

THE LIVED JIU-JITSU TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS
IN RURAL CENTRAL TEXAS: A TRANSCENDENTAL -PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Richard O. Segovia, Ed.D.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. Grappling and ground fighting martial arts are generally known as, and synonymous with, Jiu-Jitsu. This dissertation employs Brizin and Kernspecht's general theory of combat, which is principally concerned with utilizing various means to direct ends. Brizin and Kernspecht used Carl von Clausewitz's combat logic theory as their foundation. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study and included collecting data from qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observations. The qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observations indicated that research participants found utility in Jiu-Jitsu training. The scenario-based exercises, peer and instructor discussions and feedback, and reflection opportunities enriched participants' learning experience and transferability to their day-to-day work. The data also supported the theoretical framework used in this study, which should give administrators confidence that officers should be allowed to learn principles and concepts, understand attacks and defense, develop skills and abilities, apply sequential techniques, and know which techniques to use. The participants attested to Jiu-Jitsu's value in promoting self-development and improving safety for officers and the community. Having the space to learn, making personal investments, demonstrating learned concepts, and giving feedback were all consistent data points when answering the central and sub-research questions and describing the lived experiences of the officers who participated in this study. Applying the general theory of combat may help enhance force options and arrest and control tactics training, which might improve police-community relations through the safety of officers and the communities they serve.

Keywords: Jiu-Jitsu, police officer training, general theory of combat, feedback, dialogue

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom all good things flow. Also, to my loving wife, Erin, whom God brought into my life to be my rock and greatest supporter. To my three children, may you always follow your dreams – never let anyone define success for you. To my mother, who taught me perseverance, humility, and strength. To my siblings, I am only here because I wanted to be as smart as all of you, and to my mother-in-law and father-in-law, you are the most intelligent people I have ever met, and you inspire me to be better every day.

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In my experience, no one achieves success alone, and this journey was no different. I want to acknowledge all my core and dissertation professors; each of you has been a consistent source of knowledge, perspective, and support throughout this journey. Your words and prayers lifted me when I needed them most. Your rigorous yet thoughtful reviews and feedback on my work helped strengthen it, and this is the culmination of our work together. I would also like to acknowledge one of my mentors, Michael Thomas, who continues to guide and challenge me. You are always available, and I am always chasing your brilliance. Thank you, all, for playing an instrumental role in my academic and professional success. You have all done the smallest things that have had the biggest impact on my life. Each of you has my deepest gratitude.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. Recent decades have seen increased scrutiny around the use of force in police-civilian interactions (Torres, 2020). Public demands for increased accountability and training among police departments have prompted a search for viable solutions for efficacious and responsible policing. Although martial arts training is not a new phenomenon among police departments, policy debates surrounding police training practices have highlighted it as a potential measure to increase safety for both police and suspects (Parks, 2022). More specifically, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has been offered as an effective and less lethal martial art to empower police officers to use less lethal force (Brower, 2018). The problem is that law enforcement officers who are not trained in Jiu-Jitsu are trained in other forms of defensive and offensive tactics that can cause serious bodily injury to suspects and themselves. This chapter discusses the background, including the historical, social, and theoretical context. The study's problem, purpose, and significance are then discussed, followed by important definitions and a summary.

Background

Modern policing requires law enforcement personnel to be sufficiently trained during physical confrontations, which occur frequently among active-duty officers. Until the 1990s, this training was largely ignored, with low department participation rates (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). However, in the mid-1990s, growing interest in the utility of martial arts to ensure the safety of both officers and suspects prompted a growing number of law enforcement academies to employ martial arts training in their curricula (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

has been speculated to be a particularly effective approach for law enforcement (Brower, 2018). More effective policing through martial arts training has the potential to improve outcomes and interactions between police and the general public. The general theory of combat (Brizin & Kernspecht, 2014) provides offers a framework to understand the pressures placed on police officers and the solutions Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu offers.

Historical Context

Training in using less lethal force by police departments stretched back to the 19th century when the London city police began arming their law enforcement officers with truncheons or “Billy clubs” (Clede & Parson, 1987; Kaminski & Martin, 2000). The truncheon was a standard tool employed by officers in both the United Kingdom and the United States throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 1960s, the US civil rights movement saw large-scale demonstrations often met with force by local police stations, generating violent images of police excessive force (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Thus, the early 1970s saw increased interest in unarmed subject control rather than beating suspects into submission with clubs (Torres, 2020). Policymakers believed this approach to be a more optics-friendly way to improve the relationship between the community and the police.

The new programs needed several critical areas for improvement. First, policing in the United States is diverse, with thousands of municipal, county, and state agencies, to say nothing of the federal agencies such as the FBI, DEA, ATF, or Secret Service. The decentralized nature of US policing results in overlapping responsibilities, varied funding, and diverse training regimens (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Police departments have highly varied needs and financial resources to meet those needs. As a result, the physical defense training programs that began in the 1970s needed to be expanded in scope, funding, and duration. Second, these early programs

lacked expertise among trainers, who were *system* martial artists from philosophies that followed Aikido, Karate, or Judo. These systems produced results in gyms and dojos but were often ineffective in real-world applications (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Furthermore, increasingly available less lethal tools such as pepper spray, tasers, and batons meant that officers often resort to these tools rather than pursuing effective hand-to-hand training (Bowen, 2018). Finally, initial enthusiasm for martial arts training often waned, and programs that required ongoing practice to be effective were abandoned due to budget constraints.

The 1990s saw a resurgence in interest in martial arts training. At the beginning of the decade, between 2% and 20% of police academies provided unarmed martial arts training for cadets (Reaves, 2013). As of 2013, the number was 99%, spending an average of 60 hours on training). Of these, 94% have ground fighting training and 49% pressure point training (Torres, 2020). Not only do officers receive hand-to-hand defensive training in police academies, but many also continue training through programs provided by the department or on their own time. A 2017 survey by Morin et al. (2017) showed that nearly half of active police officers had training within the last 12 months.

Social Context

The recent decade has seen a precipitous drop in civilian-police trust. In 2014, Eric Garner died while being arrested by New York City police officers, causing a massive outcry. Only one month later, another civilian, Michael Brown, died during an encounter with police in Ferguson, Missouri, after allegedly trying to rob a convenience store. The Ferguson event prompted further criticism of police practices in the United States, igniting protests against law enforcement's perceived overuse of force, specifically towards the African-American community (Parks, 2022). In 2020, another use of force incident in Minneapolis involving George Floyd,

who died while restrained by law enforcement, further aggravated police-community tensions and ignited nationwide demonstrations, protests, and riots (Parks, 2022). Some critics have speculated about the so-called *Ferguson Effect*, in which law enforcement officers are less proactive in policing due to fears that they, too, will be accused of misconduct while arresting individuals suspected of committing crimes. The increased scrutiny surrounding policing approaches in the United States has led to widespread police mistrust by the public and a defensive posture by law enforcement, who seek to perform their duties effectively and safely in a dangerous, hyper-politicized environment (Parks, 2022; Torres, 2020). Many of the criticisms of law enforcement stem from a widespread assumption of racism and racial bias in policing techniques (Parks, 2022). Some researchers have speculated that internalized and systemic racism on account of officers increases the likelihood of deadly responses to situations that may otherwise be diffused through peaceful means). As officers fear for their safety, they may resort to maximalist measures to ensure their safety.

Increased training in martial arts is one proposed measure that can ameliorate this issue. Training in martial arts increases police confidence and self-efficacy, allowing officers to use defensive tactics techniques to subdue suspects effectively without resorting to deadly force (Torres, 2020; Kaminski & Martin, 2020). Indeed, one of the principal concerns of armed officers is the potential threat of losing their firearms to an unarmed subject. Physical encounters in a hand-to-hand situation are likely to elicit panic among untrained police, who then use their weapons to stave off danger (Torres, 2018). Officers trained in martial arts have been shown to react more effectively and demonstrate less physical and emotional stress when dealing with critical situations than those who have not received training (Renden et al., 2015).

