another way administrators have limited the chance at exposure is by changing officer arrest procedures. Law enforcement administrators in several police organizations limited officers making arrests for minor and petty offenses. Officers were instructed to reduce physical arrests for minor offenses and cite the person into court (Edwards and Kotera, 2021). The arrest restriction for minor offenses has officers limited to arresting on felony offenses only, such as assaults and violent crimes. The different types of crimes change from one jurisdiction to another, but violent crimes are similar in investigative methods (Brandl, 2017). The changes in arrest procedures have increased the time for officers to perform other tasks or demands. The reduction in arrests has resulted in increased officer presence due to more time to patrol streets (Alvarado et al., 2020). The reduction in arrests has not been researched for effects on crime rates or public support.

One aspect of police response that has not yet been studied since the pandemic started is police officers on the streets. One study suggested that police were more stressed, causing them to seek employment elsewhere, but what about the police departments that have put officers on reserve or laid them off (Drew & Martin, 2020)? Research into this matter has not yet been completed and published, but these researchers question how this would affect police response if the number of officers on the street had decreased due to layoffs. The previously mentioned study from lead researcher Mohler et al. (2020) suggested that police officers were under fire for not responding to all calls, but they would not respond anyway if a department had removed some officers from the street. Research shows a decrease in the number of people attempting to become police officers and how that affects the crime rate. However, what if the town or city lays off a significant amount of their force and the number of complaints cannot get answered by the number of officers left? This research needs to be completed, and new statistics and data are taken into consideration.

Adaptability

Law enforcement agencies are changing current strategies to be more flexible when situations occur. The COVID-19 virus has caused law enforcement administrators to adapt to the situation in ways that were thought previously to be unsusceptible. Organizations are now adapting daily routines such as officer scheduling, vacation leave, staff training, patrolling, and time in officer quarters (Maskaly et al., 2021). Law enforcement administrators are restricting officers' use of common police leisure areas and limiting the number of officers who can be in those areas simultaneously. Law enforcement organizations have common areas, such as dining rooms, recreational rooms, kitchens, restrooms, and classrooms (Zolnikov & Furio, 2021). The

officers have had to adjust their daily routines to coincide with these guidelines and limit their time interacting with other officers.

Law enforcement adapts to changing situations when they occur, and another way they have changed operations is the use of days off from work. In one study, law enforcement administration working in one particular department adjusted officer schedules to limit the number of officers working at the same time. The schedule was adapting to consider how many officers are on shift and the number of calls for service (Maskaly et al., 2021). The agencies determine how many officers are needed at certain times of the day and schedule the appropriate number of officers needed. Law enforcement administrators are also adapting the schedule by furloughing officers and placing them on administrative leave. Officers are taking the schedule and adjusting vacation schedules to coincide with their days off to achieve maximum time off (Maskaly et al., 2021).

Law enforcement organizations are changing patrol operations with command staff to cover complaints during the COVID-19 pandemic. Police administrators are reallocating personal to achieve a more operational balance of patrol. Patrol operations have been adapted to include police administrators answering calls for service in the place of patrol officers (Eisenman et al., 2021). The operational change maximizing the number of officers and balances the command structure to target preventing COVID-19 transmissions. The use of police administrators allows for officers to take more time off and limit their chances of exposure. The schedules for officers are affected by administrators working shifts they are not normally required to work. The operational change assists officer schedules by giving the patrol officers

more time off when exposed or when they are furloughed (Eisenman et al., 2021, Maskaly et al., 2021).

Public Reactions

The COVID-19 pandemic research on the effects on crime is currently underway by numerous researchers. One research study suggests that the crime rate has increased by 31 percent compared to the statistics before the pandemic (Laufs & Waseem, 2020). However, the study being performed has not considered the effect of officers not responding to complaints and the change of police procedures. Future research could take the new techniques of some of the law enforcement departments to verify if the change of response for police has caused the increase in crime. Police responding to calls for service in the past has been of two approaches, one being reactive and the other being a proactive approach. Reactive police response is when police only respond to complaints after they have already happened and someone, maybe a victim, has called the police. A proactive approach to policing occurs when police officers perform random routine patrols in the hope of deterring crime (Brandl, 2017). Research in some of these studies is showing, police in some jurisdictions have now changed their approach to a reactive approach and are not attempting to be proactive. The Bowen and Owen (2020) showed increased crime across a given jurisdiction after police stopped patrolling and switched to being reactive. The study showed a negative view of the police in that area from the public and no support for police (Boman & Owen, 2020). The negative view of the police is hurting the relationship between the community and the police.

In the works of Robert Peel, he wrote several principles for police to follow to be successful and gain the public's trust. Peel's second principle allows law enforcement to perform

daily actions with the support of the public (Lentz & Chaires, 2007). According to some researchers, the public's reaction relates to a successful partnership, which can decrease the crime rate. The crime rate is dependent on police working with the public, gaining the support of the public through information sharing. Police share information with the public to help them solve crimes and give vital case information (Cox et al., 2020, Weiss, 2017). The public does not allow understand the police department's actions, so it is vital that the police share information. The pandemic's impact on police operations results in a lack of information sharing between the police and the public. One study researched the effects of police sharing information on COVID-19 protocols. The study showed a failure by police administration to give information because they had not realized the potential hazards of releasing pandemic operations. The research questionnaires filled out by public members showed a mistrust of law enforcement administrators (Soltes et al., 2021). The release of information assists law enforcement personally by bringing awareness to the general public on officers' strategies in certain situations. The COVID-19 virus has forced law enforcement to find alternative methods of releasing information, such as the internet and other media platforms (Kyprianides et al., 2021). Law enforcement officials are using social media platforms and television programs to release information to the public.

Law enforcement has been forced to change communications with the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Police agencies have implemented innovative strategies to communicate with the public by releasing information by any possible means. Law enforcement officials are now communicating with the public through institutional videos, posters, mail, and information on official police department webpages (Alvarado et al., 2020). Law enforcement uses videos to pass information to the public on certain issues, such as police response to complaints, crime

information, contact information, and community awareness. The use of posters and brochures in the mail has given officers another method of passing vital information on police operations and crime to the public (Alvarado et al., 2020). Law enforcement can include details about police operations to reassure the public that they are still patrolling and preventing crime.

Farmer and Copenhaver (2021) showed that the new protocols police were following were also causing public issues. One study suggested that police officers wearing protective masks made members of the public uneasy and less likely to approach an officer for help. The research showed an adverse reaction to officers wearing masks because the public could not see their faces (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). The psychological issues associated with nonverbal communication can be found in this study. The problem was that the public could not see the facial reactions of officers, and one study participant wrote that it made the police more militaristic and less approachable. Another study found the police officers wearing masks were less likely to speak to them and make a casual conversation (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). The study shows the significance of officers wearing a mask and how the public feels. It is a controversial topic for law enforcement: do they protect themselves or remain visible in the public eye to gain their support.

Community Service

Law enforcement administrators have changed operations to include areas of public service never attempted by police officers. Police administrators have developed strategies to assist the public beyond the duties of law enforcement officers. Police organizations have developed strategies to assist in the distribution of medicine and supplies to the general public. Law enforcement officers are now assisting by protecting medical deliveries of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines (Jankovic, 2021). In some police jurisdictions, officers assist in COVID-

19 virus testing centers by working security and directing traffic in and out of the center's parking lots. The police assistance in these matters has made medical staff usually responsible for those actions to focus on the public's medical needs (Jankovic, 2021).

Law enforcement officers have changed operations to service by giving the public an assist in distributing resources. In some jurisdictions, law enforcement has expanded its role to include delivering food and medicine to vulnerable people (Jankovic, 2021). Law enforcement has been able to limit the amount of exposure for some public members by delivering resources. The officers are working to assist the vulnerable members by preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus by allowing the vulnerable to redirect their attention to mitigate risks. The change in police operations has also been a positive solution to some members of the public's financial hardship (Frenkel et al., 2021). Law enforcement delivering resources has allowed certain members of the public that are a financial budget to reallocate finances to another needed area. The delivery service by law enforcement officers has decreased the number of people out in public and created a favorable image of law enforcement.

Chapter Two Summary

The literature on the subject of police procedures and policies changing after the COVID-19 pandemic is growing. Currently, research is being conducted on questions, such as the failure of police responding to calls for service increasing crime and the decrease of officers on the street due to departments laying off employees (Bishopp et al., 2015). The literature showed how law enforcement had changed their strategies from a community policing strategy to a reactive technological driven path (Mohler et al., 2020). Mohler (2020) suggested that the strategy law enforcement implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in decreased public support.

The research on the topic of police support from the adaptation of different strategies is ongoing and more research is needed.

Chapter 2 covered the literature published up to the date of this study on what has been conducted by researchers so far on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on law enforcement, specifically on changes in procedures. The literature discussed what policies had been changed, such as police only responding to felonies and critical incidents, the public being upset with police response, and the failure of police to share information on what they had changed (Dey et al., 2021). The research showed how law enforcement changed operations to go above and beyond normal patrol activities and assist the public in new ways. Studies showed law enforcement officers going out of their way to ensure the public had vital resources such as medicine and supplies (Farrow, 2020). Law enforcement organizations also changed the response to vehicle collisions during the COVID-19 pandemic by only responding to collisions resulting in a person being injured or a vehicle blocking a roadway (Lieber & Wolfe, 2020). The new strategies being implemented to keep officers safe have caused a decrease in public support and resulted in law enforcement officers being scrutinized by the public for failing to perform the basic police officer responsibilities (Jankovic & Cvetkovic, 2020). The decrease in police responses and failure to be present in certain situations has increased crime in jurisdictions across the United States (Jones, 2020).