Widespread and standardized martial arts training can potentially ameliorate the strained

relationship between the public and law enforcement (Parks, 2022). Increased training can increase the odds of less lethal interactions between suspects and officers, leading to fewer deaths and increased feelings of safety and self-efficacy among police officers (Parks, 2022; Renden et al., 2015). A more effective, responsible, and confident police force can further increase public trust in buttressing public opinion of law enforcement (Parks, 2022).

Theoretical Context

Jiu-Jitsu provides an attractive profile for law enforcement. Batuch (2013) asserts that statistically speaking, a police officer may be called upon to use their firearm approximately 2% of the time throughout a career. However, the odds of a physical altercation are much higher, with 80% of officers reporting using physical force (Batuch, 2013). Indeed, researchers have found that the majority of arrests end up with physical force being applied to the subject somehow (Brower, 2018; Parks, 2022). Thus, most officers can be expected to need physical combat training, particularly ground fighting, at some point in their time on the force. Researchers have identified Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a prime candidate for martial arts training for police officers.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has its roots in the early 20th century and can be largely credited to a single family: the Gracie family (Gracie et al., 2003). Helio Gracie began learning traditional Jiu-Jitsu in the early 1900s and adapted its principles for more general use. The martial art emphasizes the use of pressure points, the use of body weight, and body position to achieve submission from an opponent. It should be noted that Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu does not focus on striking the opponent, unlike kickboxing, taekwondo, or boxing. The principal goal of Jiu-Jitsu is to control and submit the opponent through grappling (Brower, 2018).

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu saw a surge in popularity in the early 1990s when it debuted in the

Ultimate Fighting Championship, demonstrating its efficacy over many other more traditional martial arts (Gracie et al., 2003). The US military quickly adopted it and integrated it into its unarmed combat training, with the Army in 1994 and the US Marine Corps in 1998 (Brower, 2018). Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has been attractive to militaries and law enforcement for several reasons. First, using body position, pressure points, and leverage means it does not require significant strength or weight (Gracie et al., 2003; Brower, 2018). Indeed, in real-world situations that law enforcement faces, there are no weight classes, and individuals involved have no limit to strength and weight differentials. Second, it is a relatively easy martial art to train to the extent that one can train in a low-impact tempo and still find utility in pursuing training without significant risk of bodily harm. Furthermore, its popularity over recent decades has yielded a plethora of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu clubs and teachers (Brower, 2018). Law enforcement officers must often subdue resisting suspects, preferably without bodily harm to themselves or the suspect. The means of submission and the tactics employed thus enjoy a synergy for law enforcement.

Problem Statement

The general problem is that law enforcement officers who are not trained in Jiu-Jitsu, while trained in other forms of defensive and offensive tactics, can often cause serious bodily injury to suspects and themselves (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; Koerner & Staller, 2021; Parks, 2022; Torres, 2020). The specific problem is that the lack of real-life fight training that Jiu-Jitsu practitioners benefit from, and officers might experience when encountering a fighting suspect, can yield inappropriate physical and psychological stress responses. Moreover, the potentiality of excessive force complaints because of the lack of real-life fight training, including and leading up to deadly force, exacerbates negative public perceptions of officers (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021;

Parks, 2022). Thus, Jiu-Jitsu training has been proposed as a measure to address potential contributing factors that have led to excessive force allegations and rebuild trust with the general public (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; Koerner & Staller, 2021; Parks, 2022; Torres, 2020).

Although previous work has been done on the utility of general martial arts training and measured the effects of said training on policing outcomes, there needs to be more empirical work on the specific use of Jiu-Jitsu in the field of law enforcement. Untrained police officers have demonstrated limited efficacy in high-stress, high-stakes situations (Renden et al., 2015). Some researchers, such as Brower (2018), have recognized its theoretical utility, but there needs to be more research on the actual effects of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu specifically.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. For this study, Jiu-Jitsu training will be generally defined as a grappling and ground fighting martial art (Gracie et al., 2003).

Significance of the Study

This study aims to make theoretical and empirical contributions to the body of academic literature and broader practical implications for police training programs to positively affect outcomes between law enforcement and communities.

Empirical

This research will describe the experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas in their Jiu-Jitsu training. It will illuminate how they approach the training and how they believe that training empowers, improves, or influences their practice in the field. It will further describe the approaches instructors utilize in their pedagogical approaches and how it is received

by those being trained. By exploring and describing these phenomena, more research will be available for professionals who train police officers and decision-makers who have an influence on the training schedules of law enforcement personnel to better understand how officers train and how that training affects their work. Significant research on martial arts in law enforcement is relatively immature, with most work coming within the last two decades (Bolander et al., 2009; Laus et al., 2008; Woody, 2005). Literature on Jiu-Jitsu is even more rare and focuses more narrowly on conceptual and theoretical aspects of law enforcement (Hickman et al., 2021; Melnyk & Bohachuk, 2022). This research will add an empirical dimension to this body of literature.

Theoretical

Theoretically, the research will marry theoretical literature on the general theory of combat (Brizin & Kernspecht, 2014) with empirical studies of effective police training. This marriage will allow for a more systematic academic conversation about the utility, goals, and implications of employing martial arts in police training. More specifically, it will describe how Jiu-Jitsu empowers law enforcement officers to perform their duties safer and more effectively. The general theory of combat is primarily concerned with the utilization of means to accomplish ends, and through exploring the benefits of Jiu-Jitsu, the research will generate insights into the nature of physical altercations in police experiences.

Practical

The research will also have practical implications as well. It will illuminate the efficacy (or lack thereof), via the lens of self-efficacy theory, of Jiu-Jitsu training among police officers. Should it prove as effective as the theoretical literature suggests, it will demonstrate the empirical efficacy of martial arts for police officers (Brower, 2018). The implications will have

two downstream effects. First, it will improve the efficacy and safety of police practice, ensuring safer policing for both officers and suspects (Renden et al., 2015). Second, effective policing will generate higher standards of conduct among officers that will hopefully yield stronger trust between the general public and law enforcement (Parks, 2022).

Research Questions

This research investigates the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers and, using the General Theory of Combat Logic, examines the relationship between Jiu-Jitsu training as a means to an end. Specifically, effectively and safely controlling a violent and combative subject.

Central Research Question

How can the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas improve relations between officers and suspects?

Sub-Question One

In what ways do officers believe this training is an effective tool for policing?

Sub-Question Two

How do law enforcement officers use Jiu-Jitsu training to improve their tactical knowledge and skills?

Definitions

1. *Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu* – A martial art predicated upon grappling, the utilization of leverage, body weight, and body position to enforce submission (Gracie et al., 2003).
2. *Deputy Sheriff* - Considered line staff in a county sheriff's office, a deputy is typically assigned to jail, court, or patrol duties. Deputies who are more senior by seniority can

work in specialized assignments such as training, recruitment, personnel, K-9, traffic, and other assignments (Brakeen, 2023). The rank of deputy is often abbreviated as Dep.

3. *Mats* – Main training area where Judo or Brazilian Jiu Jitsu practitioners train takedowns, throws, and other concepts (Gracie et al., 2003).
4. *Less Lethal Force* – Force that is not designed to cause death in its application (Bowen, 2018).
5. *Lethal Force* – The use of force designed to cause death, even if death does not occur.
(Source)
6. *Lieutenant* – Considered a mid-level manager in a police department or sheriff's office, a lieutenant's role is typically administrative in nature and oftentimes a shift commander or assistant commanding officer (Police1 Staff, 2021). The rank of lieutenant is often abbreviated as Lt.
7. *Police Corporal* – Considered the lowest rank in a supervisory capacity, police corporals are either assigned to patrol operations, investigations, or specialized assignments (Police1 Staff, 2021). They may substitute for a sergeant in case of an absence. The rank of corporal is often abbreviated as Cpl.
8. *Police Officer* – Considered line staff in a municipal police department, an officer is typically assigned to patrol duties. Officers who are more senior by seniority can work in specialized assignments such as training, recruitment, personnel, K-9, traffic, and other assignments (Police1 Staff, 2021). The rank of officer is often abbreviated as Ofc.
9. *Police Sergeant* - Considered a liaison between line staff and upper management, sergeants supervise and train officers and corporals in patrol or investigative assignments (Police1 Staff, 2021). In addition, sergeants are often unit managers in training,

recruitment, personnel, and other specialized assignments. The rank of sergeant is often abbreviated as Sgt.

10. *Suspect* - Someone under suspicion, often formally announced as being investigated by law enforcement officials (*USLegal.com*, n.d.). Often interchanged with alleged perpetrator, perpetrator, or defendant.

Summary

The problem is that law enforcement officers who are not trained in Jiu-Jitsu, while trained in other forms of defensive and offensive tactics, can often cause serious bodily injury to suspects and themselves (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; Koerner & Staller, 2021; Parks, 2022; Torres, 2020). The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. For this study, Jiu-Jitsu training will be generally defined as a grappling and ground fighting martial art (Gracie et al., 2003). This research seeks to apply the general theory of combat to Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and police training to improve policing efficacy.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. Martial arts training has become increasingly popular in law enforcement, such as among police officers. However, the problem addressed in the proposed study is that those law enforcement officers who are not trained in Jiu-Jitsu are trained in other forms of defensive and offensive tactics that can cause serious bodily injury to suspects and themselves (Torres, 2020). This problem has been documented in previous research and several high-profile cases, demonstrating that ineffective defensive and offensive tactical training can lead to severe physical risk and even death (Heusler & Sutter, 2020). The case of George Floyd is one example of how a misunderstanding of the correct way in which to safely restrain a suspect without placing oneself or the suspect at risk demonstrates the potential outcomes that can occur when there is a lack of effective tactical training (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021). Jiu-Jitsu is a martial art intended to allow individuals of any size to defend themselves effectively without specifically harming their attacker (Maltsev et al., 2020). Training officers in this martial art can potentially reduce the risk of physical harm or death for officers and suspects (Koerner & Staller, 2021). However, no known recent studies have examined officers' perceptions concerning the feasibility of implementing such a training program.

This chapter reviews the literature related to key variables and/or constructs of interest associated with the problem of interest. A combination of the Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Ultimate, Criminal Justice Abstracts, and Google Scholar databases were searched to locate studies related to this review. These databases were selected based on their

comprehensiveness and relevance to criminal justice, education, and law enforcement. When searching these databases, the following keywords and phrases were entered: *police; training; Jiu-Jitsu; Brazilian; law enforcement; martial arts; and officer*. Boolean logic links keywords and phrases to narrow the search scope as needed. The MeSH term function was used to locate studies that used synonyms of these keywords and phrases. Studies were included in this review if they were published in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in the English language within the past five years and/or if they were considered seminal (e.g., the original documentation of a theory or instrument).

The remainder of this chapter includes synthesizing the literature via this search process. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is first discussed, consisting of the general combat logic theory. Then, related literature associated with the problem and purpose of this dissertation is presented and critically evaluated. Background and historical content were reviewed first, followed by current content. Gaps in the literature, research design, and methodological issues were then identified, leading to the rationale and justification for the proposed study.

Theoretical Framework

The general theory of combat logic (Brizin & Kernspecht, 2014) underpins this study and literature. This theory is concerned with integrating tactics and strategy in combat, in which a successful outcome occurs when there is alignment between the engagement's purpose and the combatant's resources or characteristics. Additionally, this theory proposes that any conflict must be terminated as swiftly and efficiently as possible. There is some debate on the origin of this theory, with some scholars suggesting that elements of the general theory of combat logic stem from the ideas of 19th-century Prussian military general and theorist Carl von Clausewitz (2018).

However, more contemporary and formal documentation of this theory is contained in American military strategist Edward Luttwak's (2001) work, whose 'grand strategy' suggested that aggressive wars were no longer necessary or effective in the current global scheme. Drawing from Eastern philosophical concepts that were influential in the development of many martial arts, including Jiu-Jitsu, the general combat theory of logic suggests that the most efficient way to resolve a conflict does not necessarily warrant a complete annihilation or termination of an enemy (Luttwak, 2001; von Clausewitz, 2018). This approach may be conducive to the training and developing physical skills necessary to be an effective police officer.

Later, theorists combined concepts presented in these earlier works to create a more holistic framework. The integration of Luttwak's (2001) and von Clausewitz's (2018) ideas are perhaps best reflected in the holistic model developed by Brizin and Kernspecht (2014). According to these authors, the integration of principles and concepts reflected in the work of Luttwak, and influenced by von Clausewitz, represents the highest of several martial arts concepts that can be applied to combat or conflict situations. On the second run of this hierarchy is the theater strategy, consisting of the balance between attack and defense. The operational level pertains to the skills and abilities of participants in the conflict and defines when to perform a particular movement. At the tactical level is the distance, alignment, and either a single technique or sequence of implemented techniques. The bottom level of Brizin and Kernspecht's hierarchy is technical and pertains to the single techniques used and how they are performed.

This theory effectively integrates martial arts and general combat principles used in the military and law enforcement. While this theory of combat logic has many potential implications for understanding conflict and combat, it has yet to be applied extensively within the peer-reviewed literature. Only two peer-reviewed studies have used the theory thus far (Cynarski,

2017; Piepiora et al., 2020). Cynarski (2017) drew on concepts presented within the model to formulate an even newer fighting arts theory incorporating psychosocial and metaphysical factors influencing conflict. Piepiora et al. (2020) referenced the work of Brizin and Kernspecht (2014) in their study of the relationship between technique and personality characteristics among athletes. Results from a cross-sectional study involving 90 Polish athletes from different sports demonstrated that sport technique significantly predicted athlete personality. Thus, some evidence demonstrates the applicability and utility of the general theory of combat logic to contexts involving conflict or competition.

A lack of research applying this theory to the understanding of law enforcement currently exists. While a few studies have applied the general theory of combat logic, no known recent investigations have grounded their analyses in this theory, specifically within a law enforcement context (Cynarski, 2017; Piepiora et al., 2020). Specifically, no studies have drawn on this theory to facilitate an understanding of the potential benefits of Jiu-Jitsu training for police officers to resolve physical conflicts more swiftly and with less risk. As applied to the proposed study, the general theory of combat will be used to understand how law enforcement officers perceive Jiu-Jitsu to be feasible and effective in improving conflict resolution skills. As demonstrated in previous studies applying this theory, findings should lead to rich and in-depth insight into the nature of competition and conflict and facilitate understanding of how rural central Texas law enforcement officers describe their Jiu-Jitsu training experiences. This theory was used to develop the research questions associated with the perceived effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training, and its assumptions will be used to frame the analysis and draw conclusions about the implications of the results. The following section contains a review of the related literature associated with the problem of interest in this study.

Related Literature

This section of Chapter 2 contains a presentation of the evidence that was located with the aforementioned search strategy. Drawing on the assumptions and principles of Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) theory and the ideas of Luttwak (2001) and von Clausewitz (2018) that combine to form the general theory of combat logic, the remainder of this chapter contains a synthesis of literature specifically relevant to the problem and purpose of the proposed study. A discussion of the development of the problem and its evolution is presented first, followed by a review of the most contemporary literature related to this topic. Research design, methodological issues, and gaps in the literature are then identified, resulting in the rationale and justification for the current study.