Literature also showed how law enforcement changed their communication efforts to support their communities when interacting with the public has to be restricted. Police are using other methods of reacting to calls for service, such as telephone and video conferencing (Farmer & Copenhaver, 2021). Communication between law enforcement and the community is vital to the success of police organizations and preventing crime. The new communication strategy is

decreasing the number of people being reached in certain communities, which has resulted in the people in those neighborhoods distrusting the police (Liu et al., 2021). Law enforcement also adapted to their environment by changing operations to include time away from duty. Law enforcement administrators have had to balance the workload by joining the ranks of the patrol staff and answering calls for service. The rise of COVID-19 cases among law enforcement administrators has caused some organizations to put protective measures on officers taking time off from being exposed directly (Dey et al., 2021). Law enforcement officers are being exposed at an increasing rate, with the number of COVID-19 cases rising across the United States (Drew & Martin, 2020). Law enforcement officers are being exposed because when they are on certain high-risk complaints or rapid deployment situations, they rush to the scene of the incident without taking the time to think about their safety and use personal protective equipment (Jones, 2020). Medical professionals are guiding law enforcement organizations with suggestions such as using a facial covering, gloves, social distancing, frequent sanitizing, and getting the COVID-19 vaccine (CDC, 2020).

The literature review showed a need for future research and discussed what policies worked and what did not work. The amount of research conducted on police policies being changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic is limited due to the time researchers have had to study the effects. In time, the literature will cover more issues such as the psychological effects the virus has had on police officers and their families.

Chapter 3: Method

Introduction to Research Design and Implementation

The purpose of this multiple case study was to show the immediate policy and procedure changes in law enforcement since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design, the methodology for collecting data, and the tools for analyzing the topic. The chapter includes the study's rationale, critical validation questions, participant number, target population, and purpose. This chapter also provides detailed descriptions of the research design, implementation of that design, and procedures for analysis.

Purpose for Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on police operational procedures and protocols. The study reviewed the impact of procedure and policy changes for law enforcement on day-to-day operations. The study demonstrated the significant procedural changes that affect law enforcement officers in the target population and the importance of recognizing these policy changes. In conducting this research, dependent variables include police operations, and the independent variable is the safety of law enforcement officers during the health crisis of the COVID-19 virus.

Research Questions for the Study

- R1:** How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?
- R2:** What are the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- R3:** Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?

The first research question ascertains the number of changes in law enforcement procedures in the selected region. The inquiry focuses on officer safety affected by those design changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Research has shown that the percentage of officer deaths has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Parkin et al., 2021). The second question evaluates how law enforcement officers have identified possible challenges in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on finding law enforcement's potential issues in their daily routines. The third question identifies the law enforcement administrators responsible for making changes to policy and procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research questions are designed to identify issues and who is responsible for responding to address all the problems facing law enforcement officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Design

This multiple case study involved a thematic approach to explore and elicit law enforcement responses, their perspectives, their opinions, and the officers' reflections on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement policies and procedures. The study was designed to elicit responses to interview questions that would detail the experiences of law enforcement officers working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on the policies and procedural changes in law enforcement and how those changes could affect the policing community in the future. The design of the research project depends on careful planning and preparation by the researcher to be strategic and focused. The study design was based on a phenomenological approach to describe the COVID-19 pandemic effects on law enforcement, the activity of law enforcement officers, and the phenomenon of a pandemic (Kelly-Quon, 2018).

The qualitative research project is an organized and detailed process. The project must first be developed to include a problem statement, purpose for the study and the research

question to be answered (Kelly-Quon, 2018). The first step in this research project was to develop a justification for the study. The justification for the study was to identify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on police policies as understanding the process and the impacts is essential for law enforcement agencies to better prepare for future crisis situations. The first chapter of this research project outlined the potential implications and possibilities for this effect. The next step in this project was to conduct a thorough review of corresponding literature on law enforcement policies and what could cause a modification in policies. The literature review was an important step in this research study because it showed the need for future research to be conducted and allowed this researcher to gain a perception of the COVID-19 virus' impact on policing. The literature review covered a range of topics from police training, law enforcement hiring practices, medical leave, police chain of command structures, law enforcement administration, and organizational development.

Justifying the study and conducting a literature review were the first steps in this research project. The most important step in the process was preparing to collect the data to be analyzed. The initial step before conducting any research at Liberty University is to gain the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher provided a quick summary and explanation of the study to the IRB for approval. The IRB confirmed that the study met all conditions and requirements listed by Liberty University (Appendix A). The IRB application included the study purpose, study participants, study instruments, study recruitment process, and consent documents. This approval had to take place before the data collection can occur.

The qualitative study demonstrated the impact of police operational changes on police day-to-day activities since the COVID-19 pandemic. The research study examined this impact by using research questions in a semi-structured interview format, which were designed to elicit in-

depth responses from the participants and allow them to provide their thoughts and feelings about working through the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews included questions designed to address the research questions and validate the study. After completing the interviews, a thematic analysis of each participant's responses was conducted to show the effect of the pandemic on policy changes. A thematic analysis was chosen to show correlations across the data and develop overarching themes to understand the relationship between COVID-19 and policy changes for law enforcement.

A qualitative methodology was employed to investigate procedures to explore the changes in operational procedures. The methodology included a thematic examination of the implementation of operational changes. The analysis identified patterns in the data collected to find keywords, phrases, and questions relating to the research questions to draw conclusions. Tewksbury suggested most research in criminal justice is conducted with quantitative methodology (Tewksbury, 2009), but this research study required a thematic analysis, so qualitative research was better suited to the research questions. Quantitative research looks for numerical data assigning value to the collected data. Quantitative data collection limits response to hard data, while this research study required an analysis of richer data (Creswell et al., 2011). This research requires participants to give explanations to the interview questions through detailed statements and perceptions. These procedures allowed the participants to fully explain each answer, unlike in a quantitative study where participants would not be given that opportunity (Creswell et al., 2007)). This qualitative study was more informative and assisted readers in understanding the effect of operational changes implemented by law enforcement due to the pandemic.

Participants and Sample Size

This study included participants from law enforcement organizations across several states in the Appalachian region of the United States, including Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. The law enforcement participants underwent the study's screening process, which included questions relating to years of service, current employment status, and place of employment. Descriptors verified participants met the parameters of the research study, which were experienced law enforcement officers in the Appalachian region of the United States. The screening questions assisted the researcher in determining the reliability of the information and the study. By determining the participants met all the parameters of the study, which was years of service and current employment, it was determined these law enforcement officers met the assumption of being experienced officers. Law enforcement officers gain the respect of their peers through years of service, which molds the officer's perceptions and abilities (Williams, 2017). Law enforcement officers gain experience and knowledge of police policies and procedures by working through different situations that arise in their daily routines. The more law enforcement officers work, the more experience and knowledge they will gain.

The study had several factors that influenced the design and resulted from the changing scenarios across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was a unique disruption to everyday life and led to some unexpected effects, and law enforcement administrators looked at the evolving developments of the COVID-19 virus and developed responses to combat the surge of cases among their departments (Lieber & Wolff, 2020). This research study attempted to determine the effect of the modified procedures on officers. The number of officers chosen for the project was two per organization, and they included officers from various ranks. Appropriate law enforcement officers were recruited through email. This researcher used a recruitment letter distributed through email to elicit a response from law

enforcement officers from the selected region. Once a response had been given by law enforcement officials, the researcher identified dates and times available to the respondents for interviews. The participants in the study received emails containing consent forms to read, and if they agree to the study conditions, they signed and returned them by email.

Study Population

The study included participants from a wide range of law enforcement organizations from four different states: Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. The four states in this study were selected because they have similar law enforcement characteristics, and the states border one another. The law enforcement characteristics were organizations with the similar number of employees with basic police certifications (Sierra-Arévalo, 2021). All the states chosen also had fraternal order of police organizations that assisted both state and local law enforcement. The study participants were approached through email with a recruitment letter which outlined the proposed research. The study's participants were selected by being the first three respondents to the email from each state. Once the first three from each state had responded, a letter of consent was sent to each possible participant to agree to the perimeters of the study, sign, and email back. Once the consent agreements all had been signed and returned, interview times were given to the participants from which to select, and an interview schedule was completed.

Data Collection

The instrument used for this study was a semi-structured interview protocol with each participant. The semi-structured interview was employed to gain the deepest information for each question. The interviews contained structured questions which gave participants the opportunity to fully explain each answer and express their feelings about the topic being discussed in each question. The interview was used as the research instrument because it is a tool

used to collect data to be analyzed to present the outcomes of the effects of the independent and dependent variable (Deborah, 2003). The interviews allowed for data to be gathered that was relevant to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement policies and procedures.

Conducting the interviews was determined by the available date and time of the law enforcement officials and the researcher's schedule. Once each participant and the researcher agreed upon the date and time, interview schedules were completed. Using descriptive interviews and surveys assisted the understanding of behaviors and perceptions during this research project (Kelly-Quon, 2018). Interviews were scheduled on different days due to conflicting schedules. The interview parameters descriptions are in the individual consent forms, and each participant was asked on each parameter if they agreed. One such parameter was the agreement for the interview to be recorded with no personal information given by the participant. The researcher gave each participant a number to catalog each interview in sequence. The parameter of each interview also included the participant isolating in a private room with no other person's present during the interview. The isolation process showed the participant was agreeable to keeping information confidential. The participant had to agree to this stipulation on the consent form to participate in the study.

The next step in the data collection process was the interview with the participants. The participants chose a date and time for an interview with the researcher. The phone interviews were recorded and stored on the researcher's computer, with only the researcher having access to the recordings due to password protection. Interview recordings will be stored on the researcher's computer for one year. Once transcription occurred, the information was analyzed using a computer software program named Dedoose, which looked for themes in the information

that addressed the research questions. Data analysis was conducted to show correlations between themes, codes, and relationships in the variables (Kelly-Quon, 2018).

The interviews included the researcher asking the participants a set of twelve questions designed to gain information to prove the study's validity. The research questions were asked one at a time, allowing the participant to answer each question thoroughly. If the participant wished to stop the interview, they could. Interviews varied in time according to the participants' answers to each question differently. Participant responses ranged from one or two sentences answering each question to three to four per answer. The data from the interviews was transcribed for analysis by the researcher after the completion of the interviews and analyzed using computer-assisted software for qualitative data analysis.

Summary

This research study was designed to elicit law enforcement responses to questions about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on policing procedures and policies. The intended participants included sworn law enforcement officers who were active in a law enforcement organization with five years of experience. The experience stipulation was put into place to ensure each participant had experience dealing with the policies and procedures of their organizations. The targeted participant sample was defined with those specific characteristics to promote a valid argument. After data collection, a thematic approach to analysis was employed to understand the relationship between the COVID-19 virus and police policies and procedures.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

In law enforcement, officers face problems they must overcome, and during their duties, they must adapt to a changing environment. This study provides information on how law enforcement agencies modified policies and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is vital for better preparing for future situations law enforcement agencies could face. In this chapter, I discuss the study's findings concerning the proposed research questions. In the following sections, I will discuss the data collection and analysis of the findings.

Most consider research to be an essential part of understanding how things work (Sherif, 2018). This qualitative multiple case research study focused on the impact of the COVID-19 virus on policies and procedures in law enforcement agencies in central Appalachia. Qualitative interviews were used to collect data from experienced law enforcement officers in four states. The states included Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. The research design used in this study was intended to show a distinct adaptation of law enforcement procedures across the middle Appalachia region during the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications. Data compiled during this research study came from interviews with experienced law enforcement officials who were working while the COVID-19 pandemic was occurring. Law enforcement agencies often change procedures and adapt to their environment to protect the public and themselves, so that they may continue to positively influence society (Lauf & Waseem, 2020).

In this qualitative study, thematic analysis was applied to the data collected during participant interviews to answer the research questions. Thematic analysis in research involves searching through the data to find repeated words, statements, or phrases to identify themes (Remu & Miah, 2021). Themes in data were developed using coding, which identifies analytical

interest by labeling explicit and implicit meanings in the data (Watson & Noble, 2014). Themes in the data identified the patterns showing an increased change in policies for law enforcement. The themes were isolated and designated for law enforcement administrators and officers strategizing for the COVID-19 pandemic. The themes allowed this researcher to show crisis management techniques used by law enforcement to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lasting effects of those strategies.

Data collected from the multiple case study interviews was compared and triangulated to what was known in the literature. Some similarities and differences were noted between different professions that developed strategies to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic as the situation progressed (White et al., 2021). The literature review guided an understanding of strategies that had been applied in the various professions and what significance those strategies had on developing new policies. This study included interviews with law enforcement professionals, and the literature review could be compared to other professionals in future studies on how effective law enforcement strategies were.

Using different questions in research shows direction and emphasis on a particular topic of study to focus the researcher's efforts (Sherif, 2018). The following research questions were developed to provide information on the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on law enforcement in the target geographical region.

RQ1: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?

RQ2: What are the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ3: Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?

To answer these research questions, interviews were conducted with experienced law enforcement officials from different organizations. The interviews allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data thematically to find patterns of adaptation in police policies and procedures. Participant data was triangulated among participants and saturation was observed in the emerging themes. These emerging themes were used to answer the research questions. Saturation shows adequate support in the data to validate the research study conclusion (Mwita, 2022). The patterns in the data are repeatedly evident, building the confidence that the themes or categories in the research validate the researcher's claims (Remu & Miah, 2021).

This research project chapter contains a review of the data and patterns within the data providing the researcher and audience with a detailed explanation of the changes in law enforcement policies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The patterns in the data led to the following themes being isolated to show the project's validity. The themes that emerged from participant data were: (a) Human Resources; (b) Protective Equipment Usage; (c) Law Enforcement Response Procedures; (d) Sick Leave and Medical Leave; (e) COVID-19 Training. The data analysis showed a repeated pattern of these themes through triangulation of participant responses. The participants from various law enforcement organizations provided answers in the oral interviews that demonstrated these emerging themes.

COVID-19 Participant Demographics

The participants in this research study were from various states across the Appalachian region and varied in the study's targeted law enforcement population. The research project set participant guidelines for each participant to meet to participate in the study. The participants all had to have over five years of law enforcement experience. The participants all gave current employment status, gender, rank, and state of employment. The study included three females and

nine males ranging from 22 years of experience to 8 years, which resulted in an average of 14 years of service. There were three participants from each of the four states targeted: Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia. Table 1 shows the results of the demographic of participants.

Table 1

COVID-19 Participant Demographic (n=12)

Participant Identification	Gender	Years in Policing	State
1	Male	17	Kentucky
2	Male	11	Kentucky
3	Female	22	Ohio
4	Male	18	Ohio
5	Female	10	Virginia
6	Male	20	Kentucky
7	Male	12	Virginia
8	Male	14	Virginia
9	Male	15	West Virginia
10	Male	12	West Virginia
11	Female	9	West Virginia
12	Male	8	Ohio

Data Analysis Results

The data in this qualitative study originated from a set of questions designed to elicit open-ended responses from participants on a certain topic or research question (Renu and Miah, 2021). Data was drawn from 12 participants in the law enforcement profession to examine the effects of Covid on police policies and procedures. Through the qualitative study, the participants gave answers to questions that enabled this researcher to categorize the answers and search for the matching themes. Multiple themes were discovered in the data, which exposed the policy and procedural changes sustained by the COVID-19 virus allowed conclusions to be made on the impact of the virus on law enforcement officers. The study participants had eight years of law enforcement experience to 22 years of experience. The study included three participants each from four different states. The participants were all sworn full-time employees of a law enforcement organization. The participants all have experience working as police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recruitment for the study was conducted through a recruitment email by the researcher in accordance with IRB protocols and approval. The emails contained a brief description of the project with instructions on how to respond if a person was interested in participating (Appendix A). A recruitment email was sent out to numerous law enforcement organizations across the targeted four states. The first three law enforcement officers to respond to the email stating they were willing to participate in the study were emailed back with a participation agreement consent form to sign and emailed back (Appendix B). Once the agreement form was sent back, the participant was emailed a schedule of times to choose from that they would be available to complete a phone interview. The participant was again informed about the nature of the study and how the study would be conducted. The participants agreed to phone interviews and to have

those phone interviews recorded for transcription. The informed consent forms were signed and emailed back by each participant consenting to the recorded phone interviews.

Phone interviews were conducted to collect data in a qualitative research method. Interviews are a tool used in qualitative research to assist a researcher in identifying patterns in words or themes to make a conclusion (Deborah, 2003). Interviews in qualitative research can be used for a variety of reasons, such as distance, isolation of participants, cooperation agreement, or participant anonymity (Lui, 2022). The IRB approved the phone interviews at Liberty University prior before any participant contact was attempted. Phone interviews were kept to a minimum of 10 minutes but not more than 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted two weeks after initial contact with the participants. The interviews were recorded using a Sunlan digital voice recorder and transcribed by the researcher using Otter AI speech software. The transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy by the researcher three times using the digital recording. Once transcribed, each participant was sent via email a word document of the transcription to verify for accuracy. The participants approved all transcriptions.

The data collected in the participant interviews assisted the researcher in identifying themes of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected law enforcement policies and procedures. The data was analyzed using the data analysis software Dedoose and resulted in five themes being identified. Dedoose is a web-based software program using advanced technology to organize and analyze data in text, photos, audio and video files, and spreadsheets (Maryl et al., 2020). The data themes resulted from participants providing information related to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in multiple ways and adapting to the changing environment. The themes that the researchers identified are provided in the following Table 2.

Table 2

Themes

Research Questions	Themes
Q1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?	1. Protective Equipment Usage
Q2. What are some of the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?	2. Law Enforcement Response Procedures
Q3. Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?	3. Sick Time and Medical Leave
	4. COVID-19 Training and Education
	5. Human Resources

The themes identified in this research project are used to examine and understand how the COVID-19 virus has affected law enforcement. The data can be used to examine further hundreds of law enforcement organizations across the United States in a broader, more far-reaching study. Data analysis can be further evaluated to understand a particular topic from a larger sample (Morgan, 2022).