Development of the Problem

The problem associated with the physical risks for officers and suspects when the former are not sufficiently trained in defensive and offensive combat tactics has evolved. This section contains a synthesis of literature documenting the background and historical context of this problem (Koerner & Staller, 2021; Lyons et al., 2017; Terrill & Paoline III, 2013). Emphasis is placed on both seminal research and newer research reflecting the evolution of this problem, leading to its contemporary state (Arsenault & Hinton, 2014; Lyons et al., 2017; Terrill & Paoline III, 2013). Themes discussed in this section include cases of assaults on police officers and the unreasonable use of force by police officers; defensive tactics training of police officers and the concept of the force continuum; and martial arts training in law enforcement.

Cases of Assaults on Police Officers and Unreasonable Use of Force

The evolution of the problem associated with the physical risks that can occur stemming from a lack of effective combat training is perhaps best reflected in notable cases of police being

injured or killed in the line of duty while amid a physical altercation, as well as those involving suspects being victimized by poor restraint and combat skills on the part of officers that led to their injury or death. Not all such cases reach national recognition, though several examples have emerged in the past several decades that highlight gaps in the tactical training of law enforcement officers (Aborisade & Oni, 2021; Akinyetun, 2021; O'Brien et al., 2019). Lyons (2017) systematically reviewed the literature associated with injury profiles of law enforcement officers involved in such physical altercations. The authors were particularly concerned with high-risk areas in the body where officers sustained injuries, which could be used to understand better how to train them to defend themselves during conflicts effectively. Results from a synthesis of 16 studies demonstrated that the most injured areas occurred in the upper extremities and involved soft-tissue strains and sprains. Additionally, the most common cause of injury was a non-compliant defendant, which commonly resulted in an assault on the officer. While severe physical injury and death were found to be rare, the physical injury resulted in lost workdays in most cases and permanent deficits in the physical functioning of the injured area of the body in approximately 10% of cases. Thus, there has been a historical need to improve the training of law enforcement officers to protect themselves from permanent injury – particularly in the upper limbs.

Cases involving the unreasonable use of force by police officers also reflect some of the deficits that exist in current approaches to the defensive tactics training of law enforcement officers in the United States. While these cases are numerous and exhaustive and often are either not reported or do not gain national media attention, some have been more culturally relevant in recent years and illustrate the negative outcomes that can occur when police are either not equipped to defend themselves without harming a suspect or are assaulted due to a lack of

defensive tactics training skills (Akinyetun, 2021; Bowleg et al., 2022; Sosoo et al., 2022). The cases of Rodney King, Edward Bronstein, and George Floyd each represent some deficit in the training of a law enforcement officer when faced with a less-than-complaint individual (Bowleg et al., 2022; Maltsev et al., 2020; Sosoo et al., 2022). Though such cases also contain racial and sociocultural connotations, they reveal areas in which martial arts training might have potentially protected the person police were dealing with.

Most recently, the Capitol riots, in which numerous law enforcement personnel were physically injured by some protestors when the Capitol was overtaken, demonstrate how a lack of preparation and defensive tactics training placed Capitol police officers at risk. For context, on January 6, 2021, hundreds of people who were protesting the 2020 presidential election broke into Congress, and some assaulted police officers who were protecting the building (Bowleg et al., 2022). An estimated 114 capital police officers were physically injured because of the overtaking of the Capitol building (Sosoo et al., 2022). While no officers died, one was brutally beaten and was unable to return to duty (Bowleg et al., 2022). More preparation and training in defensive tactics skills, such as Jiu-Jitsu and crowd management techniques, might have potentially mitigated injury to officers and protestors (Sosoo et al., 2022). The following subsection contains a presentation of the literature associated with the use of force continuum and its role in the training of police officers.

Combat Training of Police Officers and the Use of Force Continuum

How police officers were trained to approach and manage physical altercations on duty has also evolved. During their attendance in a police academy, cadets are trained in both the use of force and de-escalation tactics (Torres, 2020). Concerning the latter, officers are provided with psychological and communicative skills and tools to help reduce the severity or tension of a

conflict without using physical force (Akinyetun, 2021). In most circumstances, deescalation is a preliminary step to prevent a physical altercation and protect both the officer and the suspect (Ivanovski & Nedev, 2022). When de-escalation is ineffective, officers are trained to use an appropriate amount and mode of force (). In the context of police training, force is considered to be the amount of effort necessary to warrant compliance on the part of a subject (Heusler & Sutter, 2020). The subjectivity of the concept of force and what constitutes an appropriate amount is one factor that has led to physical injury and police excessive force in many cases.

Some concepts involving force and tactical training among police cadets are derived from Eastern martial arts principles. For example, officers are taught to balance the needs of security with the ethical rights and well-being of a suspect and to avoid inflicting physical harm unless absolutely necessary (Vera Jimenez et al., 2019). Additionally, officers are taught to use physical force as a means of self-defense primarily and as a means of restraint secondarily (Ivanovski & Nedev, 2022). The history of using force dates back to the emergence of established law enforcement in the United States, which has essentially existed since its conception (Aborisade & Oni, 2021). However, the use of force and the physical training of officers did not stem from the aim of protecting officers but, rather, from the fear that officers would abuse their power (Vera Jimenez et al., 2019). Therefore, the history and evolution of the tactical training of officers have been grounded in the ethical use of force, self-defense, and de-escalation.

The *use of force continuum* dates back to the late 19th century to help officers determine the amount of force to apply based on the level of risk present in a given situation. Over time, this continuum has evolved considerably due to the development of new threats and risks to officers and civilians, such as the more widespread availability of firearms and the emergence of modern technologies and weapons that can potentially cause harm or death (Staller et al., 2019;

Torres, 2020). There is no universal or standard model of the use of force continuum, and debates have existed in the literature regarding the effectiveness of policies surrounding this concept (Terrill & Paoline III, 2013). For example, Terrill and Paoline III (2013) examined the less lethal use of force policy that emerged following the high-profile *Graham v. Connor* case that reached the Supreme Court and involved the reasonableness of using of force during an arrest. Terrill and Paoline III's (2013) work showed that one in five law enforcement agencies do not have or implement a use-of-force continuum or a robust policy, and there is considerable variance in force tactics that are used between different agencies and what is considered to be an appropriate amount of force based on the level of risk that is present. This lack of consistency is one potential factor leading to cases of the unreasonable use of force by police officers and also represents the necessity for implementing a tactical force model that protects both officers and suspects (Terrill & Paoline III, 2013).

Researchers have recently been concerned with re-examining the use of force continuum following numerous nationally relevant cases in which either suspects or police officers have been several injured or died during a physical altercation. McLean et al. (2022) conducted a recent investigation on this topic, in which they presented a historical and conceptual analysis of the use of force continuum and its connection to cases of police assaults or excessive force. The authors concluded that, contradictory to previous research, resistance on the part of the suspect is not the only driver of decisions involving the use of force (McLean et al., 2022; O'Brien et al., 2019; Staller et al., 2019). Instead, the perception of threat is also a significant factor that influences such decisions and one that has been neglected in both police defensive tactics training and the peer-reviewed literature (McLean et al., 2022). The implementation of martial arts training, such as Jiu-Jitsu, may help to address this limitation based on its psychological and

philosophical principles that can help officers potentially identify and perceive a threat more accurately and then appropriately use force to restrain a suspect while safely defending themselves (). The following sub-section reviews the literature on martial arts training within law enforcement.