The Dedoose program was used to analyze the data to develop themes through coding and organizing the text excerpts from the participants. The Dedoose program led to the researcher finding frequencies within the data which is shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3

Frequencies within the Themes

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
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Human Resources	33	9%
Protective Equipment Usage	74	21%
Law Enforcement Response Procedures	138	38%
Sick Time and Medical Leave	65	19%
COVID-19 Training	47	13%

Frequency in the Data

The frequency of the themes identified in the data showed the participants answered the questions and confirmed COVID-19's effect on law enforcement. The data analysis of the transcribed interviews led to the researcher concluding that saturation was achieved in the study because the participants answered the research questions through the patterns in the data. Saturation in the data is confirmed when a researcher finds enough data has already been collected and there is no new data discovered that can be obtained from participants during the study (Mwita, 2022). Data saturation in this study was achieved when the participants answered the research questions in the identified themes. Data saturation in qualitative studies has been widely used to ensure the validity of findings (Sherif, 2018).

The participants in the research study answered the interview questions leading to themes confirming saturation in the data. The research questions in the study were developed to show a relationship between COVID-19 and law enforcement policy and procedures changing. The themes answered the research questions and validated the research study.

Q1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?

The first research question deals with the day-to-day operations of law enforcement and how officers respond to calls for service. The question relates those procedures to how they affect officer safety. The participant responses in the interviews resulted in two different themes emerging from the data in response to this question. One theme was the use of protective equipment, and the second theme was law enforcement response procedures. The themes answered the research question by the number of respondents stating that operational procedures had changed in at least one way. Participants shared their recollections during the COVID-19 pandemic while working for law enforcement organizations.

Theme One: Use of Protective Equipment

The first theme identified in the data from participant interviews was the use of protective equipment by law enforcement officers. The participants described the use of personal protective equipment as emergency protective items that prevent the spread of a virus from person to person. The Centers for Disease Control define personal protective equipment as the equipment is worn to minimize exposure to potential hazards such as chemicals, radiological, or pathogens (CDC, 2020). Individuals can wear personal protective equipment to protect themselves against multiple hazards in the workplace. Participants described personal protective equipment as gloves, facial coverings, respirators, safety coveralls, and some full-body suits. Participants identified the need for personal protective equipment through medical professionals' warnings and guidelines against the COVID-19 virus (Feng, Li, Hu, & Li, 2022). The CDC recommends personal protective equipment for public servants or health care workers. Medical professionals stressed the use of the equipment to minimize infection rates and decrease the number of first responders contracting the COVID-19 virus (CDC, 2020). Law enforcement officers work in the

public sector and serve people face to face, which has increased their risk of exposure to COVID-19 and led them to change policies on using personal protective equipment. Participant 3 stated it was “important to protect oneself against the virus and other people.” Participant 3 shared the following statement:

Yeah, we have all kinds of stuff to protect ourselves. So, we actually put safety kits in each police vehicle. I'm also a police fleet manager, so we actually put kits in all of the cars, like disposable masks and 95 masks, glasses, gloves, and even like a whole gown if any officer needed one. We put cleaning supplies and sanitizing spray solution at several different places throughout our building. So, if an officer brought somebody back and they needed to spray down the back of their car, the department had sprayers that they could use. We changed our normal procedures to protect officers as much as we could at the time.

The use of personal protective equipment in law enforcement was a policy some officers felt was needed for a long time. Participant 7 stated, “Officers go into dangerous situations all the time where they can be infected with God only knows what.” The response of law enforcement officers suggests law enforcement officers go into situations and expose themselves to many different medical hazards, such as AIDS, Hepatitis, Influenza, Tuberculosis, Anthrax, COVID-19, and a host of other dangerous illnesses (Ann et al., 2022). Participant 7 shared the following statement:

So anytime we had to respond over there, if there was a medical call, let's say at one point they started allowing the college students to come outside if they promised just to sit in front of their rooms just to get some fresh air for a few minutes. Sometimes, they would get locked out of their rooms, and we would have to respond to them. We would have to

go over with gloves, masks, eye protection, and sometimes even full body suits. They gave us the tieback, white suits that were extremely thick and hot to wear. They did give us those in case we needed to go into like a dormitory where it was quarantined just for Covenant 19 patients.

Law enforcement officers respond to various types of complaints and must go into places that are not considered safe. Participants responded several times during the interviews they had to respond to places where they did not feel safe, even with personal protective equipment. Participants discussed using personal protective equipment to protect themselves, and the people they care about at home. Participants discussed they did not want to take the virus home to family members or potentially pass it to other civilians on other complaints. Participant 2 stated they felt unsafe and a virus carrier. “I know I have been exposed, and I do not want to take it home to my elderly parent who has medical conditions,” the participant explained. Law enforcement officers are exposed frequently to potentially deadly illnesses and transmitting those illnesses to family members is six times greater than the general public (Bossert, 2020).

Participant 2 shared the following observation:

At the beginning of the Covid pandemic, I felt safe. I did not know what it could really do to a person. Once I learned how dangerous the virus could be to certain people in the general population, it scared me a little bit. I have a father who has breathing difficulties who I spend a lot of time with, and I did not want to bring it home to him. I did not want to be responsible for transmitting a virus to him that could possibly kill him. I did not want that to happen, so I had to spend a lot of time away from him at first until I felt safe.

Participants explained how important wearing personal protective equipment was and why it mattered to them to protect the people around them. Participants described several times

how the equipment policy possibly saved them from becoming sick or transmitting the virus to family members at home. The participants also discussed how it took some time to become accustomed to wearing the equipment, but once they did, it was just like any other equipment they use. It became muscle memory to put on the mask, gloves, or eye protection just like their firearm or another piece of necessary law enforcement equipment. Participants discussed using the protective equipment in different situations, and they claimed the equipment never hindered their job performance. Participant 1 discussed how the equipment became policy, “PPE (personal protective equipment) is now being used every day.” Participants in several interviews discussed how personal protective equipment is now being used daily in multiple scenarios even with the COVID-19 virus infection rates decreasing. Participant 1 stated the following:

We have had masks and glove mandates, stricter policies on un-vaccinated employees, travel restrictions, and we always followed the CDC quarantine guidelines. Any officer who chose not to get the vaccination had to be tested weekly to ensure the virus would not spread unknowingly through the officers. The unvaccinated officers were also required to wear mask at all times, both indoors and outside. We became more reactive, mandated the use of gloves, masks, and PPE, and added rules pertaining to dealing with individuals or transporting arrestees. We also filled out infectious exposure forms every time we even thought we had been exposed.

Participants discussed how the personal protective equipment became part of their everyday lives, and it became muscle memory to wear the equipment. Personal protective equipment is now a part of those participants’ standard assigned equipment. Masks, gloves, and eye protection are now mandatory for the participants in the study. For example, participant 5 discussed the importance of wearing a mask, explaining, “The department made its police wear

the KN95 mask at all times.” The mask mandate went into place shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began for most of the participants. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) suggested that KN95 masks be worn in public by first responders to protect themselves against the COVID-19 virus (CDC, 2020). Participant 5 made the following statement:

My department made all of us wear K-N95 mask while around each other or the public.

The only time we could take them off was if we were inside of our car alone. Also, if you got the vaccine, you only had to test if you started to feel ill. If you decided not to get the vaccination like I have done, we were required to get tested and provide the results weekly. If we were caught in public without the mask on, we could face disciplinary actions by the administration.

Theme Two: Law Enforcement Response Procedures

Law enforcement responds to daily service calls to serve the public and prevent crime. The procedures for law enforcement responding to complaints varies from agency to agency, with two different types of police response. One response is for the officers to be proactive, and the other is reactive. Officers define proactive response for law enforcement as preventing crime by actively patrolling and stopping offenders from committing a crime. Reactive response for law enforcement is defined as officers responding to a crime once the crime has already occurred (Butler et al., 2022). Law enforcement responds to various types of complaints, and the participants in this study talked about how their procedures have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants in this study of law enforcement policies and procedures discussed their response to calls for service. Participants discussed working vehicle collisions, theft complaints, assaults, drug complaints, neighbor disputes, and other complaints. Participants also discussed

how their response to certain complaints had changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and how those procedural changes impacted their organization. Participant 5 discussed how procedures had changed for responding to a person's home. Participant 5 stated the following:

Other restrictions they placed on us was not going into a residence on a complaint for service unless it was justified to do so. We were ordered to discuss complaints with the person calling outside a residence in open air with our mask on. We always had to work complaints inside before, but now we go outside while keeping a short distance from the person we were talking to. The policy has not changed back, and I do not know if it ever will.

Responding to complaints is a large part of what law enforcement is required to do every day. Participants suggested a change has been made in how they respond to complaints on the basis of how serious the complaint is on a criminal level. Several participants discussed how they respond to calls for service over the phone unless it is a felony or a crime in progress. A felony is a type of crime committed by a person that causes serious physical or mental harm to a person or society (O'Leary, 2022). Participant 10 discussed how answering calls had changed, "Taking calls for service has now transitioned to taking complaints over the telephone." Law enforcement take calls for service regularly and respond in different ways. Participant 10 stated:

Answering calls for service over the phone as much as we could, so we could avoid human contact, but when phone calls could not be done such as domestics, injury collisions, and felonies, we wore masks and stayed at a safe distance as much as possible. If we thought the people, we were in contact with had Covid- 19, we got tested as quick as possible. If we knew for sure the person was infected, we took a mandatory day off to

get tested. We changed our response to phone calls unless it was urgent. The phone call policy is still in effect on some complaints.