Martial Arts Training in Law Enforcement

While tactical training has been a component of law enforcement training throughout its history, only recently has martial arts training been considered a viable element of the preparation and development of police officers. One of the major developments in the integration of martial arts and general law enforcement training occurred in 2009, when Canada's constable, Al Arsenault, first introduced the fusion of arrest and control tactics that are standard in the training of police officers with various aspects of martial arts, such as Judo (Arsenault & Hinton, 2014). This officer had been training in the martial arts since the 1980s but first developed a formal model of integrated martial arts and standard police tactical training when he began to train police officers in Judo in the early 21st century and developed several training centers throughout Western Canada for officers seeking specialized skill development (Arsenault & Hinton, 2014). Judo is a martial art that emphasized throws and disabling suspects without harming them, as well as using maximum efficiency for the mutual welfare and benefit of both the attacker and defender (Heusler & Sutter, 2020). The training centers quickly became popular and have become a staple in Canadian law enforcement.

While martial arts training in law enforcement has become more popularized in recent years, there have been limited peer-reviewed studies examining its impact on outcomes like the safety of police officers, the safety of suspects, and the impact such training has on deterring physical altercations between the two. However, some studies have indirectly evaluated the

utility and feasibility of martial arts training for police officers (Renden et al., 2015; Staller et al., 2019; Vera Jimenez et al., 2019). For example, Renden et al. (2015) sought to determine whether officers who had training in martial arts performed more effectively in self-defense and arrest scenarios when experiencing low and high anxiety levels than those who did not. A sample of officers who were and were not trained in martial arts took part in a weekly intervention in which they were taught self-defense and arrest skills based on Karate, Jiu-Jitsu, and Krav Maga principles. Results demonstrated that officers who had additional experience beyond the training program demonstrated the highest levels of performance under high anxiety conditions, although the intervention significantly improved the self-defense and arrest skills of both groups. These findings illustrate the effectiveness of holistic interventions that combine principles of multiple martial arts in officers' self-defense and arrest skills and the potential applicability of such a training program to applied scenarios involving actual suspects.

While these findings demonstrate the benefits of martial arts training for police officers, including interventions that contain elements of Jiu-Jitsu, there have been some limitations of such interventions in the literature. For example, results from the Renden et al. (2015) study demonstrated that their martial arts intervention did not significantly prevent participants from performing worse under high anxiety conditions compared to low anxiety conditions. The presence of anxiety within a potential physical altercation or circumstance that has escalated appears to have a universally negative impact on police officers, regardless of their martial arts experience (O'Brien et al., 2019). The negative impact of anxiety on performance has been documented widely in the literature across numerous disciplines and contexts (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; O'Neill et al., 2019; Staller et al., 2019). This impact reflects the need to more effectively prepare officers to negotiate high-tension situations in the line of duty, and the integration of

principles of Jiu-Jitsu within standard police training may help to address this limitation (Staller et al., 2019). The following section contains a review of the most current evidence associated with martial arts training and its role in the physical development of law enforcement professionals.

Current Status of Martial Arts Training in Law Enforcement

The purpose of the previous section was to provide an overview of the history and background of the problem and its evolution to the current state in which there remains a lack of understanding as to the feasibility and impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training among law enforcement officers and the risks that can occur to officers and suspects alike as a result. This section contains a synthesis of the current status of martial arts training in law enforcement (Koerner et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2019; Staller et al., 2019). Based on the accumulation of evidence associated with martial arts training in law enforcement, researchers have synthesized the existing literature through systematic reviews and meta-analyses to draw broader and generalized conclusions about the utility of such interventions. Duarte and Ferraz (2022) conducted one of the most recent systematic reviews on martial arts and combat sports training among law enforcement officers. The authors found just five studies across five academic databases that met the inclusion criteria. However, despite the small body of evidence on this topic, the authors found that martial arts and combat sports training was associated with significant and consistent improvements in tactical performance and reductions in injury rates, anxiety, and stress. These findings confirm studies in other domains demonstrating the positive effects that martial arts training can have on not only physical performance but also mental health and the ability to manage stress and anxiety (Duarte & Ferraz, 2022; Kukić et al., 2019; Staller et al., 2019). Whether or not such training significantly enhances these outcomes among law enforcement in

applied situations and outside of simulated environments warrants further investigation in the literature.

Considering some of the altercations with racial subtext that have gained national attention in recent years, researchers have also sought to investigate the extent to which martial arts training may effectively remedy police interactions involving people of color that occur in the field. Parks (2022) presented a review and conceptual paper documenting the need and potential advantages of martial arts training to mitigate violence caused by perceived or real racial bias by or towards law enforcement personnel. The author noted the disproportionate number of cases that involve white officers and African American suspects, which appears to be indicative of at least one of two factors, including racial bias in the perception of a threat on the part of law enforcement personnel and/or an increased real threat of violence on the part of African American suspects (Parks, 2022). Which factor most strongly predicts violence and physical injury risk to both officers and suspects is unknown, and researchers have speculated that both combine to play a role (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; Koerner et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2019). Due to the ability of martial arts to integrate psychosocial training and reduce stress and anxiety during physical altercations, martial arts training may help improve decision-making on the part of officers and more accurately perceive the threat level.

Some literature from outside the United States has revealed the positive impacts of martial arts training on law enforcement personnel's general health and well-being, irrespective of its influence on actual performance during arrest and control scenarios in the field. For example, martial arts training has been a key component of the training of police officers in many Eastern countries for centuries and has also been widely adopted throughout Eastern European countries like Slovakia (Facinek & Košč, 2021; Kukić et al., 2019; Maltsev et al.,

2020). Facinek and Košč (2021) documented the impacts of martial arts training on the general fitness and mental health/well-being of police officers in Slovakia, where such training has been implemented for multiple decades. According to these authors, martial arts training involving Taekwondo, Judo, and Aikido has been linked with Slovakian officers' increased fitness and mental health (Facinek & Košč, 2021). Thus, it is probable that martial arts training is also associated with improved performance in applied circumstances, though further research is needed to understand these impacts.

Researchers have recently increased efforts to understand how martial arts training can improve law enforcement officers' self-defense and restrain skills, psychological outcomes, and general well-being. Fully embracing a specific martial art also generally warrants the adoption of a particular philosophy and set of values that can correspond to an enhanced sense of spiritual and mental health (Heusler & Sutter, 2020). Through self-discipline and self-reflection, many martial arts induce a personal transformation as much as physical ones (Cortright et al., 2020). Thus, there are many additional advantages that martial arts training can have aside from just improving combat and defense skills (Maltsev et al., 2020). These benefits also appear to align with the physical requirements of police work and law enforcement in general.

Studies have recently emerged documenting the psychological impacts of martial arts training. Torres (2020) conducted a recent investigation of the impacts of martial arts training on confidence, motivation, apprehensiveness, and use of force self-efficacy among more than 1,000 patrol officers in the United States. Results demonstrated that martial arts training significantly predicted high levels of perceived self-efficacy involving the use of force, motivation, and (low) apprehensiveness. These findings provide insight into the multidimensional benefits of martial arts training and the ability of martial arts to improve self-efficacy regarding the use of force

decision-making and agree with previous research on this topic to illustrate the diverse benefits of martial arts and how they potentially are conducive to optimal police performance (Heusler & Sutter, 2020; Maltsev et al., 2020). Many of the most important benefits are psychological in nature.

Enhancing self-efficacy may improve the physical performance of police officers and enhance their decision-making abilities involved in using force when subduing a suspect or potentially dangerous individual while on duty. Self-efficacy is a principle within the social cognitive school of psychology and is contained within Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977). According to Bandura, self-efficacy refers to the realistic belief one has in their ability to accomplish a specific task, such as applying force and making appropriate decisions about who to most effectively, quickly, and peacefully subdue a potentially dangerous individual (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Improving self-efficacy for using force among law enforcement personnel is critical for protecting them and suspects, and it is evident that martial arts training is an effective way to do so (Torres, 2020). One of the reasons this is the case is that martial arts may offer more complete and holistic training than that currently offered in police academies (Agragal & Borkar, 2021). According to Bandura, there are four sources of self-efficacy: past successful experiences, physical mastery of the task, verbal persuasion, and vicarious experience (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Through martial arts training and embracing the core principles and philosophies, each of these four sources is present and potentially to a greater degree than in traditional police training (Xu et al., 2020). There is currently a lack of extensive research involving the impacts of Jiu-Jitsu on these mental and physical outcomes, specifically among police officers.