The response of law enforcement can have negative reactions from the public, especially when officers are no longer out in the public eye. Participants discussed how they changed patrol policies by remaining out of the public as much as possible. Several participants discussed how they are now not allowed to eat out in restaurants or with their fellow officers. Participant 5 shared:

We were also not allowed to go out on duty and eat with each other; we had to eat alone in our police cruisers or wherever we could. We were also not allowed inside of the station unless we had good cause. We had to do all report writing in our cruisers or at home. If we did go into the police station, we had to wear mask, gloves, and were only allowed to stay 10 to 15 minutes.

The participants showed a cause for concern when discussing the importance of responding to complaints. Law enforcement officers respond to complaints and talk to people about what has occurred and how they can help remedy the problem. Law enforcement officers are the peacekeepers of society, and without them, society will be in chaos. Law enforcement assists people and keeps the chaos at a minimum by being society's mentors, friends, heroes, calming voices, shoulders to cry on, protectors, and listeners (Siegel, 2009). Participants discussed how law enforcement's place in society had changed during the pandemic, and it was hurting their relationship with their community. Participant 11 talked about how changing policies on vehicle collisions have made some community members angry. Participant 11 explained:

We also now handle all non-injury collisions with a civilian accident report. We do not respond to those anymore, which has helped our call volume go down. Some people did not like this change because they feel the civilian accident report does not help them when it comes to damages to their vehicle. I handed one person a civilian report, and they become hostile, saying they should not have wasted their time in calling us, and I was no help. The person told me they wish they would have called the State Police because now the damage to their vehicle will never get fixed. Our administration changed the policy, and I explained that to the person, but they did not care. They just wanted to get a report saying the other person was at fault, but I was unable to give them one. I don't like that policy because I feel it makes the public upset when there is no reason.

Q2. What are the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The second research question focuses on the challenges law enforcement faces and how law enforcement has adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic forced people who work in public to change their procedures and how they interact with people (Zolnikov & Furio, 2021). Participants in this study discussed how they changed not only how they do their job, like in the first research question that was previously answered, but these participants stated they had to change policies to address certain staffing challenges. The participants were able to answer the research question with two different themes. The themes were constant across the interviews, and a few participants stated it was a large issue they had to resolve. The themes from the data that answered research question two were first, Sick Time and Medical Leave, and second, COVID-19 Training and Education.

Law enforcement officers are required to face many challenges in their careers. Some of those challenges can be life-threatening, while some are minor issues officers do not even

realize. One theme involving sick time and medical leave came up in the interviews, with participants stating numerous problems with staffing through the COVID-19 pandemic. Law enforcement officers exposed to the virus were placed into quarantine due to the guidelines set by the CDC when the virus started in 2020 (CDC, 2020). Those guidelines placed law enforcement organizations in a tight spot. Participant 1 discussed medical leave in the following statement:

While off for reasons of being quarantined, positive for Covid, experiencing Covid symptoms, employees do not have to use any of their own sick time and will be paid as if they are working. If the officer is off for an extend period of time, the department takes care of them and pays them. The department also changed the sick leave policy adding potential virus transmission. What I mean is if a person was exposed to the virus and was not vaccinated, they have to take off for a minimum five working days. If they were vaccinated, they were required to wear a mask at all times and were not allowed in the police station until five days were up. It was a policy that hindered our service to the community.

Sick time and medical leave changed staffing policies and led to some law enforcement organizations in this study to change where officers could go off duty. Law enforcement officers are sworn to uphold the law and always perform criminal justice duties, not just when they are on duty. Law enforcement officers are also required to respond to crimes in progress if they observe them, on duty or off (Agee, 2020). One participant discussed how changing off-duty policies to combat the transmission of the virus had also taken away a little freedom officer had when they were off duty. Participant 6 stated:

My agency has offered paid time off for any officer that has contracted COVID-19. The agency has also paid for any COVID-19 test that we have taken for precautions. The Chief has routinely allowed us to take off when officers did not feel ok, even if we did receive a negative test for Covid. The Chief actually changed the policy on sick leave and took care of any medical need officers might need that contracted the virus. If an officer got sick, the department paid for all medical bills. The only issue with our new leave policy would be officers cannot travel outside the state unless they wanted to take another Covid test and take another five days off once they got back. Some officers did not like this policy because they felt they were not able to relax and go where they wanted to without being punished.

Sick leave became an interesting topic during the interviews with participants because it was vastly different between the organizations. Sick leave and medical leave were one constant change among the participant. Every participant stated during their interviews that their policies had changed and would remain for the foreseeable future. These types of policies must remain in place to protect officers in the future, according to participant 7. Extended medical leave was another policy brought up during the interviews with participants. Participant 7 discussed how extended medical leave assists officers with financial resources. Extended medical leave is a type of assistance organizations give to employees who become sick and need extended time off due to illness or medical conditions (Butler et al., 2022). According to the participants, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed organizations to change the leave policy to include extended time.

Participant 8 related:

The department gave everyone 120 hours of sick time to use if they became infected, but the difference now is that everyone is under the same radar as far as discipline and how

much time they can take off just because they feel like it. If a person would have become deathly ill with Covid, the department would extend sick leave to assist the officer. The department gave up to 200 sick hours of extended leave if an officer became sick and was placed in the hospital or was unable to return to work. We had one officer with asthma who came down with the virus and had a rough time. He was off work for several weeks and the department took care of him. It was good to see that they had our back and were willing to assist us.

The second theme identified in the study answered the research question was COVID-19 training and education. Medical professionals published articles and statements about how people could protect themselves against the virus and slow the spread of transmission. The medical professionals followed guidelines and instructed people to wear personal protective equipment. People were also instructed on how to wear the equipment properly and what to look out for when buying personal protective equipment. The guidance by medical professionals showed how important wearing good equipment was and not to buy equipment that was not of good quality (Bharath et al., 2022). Medical professionals recommended that face masks, gloves, eye protection, and full body protective suits be of better quality.

The participants in this study discussed being taught how to use personal protective equipment and what equipment is best. Participants stated how local medical professionals stepped up and instructed them on proper usage and how they should wear the equipment that would be better for them. Law enforcement officers must respond to crimes in progress and chase after people. Officers must locate criminals when they commit a crime and hold them accountable. Participants suggested that in part of the training, they were instructed on how to wear the equipment during those stressful situations. Participant 2 explained:

Our Human Resources Department had the meetings with us, constantly sharing information with the officers on current CDC guidelines and studies. Once our local area had its first case, our local health department met with us and brought an infectious disease physician to educate us about the disease and why we should get the vaccination. He instructed us on what type of equipment to wear that would protect us the most and how to wear the stuff. I did not know until that point that a face mask had to be of certain quality and had to cover pretty much your entire face. The ones he instructed us to get were hard to breathe through and took a while to get used to. I remember the first foot pursuit our officers got into during the pandemic with mask on. The officer lost the person and had trouble breathing. The local physician that came to talk to us suggested we start exercising with the mask on so that it did not happen again. So, our Human Resource Department gave us 20 minutes on our shift to walk or jog to get used to the mask. I have to say it really helped.

The training and education of personal protective equipment for law enforcement started when officers were in basic police training programs or an academy. Law enforcement training programs have guidelines and protocols to educate officers on using personal protective equipment. The literature review in this study suggested law enforcement officers are trained to use the equipment, and explanations of the severity of contracting the disease are taught to officers. The literature review matched the statements from the participants in this study. Participants stated several times in the interviews they had basic training on the use of personal protective equipment. Still, once the COVID-19 pandemic started, it became apparent why they needed the training. Participant 3 stated:

We had a lot of things that were coming out from our department of health. So, in our HR Department was regularly kind of sending out bulletins about how we were going to respond, things that we put in place as far as we put signs up on the doors about wearing masks. The chief ordered us the nicer mask with our patch on them. So, a lot of it was coming, as I said, from the Department of health and our HR Department kind of putting out bulletins about what was going on. Obviously, stuff on social media in the news, unfortunately, I take with a grain of salt, just because a lot of it you don't know what's true or not true. So, a lot of it, like I said, was from our department of health and our HR Department. One thing our HR department did do that helped us was to bring nurses in to show us how to wear the face mask and how important they were to wear even outside when you are talking to the public.

Training in how to use personal protective equipment was a large step in combatting the COVID-19 virus. Information sharing about the virus and following the guidelines of medical professionals was the other half of the battle. Medical staff shared guidelines about the COVID-19 virus daily, and brochures or flyers were handed out to law enforcement officials (Bossert, 2020). The brochures and flyers contained information about the COVID-19 virus and personal protective equipment. The brochures and flyers were a constant reminder in law enforcement; participant 4 discussed seeing the flyers hanging every day and related:

So, we actually sent out various memos explaining what was going on in our local area and updated with different, like I said, different cleaning procedures. We also encouraged everyone to get the vaccine and actually provided them the time to go get it. The HR department hung flyers in the station about the virus near the front door of the station. It was a good reminder when coming to work, it was in your face every time you would

come in the front door. You couldn't miss the flyer; it had a big picture of a person coughing into a police officer's face with the statement, this can happen to you. I felt like it made the point.

Q3. Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?

Law enforcement officers are tasked with challenges and work to ensure community safety. The organization's officers work for having to make changes to policies as situations arise that merit a response. Law enforcement administrators have the difficult job of designing a policy and procedure for every type of occurrence a police officer might encounter. Administrators work tirelessly to ensure the safety of their officers by adapting policies to changing environments like the COVID-19 pandemic (Edwards & Kotera, 2020). In law enforcement organizations, the task of changing policies and procedures falls on numerous officials. Participants in this study discussed how supervision and human resource departments worked together to change policies to match the demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In law enforcement organizations, changing a policy and procedure manual takes time and a lot of effort from several people. Changing a police department's policy depends on a few different components. Those components include dangerous situations, medical leave, administrative changes, financial resource allocation, and legal reviews (Jones, 2020). The components of policy changes vary from one organization to another, while the main idea remains the same, the protection of employees and the people they serve. Law enforcement organizations have numerous employees who perform different tasks, but employees have to work together to bring about a needed change. Participants in this study discussed how important it was to work together from the administrative level and human resources to entry-level patrol

officers. Every participant in this study mentioned who was responsible for changing policies and how those individuals proceeded to make those needed changes.

Participants discussed who was responsible for changing the policies and procedures in their organizations. It was stated repeatedly that human resources staff member were the primary responsible party for resolving any issues in the policy and procedure manual. One participant stated they were a part of changing policies and how they felt responsible for their department's safety. Participant 1 shared:

It's a combination of City Manager, Public Safety Commissioner, HR, and myself. We have weekly meetings to discuss any possible changes that need to be made in the department and if those changes need to be made immediately or down the road. Once decisions have been made, a department meeting takes place to inform officers and hear their feedback. If officers have an issue with what has been decided, we take that into consideration. Being the person in charge of making important decisions takes a toll on my mind. I feel like everyone is my responsibility and I have to make the right decision or someone could get hurt or worse. The COVID-19 pandemic has not been easy on me. I have tried to make the right call, but it never feels like I have done the right thing.

The collective of a law enforcement organization depends on how well officers can work together to resolve issues. Officers of any rank can be assigned to carry out any function necessary for the department to succeed. Law enforcement officials, from Commanders down to patrol, can be part of the decision-making process and have input when important decisions need to be made (Maguire & Uchida, 2015). The law enforcement organization can have numerous individuals making these important decisions. Participants in this study discussed having every employee in some part of the decision-making process. Participant 3 explained:

Our administration, our Chief and Captains. I think they did a good job of taking care of us. They would send all kinds of information through our emails, and our HR Department would send all kinds of updated things that you can do and things to be aware of and symptoms. We would have weekly meetings to discuss if we needed to make any new changes. The administration allowed every officer to voice their opinion. If officers did not like a new policy or procedure change, they would have the option of explaining why they felt the way they did and what could be done to resolve the issue. To say we have had a lot more meetings than usual would be an understatement.

The participants involved in this study were unanimous when talking about their organizations making decisions together as a cohesive unit. Law enforcement officers work together in stressful situations and are known to watch over each other and be there when another officer is in need. The term Thin Blue Line is known as the brotherhood of police representing police officers' courage in the face of uncertainty and the sacrifice of a few while protecting the innocent (Levett et al., 2015). Law enforcement officers work together to solve a crime and protect one another while completing this difficult task. Participants in the study all talked about how solving problems together meant they were a cohesive unit, and if one had an issue, they would work it out together as a team. Participant 5 illustrated:

Our Chief and City Hall has the final say so in the end results of any changes in the department policy. But, we are a small department and any change is talked about between us all. We all have a say in what decisions are made through discussions at regular meetings. We discuss issues and problems when administration feels something needs to be changed. We come together and attempt to agree, even though sometimes that

does not work. We always have each other's back, but at the end of the day, Chief has the final say.

Participant 8 observed:

The Chief, Major, and Lieutenant are in control of changing any policy and procedures for the department. They had followed the guidelines from the health department and the CDC to make any changes. Once they decided that a change was necessary, they made announcements through email and text alerts. If we have a problem or want to address any of the changes, we can either respond to the messages or bring it up at the weekly meeting. When we changed the policy on using face masks, a couple different officers suggested that we should have uniformity, and the department should create us unique masks. The department voted and agreed on the matter. It is what we do; we voice our opinions, and luckily, we have a good administration who will listen to us.

Participant 9 reiterated the essential role of Human Resources:

There is a lot of individuals that could be involved in making policy changes. Any procedural changes are made by the Chief and Human Resources. They make changes when something occurs or if something is warranted.

Participants discussed issues when making policy or procedure changes in their organizations. Law enforcement officers see change when administrators deem certain changes are warranted. Law enforcement administrators' problem is gaining officers' trust when they make drastic changes. Sometimes, blue flu or sabotage are used by law enforcement administrators when they make changes and officers are unwilling to follow new guidelines or rules (Schafer & Varano, 2015). Law enforcement administrators try to challenge this defiance

by having meetings where officers voice their opinion and administrators can agree with officers.

Participant 10 made the following statement about meetings and who makes decisions:

The Human Resource department makes all changes at the discretion of the commissioners. The HR department views the current policies and takes into consideration the given situation we are currently in with the pandemic and make decisions that affect everyone. If any officer wanted to discuss any change, they had the right to call a meeting with everyone or just go to HR for clarification. I believe the department did a good job during the pandemic. I mean you can always look back and find something you could have done better but it was ok.

Participant 11 added to the discussion on who makes changes:

The Chief of Police and the Mayor are responsible for changing any policies, which like anything else they only change things when something happens. They have changed several policies after Covid struck. When officers started contracting the virus and getting sick, they were forced to act. The Chief and Mayor come up with the changes, but in the end, our HR still has the final say. We have a good Human Resource officer who has a law degree. So anytime the Chief or Mayor wants to make changes or decides to act on something, HR steps in and makes sure that it doesn't violate anything in the employee handbook or federal laws. It is a balancing game between them, sometimes they get along and sometimes they don't. It is like when they changed the sick leave time and made medical expenses less aggravating. The Chief wanted to force us to use our sick time if we had a positive case of COVID-19, but HR stepped up and informed him we could use our medical leave because no one could really prove how we became infected. It is the little things that matter.

Summary

Law enforcement officers have adapted to the COVID-19 virus, and the purpose of this study was to examine the changes made to law enforcement policies and procedures due to the virus. The study examined how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced law enforcement's daily routines and the future ramifications. The COVID-19 virus took the world in a new direction and forced everyone to change how they lived their daily lives (Butler et al., 2022). Law enforcement had to change their procedures for dealing with the public. To better understand the process and the effects, a comprehensive qualitative study was conducted to consider how law enforcement organizations can make changes, who is responsible for the decisions, what challenges law enforcement faces with COVID-19, and how to protect officers. The training officers must go through to learn to protect themselves from the virus was a primary focus. This study analyzed data from interviews with law enforcement officers in a four-state region of the United States. The participants provided answers to interview questions designed to assist in analyzing three research questions. Using thematic analysis of the data from the interviews, themes emerged that answered the three research questions, and to ensure validity in the study, the information provided by the participants was found to be conclusive to the purpose of the study. The Themes included protective equipment usage, law enforcement response procedures, sick time and medical leave, COVID-19 training and education, and human resources. Each of the five themes identified in the participant's answers was supportive of one another in answering the research questions.

Triangulation between the field notes taken during the interviews, between the transcripts of the participant interviews, and the data analysis results from Dedoose was conducted. The participant interviews and the field notes showed saturation in the data. The participants from

multiple law enforcement organizations in several states explained their congruent answers in detail. The participants' answers were used to identify themes in the data to show a direct relation between COVID-19 and law enforcement changing policies and procedures. The results of the qualitative study extended the research of previous studies cited in the literature review in chapter 2, where I examined the effects of COVID-19 on professional organizations. The data analysis showed that the participants and their organizations dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic similarly through interchangeable challenges.

The methods used to find data in this qualitative study allowed for a formal interview process on multiple occasions with several participants to answer the research questions. Notably, the findings of this study suggest the COVID-19 pandemic caused law enforcement officers to adapt to the situation and resulted in certain changes that will remain for the foreseeable future.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

This qualitative multiple case study intended to show the operational changes in the law enforcement profession due to the COVID-19 virus and pandemic. This chapter summarizes the findings from the participant interviews with law enforcement officers from a four-state region of the United States and draws valuable conclusions. This chapter elaborates on the analyzed data from chapter four and the previous literature review on the related topic. Research questions and the identified themes in the data from 12 open-ended interviews led to significant evidence of the relation between the COVID-19 virus and the changing of law enforcement policies and procedures.

The study showed the importance of adapting to the changes in procedures due to the COVID-19 virus. The literature on the COVID-19 virus showed how the pandemic impacted the day-to-day operations of law enforcement. The study showed the importance of recognizing this impact on the operational procedure changes and the future implications of those modifications. The study had some unforeseen findings, and the conclusions from the literature were compared to find a relationship between the virus and procedure changes. This chapter also reviews the methodology and importance of setting guidelines in research. The data analysis review will be presented as a final conclusion to show the impact of the COVID-19 virus on law enforcement and the future recommendations for future research. The chapter will conclude with final remarks and a reflection on the study.