Many recent studies have shown that teaching individual techniques within martial arts disciplines is associated with improved physical abilities needed to perform law enforcement duties effectively. For example, Khatsaiuk et al. (2021) conducted an intervention to examine the effects of a martial arts technique known as Katsumoto on the explosive force of 62 Ukrainian police officers. Results demonstrated that the technique significantly improved this outcome based on kinematic data generated from electrodes placed on officers' bodies while they performed various defense and restrain maneuvers. These findings align with several other studies demonstrating the benefits of specialized martial arts technical training on law enforcement skills (Hamzani, 2020; Khatsaiuk et al., 2021; Staller et al., 2021). Martial arts training can be integrated with typical police training at the academy level and also through additional skill development opportunities throughout the career of law enforcement personnel.

A trend in the literature associated with martial arts training among law enforcement is that most programs that incorporate such training offer relatively watered-down versions of an amalgam of disciplines, such as Karate, Kung-Fu, and Judo. These programs usually take the form of additional training opportunities for officers during overtime hours, in which basic movements are taught and practiced, but there is no philosophical discussion, and no personal transformation is encouraged by a master instructor or mentor (Ho et al., 2020). The lack of this mentorship relationship or emphasis on the philosophical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of martial arts and the integration of multiple disciplines can render the physical training less effective or complete because it does not instill values or beliefs that can effectively guide decision-making, such as regarding the use of force in real physical altercations while on duty (Flores-Macias & Zarkin, 2022). Therefore, while martial arts training does appear to offer improvements in many physical and psychological skills, such training would potentially be

more effective if a single discipline was taught and mastered instead of just physical techniques from several different forms of martial arts.

Another problem with the lack of emphasis on the psychological and philosophical aspects of martial arts training is that, in such cases, less emphasis is placed on the cognitive skills, such as awareness, how to perceive a threat, and how to manage anxiety, and this can still result in ineffective decision-making in tense and high-anxiety situations. This may be one of the reasons why studies have shown that officers with martial arts technical training implement significantly better use-of-force decisions in low anxiety conditions, but both officers with and without such technical training demonstrate impaired performance in high anxiety conditions (Ermasova et al., 2020; Hofer & Savell, 2021; Renden et al., 2015). A more comprehensive training focusing on just one discipline would theoretically improve officers' physical and mental skills and more adequately prepare them for applied, high-tension situations while on duty (Hofer & Savell, 2021). The following sub-section contains a literature review on the emergence of Jiu-Jitsu training in general law enforcement.

Research Involving Jiu-Jitsu Training in Law Enforcement

While martial arts training among law enforcement began to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s, it was in the early 2000s that the first literature related to this topic was produced (Bolander et al., 2009; Laus et al., 2008; Woody, 2005). This evidence pertained to more widely practiced martial arts, such as karate and kung-fu techniques for self-defense or to retain a suspect (Cowper, 2000; Mazerolle et al., 2007). Only recently have the first studies associated with Jiu-Jitsu training begun to appear in scholarly journals (Hickman et al., 2021; Melnyk & Bohaichuk, 2022). However, many of these investigations have contained just anecdotal reports of the impacts of martial arts training or have been conceptual or theoretical, with no empirical

evidence of the actual effects of martial arts on the physical and cognitive skills of police officers.

No known recent studies have been published in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals that have examined the impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training on law enforcement personnel. Some dissertations associated with this topic have been produced but have not yet been published in peer-reviewed journals (Harmon, 2022; Rinderer, 2022). For example, Harmon (2022) conducted a qualitative, exploratory study investigating the perceptions of law enforcement personnel concerning the feasibility of Jiu-Jitsu training. The twelve participants unanimously agreed that Jiu-Jitsu training was likely to be effective and feasible as a supplement to traditional training efforts used within police academies. Additionally, Rinderer (2022) worked with Boise State University on the perceived feasibility of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu training for rehabilitating from post-traumatic stress disorder for law enforcement personnel. Once again, there was general agreement that Jiu-Jitsu training was perceived to be both feasible and likely beneficial in addressing some of the issues that occur with post-traumatic stress disorder, such as inhibitions in engaging in physical altercations with suspects resulting from a past traumatic experience.

Several of the most important effects of Jiu-Jitsu training are psychological and cognitive. Based on the findings of recent studies, there is some evidence showing that Jiu-Jitsu is likely to be beneficial for law enforcement personnel for both physical and psychological outcomes, but there have been no recent, published, peer-reviewed studies documenting whether Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu training is likely to be effective or feasible within the state of Texas (Rinderer, 2022; Zavala & Chan, 2021). Context-specific evidence is needed based on the tendency for different areas across the United States, as well as different police departments within these

areas, to have varying philosophies and policies regarding officer physical training and conditioning.

There is limited doubt that martial arts training offers a range of physical and mental benefits. The large body of evidence supporting the efficacy of martial arts training among law enforcement personnel is indicative of the probable effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training (Figueiredo et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2021; Stellpflug et al., 2020). Additionally, limitations associated with the application of martial arts training in previous studies related to the lack of psychological benefit resulting from strictly physical training of a conglomerate of martial arts suggests that a homogenized and integrated approach is likely not as effective as fully focusing on one specific discipline (Wang et al., 2021). Jiu-Jitsu offers a potential solution to this problem by providing a singular and evidence-based training program that fully embraces the principles of an approach that appears to be particularly conducive to the mental and physical needs of police work (Bueno et al., 2022). The following sub-section reviews the evidence associated with Jiu-Jitsu training specifically for police officers.

Jiu-Jitsu Training Specifically for Police Officers

The third theme associated with the literature's current status is Jiu-Jitsu training, specifically for police officers. While there have been several studies examining martial arts training for law enforcement and police officers in particular, less literature exists specifically examining the impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training for police officers (Duarte & Ferraz, 2022; O'Neill et al., 2019; Vera Jiménez et al., 2019). Certain differences exist among law enforcement agencies, such as the United States Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), that warrant different physical and cognitive skills (Kukić et al., 2019). Street-level patrol officers are much more likely to be engaged in physical altercations daily in the line of duty than other law

enforcement officers, and the physical conditioning, defensive tactics skills, and cognitive ability to make a split-second decision regarding the use of force must perpetually be at a high level (Cheng et al., 2021). For this reason, being trained in Jiu-Jitsu is potentially more conducive to the skills required for a street-level police officer than other specialized areas of law enforcement.

Some studies do exist which have examined the impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training in various aspects of police work, though many of these have combined Jiu-Jitsu training with other martial arts or have only used specific techniques taught within Jiu-Jitsu rather than a comprehensive spiritual and philosophical embracing of the martial art. For example, Gardner and Al-Shareffi (2022) examined the potential effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training to regulate decisions about chokeholds among police officers and the skill demonstrated in applying such holds. The authors discussed numerous recent cases of the incorrect application of choke holds and other forms of restraint used by police officers, which led to the injury or death of suspects. Several other studies have also recommended various forms of martial arts training based on these cases, many of which have led to the incarceration of the police officer(s) who implemented the incorrect technique and led to the injury or death of a civilian (Giacomantonio et al., 2020; Kabadayi et al., 2022; Vit et al., 2019). According to Gardner and Al-Shareffi (2022), training police officers in Jiu-Jitsu may help improve decision-making regarding applying air and carotid chokes to subdue suspects safely while restricting their movement. However, the actual effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training on this outcome was not tested. The authors recommended implementing a policy that requires police officers to be trained in Jiu-Jitsu to improve officers' physical restraint skills and cognitive decision-making.

One of the dilemmas presented in both anecdotal evidence and documented in the literature of law enforcement and criminology scholars is the time and resource constraints within many police departments, which can prevent the ability to implement additional training for officers beyond what is currently standard. Physical fitness and conditioning requirements and standards differ by state, and there is currently no universal or standardized training program for police officers, and Jiu-Jitsu may offer an affordable and time-efficient means in which to bridge this gap (Rozenfeld, 2021). Zhang (2022) highlighted the importance of consistent physical education among police officers but documented many of the barriers that currently exist to doing so, such as police understaffing and the increased stress that is placed on already overworked officers regarding additional physical conditioning requirements. According to Zhang (2022), online physical education courses that contain martial arts skills within the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu tradition may potentially be an effective medium for which to address these barriers and provide police officers with the physical training they need to meet conditioning requirements, as well as to enhance their defense and restrain skills. Zhang (2022) developed an online police physical education system containing PHP language and an InitPHP framework that the author suggested could optimize police conditioning and improve the mode of physical education and the current teaching mechanism used in the field. However, while this program may have many potential benefits over current strategies to train police officers, it has yet to be tested empirically or applied in a real sample of law enforcement personnel.

Researchers have recently documented the trend for theories and conceptual papers to be presented involving the use of force and the potential for techniques within martial arts like Jiu-Jitsu to be able to improve the physical conditioning and skills of police officers, but the lack of evidence actually demonstrating outcomes associated with these theories and concepts. McLean

et al. (2022) examined police agencies, use of force regulations, training initiatives, approaches for disciplining problem officers, supervision, and dimensions and issues associated with potential solutions in the United States. Results showed that many promising ideas have been presented in the literature, though there have been few strategies that have been tested via empirical research or involving actual cases in the field (McLean et al., 2022). These findings align with several other studies in which martial arts training like Jiu-Jitsu has been promoted as a means of offering multidimensional physical and psychological benefits to officers, but these techniques have not yet been researched using scientifically rigorous methodologies (Alispahic & Hadzikadunic, 2020; Bondarenko et al., 2020; Wang, 2020). Thus, the current need within the literature related to the physical training of police officers is to test the ideas and theories presented by researchers advocating for martial arts and Jiu-Jitsu specifically.

One of the reasons that research related to Jiu-Jitsu and its impacts on the physical and cognitive skills of police officers has stalled is that little remains known regarding the actual feasibility of implementing a Jiu-Jitsu training program in specific police departments, or the experiences of police officers who have been trained in Jiu-Jitsu. Before implementing interventions involving Jiu-Jitsu or changing policies to incorporate martial arts in the general physical training of Jiu-Jitsu, evidence is needed regarding the experiences of officers who have trained in this discipline and their perceptions of the feasibility of implementing Jiu-Jitsu training across an entire department (Anh, 2022). The evidence that is obtained from such research may lead to increased insight into the likely impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training on a police officer's psychological and physical skills and ways in which to address any potential barriers that are documented (Jankovic et al., 2020). Therefore, qualitative, phenomenological research must be

conducted in specific police departments and settings to make evidence-based recommendations for decision-makers in law enforcement, such as police chiefs and sheriffs.

While there have been no recently published studies involving the potential feasibility and impacts of Jiu-Jitsu training for police officers in the United States, there have been investigations of the effects of this form of martial art in other countries and the territory of Guam. For example, Farrer (2019) investigated the therapeutic effects of Jiu-Jitsu training for police officers in Guam who had been exposed to traumatic incidents. The researchers found that a holistic Jiu-Jitsu intervention was associated with improvements in the mental health and well-being of officers who had been involved in traumatic conflict situations while on duty or who had otherwise witnessed traumas, such as homicides. These findings agree with other studies involving both the mental and physical benefits of Jiu-Jitsu and how fully embracing the mental and physical aspects of Jiu-Jitsu and not just the techniques themselves are necessary to maximize the benefits of this martial art (Farrer, 2019; Paoline III & Gau, 2022; Tulendiyeva et al., 2021). One of the problems with previous studies involving the effects of Jiu-Jitsu is that they have focused strictly on the physical aspect of training while ignoring philosophical concepts, such as the intersection of power with knowledge and the integration of mind and body (Ban et al., 2021; Dworzecki & Nowicka, 2019; Farrer, 2019). More evidence is needed regarding the effects of more comprehensive Jiu-Jitsu training, particularly for supporting the mental health of police officers, especially those who have suffered from post-traumatic stress following observing or being a part of a highly stressful situation while on duty.

The training methods for police officers in handling and controlling physical altercations during their duty have also undergone significant changes over time. Cadets enrolled in a police academy undergo comprehensive training that encompasses the acquisition of skills in

employing force and de-escalation strategies (Torres, 2020). Concerning the latter, law enforcement personnel are equipped with psychological and communicative competencies and resources that can effectively mitigate the intensity or strain of a conflict without resorting to physical coercion (Akinyetun, 2021). In most cases, initiating a preliminary step is crucial to proactively mitigate the risk of a physical altercation and ensure the safety of the law enforcement officer and the individual under suspicion (Ivanovski & Nedev, 2022). In situations where de-escalation proves ineffective, law enforcement personnel receive training to employ a suitable degree and method of force (Ivanovski & Nedev, 2022). Within the realm of police training, the concept of force is defined as the level of exertion required to elicit compliance from an individual (Heusler & Sutter, 2020). The presence of subjectivity in the definition of force and its appropriate magnitude has been identified as a contributing factor to instances of physical harm and incidents of police excessive force. The incorporation of martial arts training within law enforcement institutions gained prominence during the 1980s and 1990s. However, it was not until the early 2000s that scholarly literature addressing this subject emerged (Bolander et al., 2009; Laus et al., 2008; Woody, 2005). The evidence presented in the study focused on commonly practiced martial arts, such as karate and kung-fu, which are utilized for self-defense purposes or to apprehend a suspect (Cowper, 2000; Mazerolle et al., 2007). In recent times, scholarly journals have started to feature the initial studies pertaining to Jiu-Jitsu training (Hickman et al., 2021; Melnyk & Bohaichuk, 2022). Nevertheless, a significant portion of these inquiries have primarily relied on anecdotal accounts to examine the effects of martial arts training. Alternatively, some studies have been predominantly conceptual or theoretical in nature, lacking empirical evidence to substantiate the actual impact of martial arts on the physical and cognitive abilities of police officers.

Several studies have investigated the effects of Jiu-Jitsu training on different aspects of police work. However, it is worth noting that many of these studies have incorporated Jiu-Jitsu training alongside other martial arts or have focused solely on specific techniques within Jiu-Jitsu rather than encompassing a comprehensive exploration of this martial art's spiritual and philosophical aspects. Gardner and Al-Shareffi (2022) conducted a study to investigate the potential efficacy of Jiu-Jitsu training in regulating decision-making regarding the use of chokeholds among police officers and the level of skill exhibited in applying such holds. The authors examined a variety of recent instances wherein police officers improperly employed choke holds and other methods of restraint, resulting in harm or fatality to the individuals in question. Numerous additional studies have similarly advocated for diverse modalities of martial arts instruction in light of these instances, a significant number of which have resulted in the legal confinement of the law enforcement officer responsible for employing an erroneous technique that resulted in harm or fatality of a non-combatant (Giacomantonio et al., 2020).