Summary of Findings

The findings in this study of the changes to law enforcement policies and procedures due to the COVID-19 virus were generated with a qualitative thematic analysis. The study included

participants from law enforcement organizations who shared their experience of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were active, experienced law enforcement officers who shared their personal feelings and professional opinions about how effective their organizations were at resolving challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were subjected to a semi-structured interview, organized and designed to prompt responses to questions that answered the main three research questions. The data from those interviews were analyzed to form conclusions. The following are the three research questions:

RQ1: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected law enforcement's operational procedures for officer safety?

RQ2: What are the challenges policing faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ3: Which law enforcement organization members are responsible for making the operational changes due to COVID-19?

The first research question was designed to understand the day-to-day changes in law enforcement procedures and how these changes have affected officers' safety. The question brings into focus whether an increasing change in procedures puts officers at a higher risk of danger. Several findings came to the front when participants answered interview questions related to this question. One significant theme of this research question that came to light was law enforcement officers' use of personal protective equipment and how it affected the officers personally. The data showed officers had issues with the equipment until they became accustomed to wearing the items. Participant answers showed a high occurrence of law enforcement officers unwilling to wear the protective equipment at first due to the extra time it took to put on protective equipment each time they exited their police vehicles. Two different officers suggested it took them a considerable amount of time becoming accustomed to running

while wearing facial coverings. Participants stated during the interviews that they changed procedures to include wearing personal protective equipment. They spoke about having to always wear the equipment and in some instances wearing the personal protective equipment even when they were alone in their patrol vehicles. Participants spoke of the difficulty of having to wear the equipment all the time. Participants discussed wearing facial coverings which resulted in one participant having to receive medical treatment for a rash across his face. Participant six stated that he struggled to wear the face mask when out in the public because of an asthma condition. The results of safety interview questions during the COVID-19 pandemic showed participants were divided, with some participants feeling scared and some having restrictions. The restrictions came from participants who discussed having family members at risk or were at risk themselves from certain medical conditions. The interview questions allowed participants to voice their opinions and feelings without repercussions freely. This type of question allowed the data to be analyzed and further evaluated to understand the relationship of the theme to the research question (Morgan, 2022). The participants stated numerous times they were all afraid of the COVID-19 virus at some point.

The second research question was designed to identify the challenges law enforcement officers undertook during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data analysis of participant interviews revealed that major policy changes were enacted that influenced daily operations. Participant one discussed his organization changing routine procedures to respond for calls for service. He discussed in his interview how his organization only responds to crime in progress and everything reactive is handled directly over the phone. Participant three discussed how her department only respond to vehicle collisions with someone reporting they are injured. The participants responded to the interview questions with resentment toward the environment of

which they have become a victim and the need for public assistance. Several of the participants discussed how they felt the operational changes from the COVID-19 pandemic were hurting the relationships with the public. Participant eight discussed how he had responded to a complaint involving a burglary. He discussed how his department had changed the procedures for responding to a victim's house, which included not going into someone's home. He discussed in length how he felt this one procedure was causing him resentment towards this way of policing. He discussed how the victim in that one complaint felt neglected which made him feel useless. The participants discussed how they adapted to the pandemic through teamwork and guidance from medical professionals. One of the major challenges law enforcement participants stated they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic was officers becoming ill and how to keep a full staff when employees were in quarantine from the virus. The administration and human resources officers in the organizations were discussed by the participants as the ones who were challenged to deal with medical leave. Participant answers were identical concerning sick leave. The participants discussed how their organizations adopted sick leave and medical time policy changes to resolve the absentee employee issue.

The data analysis led to the conclusion that law enforcement officers were also challenged to keep up with the public's demands, with fewer officers working on the street. The average number of complaints officers answered decreased by 2.4 percent in the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jennings & Perez, 2020). The participants discussed how the demand for officer response was nearly the same, but training and educating officers to deal with the COVID-19 virus was just as demanding. The interviews showed law enforcement officers were receiving training from medical professionals to protect themselves against the COVID-19 virus and how to battle the virus if they did become infected. The participants repeatedly discussed

how organizational leaders organized the organization's efforts to contain the virus. The end result of training for law enforcement officers on taking precautions from the COVID-19 virus resulted in 100 percent of the officers interviewed being trained on the use of protective equipment.

The third research question focused on who in the participants' organizations was responsible for making policy and procedural changes and how the process to make those changes is organized. The participant responses led to the conclusion that law enforcement administration, human resource officers, and some local government officials were responsible for making the changes to combat the COVID-19 virus. Participants discussed how they felt the operational changes in their organizations had hurt the relationships with their communities. Participants stated over and over in the interviews, members of the public had become hesitate reporting crimes. Participant five discussed how her organization had received numerous citizen complaints against the new response policy. Participant five discussed how the complaints were causing hostility between department members and citizens. The results were conclusive and showed that law enforcement administration works to solve problems through a democratic leadership style. The participants discussed how their leaders allowed them to have input when things needed to change. Participants discussed how leadership in their organizations discussed operational procedures and allowed officers to vote for approving the proposed changes. The participants stated numerous times that the administration and leadership in their organizations would have regular meetings to discuss information about the COVID-19 virus and pandemic and what kind of changes they should make to keep everyone safe and healthy. The participants stated administrators allowed them to give their opinions, and if the administration felt their opinions were of value, they considered their opinions before making the proposed changes. So,

the data showed everyone was responsible for making changes to the organization's policy and procedures to some degree.

Implications

The implications of this study are addressed in this chapter and give awareness to the actions needed by law enforcement administration to combat a pandemic to ensure safety and promote health and wellness for law enforcement officers. The study examined the literature on the topic, came up with similar findings and conclusions associated with the analysis of the study, and suggested future implications if the COVID-19 pandemic did not teach policymakers the importance of being prepared.

Theoretical Framework

The general strain theory can be applied to understanding law enforcement's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its future implications (Alcadipani et al., 2020, Butler et al., 2022, Dey et al., 2021). Applying general strain theory to understand the significance of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement is an original topic. The COVID-19 pandemic has only been around for a couple of years, so previous studies and literature are limited (Ann et al., 2022, Edwards & Kotera, 2020). This study used Agnew's general strain theory as a theoretical framework to understand law enforcement's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agnew's general strain theory was applied to understand the stress on law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic and society's negative reflections on police (Dey et al., 2021, Olson, 2021, Osofsky et al., 2020). Depending on the type of stress law enforcement officers encounter, there is a greater likelihood that officers will experience stress and be more likely to engage in the elements of strain theory (Olson, 2021, Maskaly et al., 2021). The theory suggests a person will engage in three different elements of strain; (a) loss of positively valued stimuli, (b)

strain related to unsuccessful at achieving goals, and (c) strain based on negatively valued stimuli (Broidy, 2001, Olson, 2021, Ann et al., 2022). The negative reflections on police led to stress for police officers in this study. Participants discussed the stress they were under to resolve the public issues, and finding positive outcomes resulted in the participants having negative thoughts and behaviors (Olson, 2021, Maskaly et al., 2021, Mwita, 2022). This addressed the study's research questions by reflecting on law enforcement's challenges.

Law enforcement organizational leaders have successfully changed operational procedures but failed to realize the implications on officers' stress levels (Edwards & Kotera, 2021). The strain on organizational leadership responsible for changing procedures is the result of three elements: (a) officers failing to obey policy changes, (b) outside influences of community members, and (c) human resource oversight (Engel et al., 2020, Feng, 2022, Miles-Johnson & Linklater, 2022). General strain theory explains how the stress of organizational leaders impacts their subordinates. The general strain theory can be used to examine the effects on police officers and leadership.

The coping mechanism in this study is changing operational procedures to respond to the strain's severity, increasing the stress risks for law enforcement officers (Badri et al., 2022, Parvar et al., 2022, Wu et al., 2022). Operational and procedural changes for law enforcement result from techniques police officers use to manage stress as they serve the public. Stress in law enforcement causes issues for officer safety. Consequently, how experienced law enforcement officers managed stress during the COVID-19 pandemic was explored. There is a need to examine specific stressors for police officers and how society responds to officers.

The importance of educating officers on the COVID-19 pandemic and future pandemic preparedness addresses the training at the basic academy level. The literature reviewed in this study discussed how the training of law enforcement officers was changing to prepare officers for the societal environment they will serve. The literature review had information about medical training for law enforcement officers at the basic level. The information suggested adding necessary training protocols to teach police recruits to use personal protective equipment and to engage the public from a distance. Teaching law enforcement officers to take reports from the public while keeping a distance from the person they are talking to is important for officer safety and health (De Carmargo, 2021). The study participants discussed the importance of keeping their distance from the public in any way possible. The participants keeping their distance from the public included responding to complaints only if an emergency existed, taking police reports over the phone, and only talking to people who were filing complaints outside of the complaining person's home. The law enforcement officers in this study did not risk going into the person's home so that it would decrease the chance of exposure.

Policy Implications

Another implication is the need for advanced protocols in medical isolation for law enforcement during a global pandemic and the mental stress it causes officers. The participants in this study suggested that employee health was the main problem during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having advanced protocols in place ahead of time would assist the officers in dealing with any medical condition, but having culturally competent counselors would assist officers in dealing with being isolated. Law enforcement officers have the drive to protect and serve other people. Officers struggle mentally to adjust when they are taken away from that service due to a lack of physical ability or mental issues (Caveney et al., 2019). Therefore, there is a need for

counselors to assist law enforcement officers. It is well known among law enforcement professionals as a blue code of silence. The law enforcement community does not talk about their issues and lacks trust in this instance (Caveney et al., 2019). A competent counselor could help with the mental anguish isolated officers would go through when they are quarantined.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations and limitations were involved in this study to set up clear boundaries across the research field. Planning any research project is a great task, and precise decisions must support the study and limit the design. Setting this project up was a unique process that had to be designed to organize the researcher's efforts. The study includes a couple of different delimitations to focus the study. The first delimitation in this study was the limited number of law enforcement participants. The study was also limited to active law enforcement officers with at least five years of service and a basic police certification. This intention was to have law enforcement officers with experience in developing policies and procedures answer questions to interpret data involving challenges during a pandemic. This type of approach in this study allowed the researcher to focus on what the law enforcement officers experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second delimitation in this study was the targeted geographical region where law enforcement officers were selected. The area selected included Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia. These states were included due to their population size and centralized police training styles. Selecting these states suggested this area of the United States dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic similar using police tactics and procedures. This area was also selected because they are geographical neighbors sharing borders.

Limitations in any research study aim to identify weaknesses that could affect the study's validity. One limitation of this study was that most law enforcement participants were male. There were twelve total participants, with three of the participants being female and nine being male. The number of females in law enforcement across the United States is just over thirteen percent, compared to eighty-seven percent being male (Miles-Johnson & Linklater, 2022), so the study's primarily male participants are indicative of the law enforcement population. Another limitation in this study was the number of law enforcement officers from each state. There were only three officers from each state selected. The number of law enforcement officers selected from each state could limit opinions of the validity within each state.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study included areas where more research could be needed, and a more comprehensive study of a larger geographical location could be warranted. The recommendation for future research would include a larger geographical area to better represent all law enforcement across the United States. The larger area could include large metropolitan law enforcement organizations and small rural law enforcement organizations. The researcher could then show the difference between rural and urban law enforcement organizations. The second part of the recommendation for a larger participant size would include more participants and a diverse pool of participants. The recommendation would be a large geographical area with an immense participant group.

Furthermore, studies have focused on the COVID-19 pandemic since its early beginning in 2020. The Centers for Disease Control reports that the COVID-19 virus has adapted and evolved with several mutations that have changed the virus' characteristics. Another recommendation for future studies would be to research the severity of the disease on law

enforcement officers by the mutated characteristics. Research could imply law enforcement officers who are more exposed to the different mutated strands of the virus are less likely to become more severely infected. Of course, it could also mean the law enforcement officers are more prone to become infected. Research would have to decide the outcome.

One last recommendation for future research would include further examination of law enforcement officers complying with counselors during a pandemic. As the chapter stated, law enforcement officers do not discuss issues like most people due to the blue code of silence. Law enforcement counselors need more research to verify if officers are even more silent regarding pandemics. The research could address whether officers hold their feelings inside out of respect for other officers or do officers protect one another at all costs. The research could compare statistics from prior years of police reporting to counseling to those receiving counseling during a global pandemic.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to show the operational and procedural changes in law enforcement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on law enforcement adapting to the pandemic by changing how they respond to complaints, how they interact with the public, how officers use personal protective equipment, and what ramifications those policy changes would have on law enforcement organizations. Finally, it was the researcher's goal to identify the challenges law enforcement officers faced while attempting to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The data in this research demonstrated the immense dangers of working in public during a global pandemic and how it affects the officers and their families. The study showed the possible implications and how they could be resolved. According to the findings, the pandemic had a significant impact on policing procedures, officers, and the communities they serve.

The research focused on and examined law enforcement policies on sick leave and medical time officers are currently awarded and the impact of the COVID-19 virus. Guided by three research questions, the researcher asked twelve interview questions, and participants answered the questions openly leading to the identification of themes. The identified themes led to the study's conclusions by coding the data using a computer program called Dedoose. The information obtained in the data analysis exposed the challenges law enforcement officers endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants in the study revealed they had no procedural action plan to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges they would face. The participants in the study discussed developing solutions to the issues after COVID-19 was already present in their communities. Participants revealed they had no concept of the danger they were facing. Furthermore, participants' organizations had no emergency action plan to deal with a pandemic, and there were no plans to deal with many officers becoming ill simultaneously. The participants shared stories of isolation and discussed the fear they had to overcome just to perform their duties.

The participants in this research study chose to answer the interview questions of their free will without outside influences. All twelve participants were aware the study would be used to determine conclusions about the effect of the COVID-19 virus on their organization. The study led the participants to recollect what they could have done better and if they could have acted quicker to protect themselves. The interview process was a clear, precise, and focused process directed at finding information from law enforcement officers about the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted promptly, with all participants having the same time to answer the interview questions.

Lastly, the study aimed to show the operational and procedural changes in law enforcement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher did not realize until the project was in motion that not only could this project determine whether the policy and procedures had changed, but if the knowledge law enforcement officers obtained combating the COVID-19 pandemic could be used to protect officers in the future. Law enforcement officers have a difficult job managing the work of police officers, but now with a virus such as COVID-19, they are fighting an uphill battle. Law enforcement officers routinely respond to complaints and calls for service they are not equipped to deal with. Still, the COVID-19 virus showed how vulnerable law enforcement organizations are and that they must have policies and procedures before pandemics occur. Despite the added public expectations, law enforcement officers are required to respond, they are needed to help, they are necessary to apprehend, and they are required to go into these situations being brave.

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APPENDIX A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 24, 2022

Timothy Roberts Jarrod Sadulski

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-659 Changes in Law Enforcement Operational Procedures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Timothy Roberts, Jarrod Sadulski,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Study Recruitment Letter

Hello [Potential Participant],

As a Ph.D. candidate in the Helms School of Government at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to examine operational changes in police organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and if you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be a sworn full time police officer in a state, county, or local municipal. Participants must have at least three years of working experience and be a minimum 25 years old. Participants, if willing, will be asked to verify employment. It should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the interview. Name of department and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Study Procedures:

Interview will take place at the discretion of the participant from the given two-week window. Participants will be given opportunity to choose from given time slots. Interviews will last 10 to 15 minutes given the amount of information supplied during the interview. Participants will answer 12 interview questions with a 2-minute max limit to answer. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Would you like to participate in the study?

{yes} Great, could I get your email address so I can send you times that are available, so we set up a time for an interview?

[No] I understand. Thank you for your time.

The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me by email. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study. Participants will be entered in a raffle to receive a gift card from Cabela's.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

Appendix C

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Police Procedures and Policies Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Principal Investigator: Timothy Roberts, Ph.D. Candidate, Helms School of Government,
Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a sworn full time police officer in any state, county, or local municipal. Participants must have at least three years of working experience and be a minimum 25 years old. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to demonstrate the immediate operational changes in law enforcement since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 virus has impacted policing in various day-to-day operations, and this study will show the importance of recognizing the impact of the operational changes.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Once consent is given, the participant will schedule a time available for an interview. The window of time will be in two weeks or less.
2. Participate in an interview by answering questions related to the study. The questions will have a two-minute restriction for each question.
3. The interview will be recorded and transcribed, so the participant will be debriefed of security measures for information.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Benefits to society include showing society the challenges of law enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic and how operational procedures are changing to handle the pandemic situation. The study will examine the changes in procedures since the COVID-19 pandemic began, who is responsible for those changes, and what effect the changes have had on law enforcement officers. The Study will show how the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed people's lives worldwide, and the law enforcement officers serving the communities on the front line are dealing with the potential life-altering virus.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

Law enforcement organizations have restrictions on the passing of information related to the policy and procedures of the agency, so participants should be aware they may experience psychological stress or anxiety.

Liberty University will not provide financial compensation if you suffer financial loss or job termination as a result of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. / Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. Interviews will be conducted over the phone or internet platform in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be entered to win a Cabela's gift card. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes; however, they will be pulled and separated from your responses to maintain your anonymity.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit any information. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Timothy Roberts. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher at troberts75@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Jarrod Sadulski, at jsadulski@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me how you first became aware of the COVID-19 virus?
2. Can you talk about whether or not you feel safe working at your agency during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Do you have some thoughts on how your organization is doing regarding COVID-19?
4. Please describe what you know about your organization's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. What is your organization doing to educate you about the COVID-19 virus?
6. What kind of restrictions has your agency implemented to deal with the COVID-19 virus?
7. What do you think about this COVID-19 pandemic and efforts made to combat the spread of the virus in your agency?
8. What has your agency done to assist you during the COVID-19 pandemic?
9. Who in your agency leads the way for operational changes during the pandemic?
10. Has the organization you work for changed any procedural operations during the Pandemic?
11. Does your organization have COVID-19 policies addressing extended leave if you contract the COVID-19 virus?
12. What are the future ramifications of any change in procedures in your organization from the COVID-19 virus? Is the procedure changes permanent or short term?