More evidence is needed regarding Jiu-Jitsu's role, specifically within the United States. Sociocultural differences that exist between Guam and the United States may affect the extent to which Jiu-Jitsu is embraced within police departments (Farrer, 2019). While Guam is a United States territory and shares many of the same laws and policies related to criminal justice, there are also differences in law enforcement approach and the general culture that may influence whether Jiu-Jitsu is adopted and used among law enforcement in the mainland United States (Baldwin et al., 2019). Moreover, in some areas of the United States, there may be more barriers to implementing Jiu-Jitsu, with more traditional attitudes associated with law enforcement (Karaduman et al., 2022). Research involving the perceptions of police officers in Texas who have undergone Jiu-Jitsu training may provide insight into the likelihood that this martial art will

be adopted across different departments within Texas and beyond. The following section discusses the research design and methodological issues in the current body of evidence related to Jiu-Jitsu training among law enforcement.

Methodological Issues in the Literature

Though the literature related to martial arts training as a means of improving the tactical skills of law enforcement personnel has continued to evolve, some research design and methodological issues have impeded understanding of this topic. For example, much of the literature related to this topic has included theoretical or conceptual papers (Hasan, 2021; McLean et al., 2022; Walters & Heine, 2021). While such research has provided insight into the potential for Jiu-Jitsu to be positively impactful in law enforcement, more is needed for adoption in practice or to change policy associated with the training of police officers (Lee et al., 2021). Empirical evidence from law enforcement personnel with experience with Jiu-Jitsu is necessary before interventions associated with this martial art can be implemented or policy and practice can be modified (Bjorkelo et al., 2021). Additionally, there has been an abundance of quantitative research and cross-sectional studies that have examined the subjective perceptions of law enforcement personnel involving martial arts training (Benesch, 2020; De Ronzi & Greco, 2020; Hickman et al., 2021; Ong et al., 2022). Such research is beneficial because of its generalizability but provides only superficial insight into the potential effects of Jiu-Jitsu training (Kavoura et al., 2021). More in-depth and rich data involving the perceptions and experiences of police officers is necessary to generate an understanding of the potential for Jiu-Jitsu training to be incorporated into standard police training (Toh & Cho, 2022). The following sub-section discusses gaps in the literature related to this topic rather than just regarding research designs and methodologies of existing studies.

In addition to the aforementioned research design and methodological issues, several gaps in the knowledge related to this topic still exist. For example, little is known regarding the perceptions and experiences of police officers who have received Jiu-Jitsu training, and researchers have called for more investigations into this topic, largely in response to several high-profile cases in which insufficient training has potentially led to the inappropriate use of force and application of restraint techniques by police officers, ultimately leading to injury or death to a civilian (McLean et al., 2022; Bjorkelo et al., 2021). There are currently no recent phenomenological or transcendental studies related to this topic. There have also been no recently published studies specifically related to Jiu-Jitsu, which differs in its physical and philosophical approach from other martial arts studied more frequently, such as Karate and Kung-Fu. No known, recent, published qualitative, transcendental-phenomenological studies have examined the perceived efficacy of Jiu-Jitsu training among law enforcement professionals. Integrating transcendental and phenomenological designs offers a more comprehensive means to generate the understanding and interpretation of meanings expressed in the lived experience of individuals with backgrounds in the subject of interest, such as police officers trained in Jiu-Jitsu.

The historical beginning points of police departments' preparation in the utilization of less lethal force can be followed to the 19th century, precisely when the London city police launched the practice of outfitting their law enforcement officers with truncheons, usually called "Billy clubs" (Clede & Parson, 1987; The truncheon served as a customary implement utilized by law enforcement officers in both the United Kingdom and the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. During the 1960s, the civil rights movement in the United States witnessed extensive demonstrations that were frequently met with resistance from local law enforcement agencies, resulting in the dissemination of graphic depictions of police excessive force

(Kaminski & Martin, 2000). In the early 1970s, there was an increase in preference for employing nonviolent methods of subject control instead of relying on physical force like clubbing to subdue suspects (Torres, 2020). Policymakers held the perspective that this particular approach would serve as a more favorable means of enhancing the rapport between the community and law enforcement, with a focus on public perception.

The new programs caused enhancements in several crucial domains. The policing landscape in the United States is characterized by a wide range of agencies, including many municipal, county, and state entities and federal organizations like the FBI, DEA, ATF, and Secret Service. The decentralized structure of policing in the United States has several consequences, including overlapping responsibilities, diverse funding sources, and varied training programs (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Police departments exhibit various needs and possess varying financial resources to address these requirements. Consequently, there was a need to enhance the scope, funding, and duration of the physical defense training programs initiated during the 1970s. It should be noted that the initial programs suffered from a notable deficiency in the level of proficiency exhibited by the trainers. These trainers derived from martial arts backgrounds founded on Aikido, Karate, or Judo philosophies. According to Kaminski and Martin (2000), although these systems showed efficacy within gymnasiums and dojos, their effectiveness in real-world scenarios was frequently lacking. In addition, the growing accessibility of non-lethal resources such as pepper spray, tasers, and batons has led to a tendency among officers to rely on these tools instead of prioritizing comprehensive hand-to-hand combat training (Bowen, 2018). Ultimately, the initial fervor surrounding martial arts training frequently diminished, leading to the discontinuation of programs that necessitated consistent practice for optimal results, primarily due to financial limitations.

During the 1990s, martial arts training saw a remarkable spike in interest. According to Reaves (2013), during the decade's initial years, 2% to 20% of police academies incorporated unarmed martial arts training into their curriculum for cadets. According to Reaves (2013), as of 2013, the percentage stood at 99%, with individuals dedicating an average of 60 hours to training. Torres (2020) reported that nearly all individuals, 94%, have learned ground fighting, while approximately half, 49%, have been schooled in pressure point techniques. In addition to receiving hand-to-hand defensive training in police academies, it is common for officers to engage in ongoing training either through department-provided programs or personal initiatives. According to a study conducted by Morin et al. (2017), nearly half of employed law enforcement officers underwent training within the previous 12-month period.

Implementing widespread and standardized martial arts training can potentially improve the strained relationship between the public and law enforcement (Parks, 2022). The implementation of enhanced training programs has been found to have a positive impact on the likelihood of reducing fatal encounters between law enforcement officers and suspects, consequently resulting in a decrease in mortality rates and an improvement in the overall sense of safety and self-confidence among police personnel (Parks, 2022; Renden et al., 2015). According to Parks (2022), enhancing the efficacy, accountability, and self-assurance of the police force can contribute to a greater level of public confidence, thereby reinforcing the prevailing perception of law enforcement.

Other works have been conducted related to very similar topics (e.g., Harmon, 2022). Specifically, Harmon (2022) recently conducted a qualitative, exploratory study with North Dakota State University involving the perceived efficacy of Jiu-Jitsu training for law enforcement personnel. However, according to Facal (2022), the findings have not yet been

published in a scholarly journal, and the results are not particularly generalizable outside of the context in which they were obtained based on the design and sampling approach, which potentially limits their applicability to police officers working specifically within central Texas. More context-specific research is needed to understand how law enforcement professionals perceive Jiu-Jitsu training as effective and logistically feasible within their units or communities (Facal, 2022). The following section contains a rationale and justification for the proposed study based on these gaps in the literature, research design, and methodological issues.

Rationale and Justification for the Current Study

Based on these research designs, methodological issues, and gaps in the literature, a need exists to identify how law enforcement personnel describe their experiences with Jiu-Jitsu training. Results from such research may be beneficial in understanding the perceived impacts and feasibility associated with Jiu-Jitsu training among law enforcement personnel. The proposed study will help fill a gap in the literature related to the experiences of police officers with training in Jiu-Jitsu and will also help address certain research design and methodological limitations that exist in previous studies, such as the lack of applicability to specific police departments and the tendency for the majority of the literature related to this topic to be quantitative and cross-sectional in nature (Benesch, 2020; De Ronzi & Greco, 2020; Hickman et al., 2021; Ong et al., 2022). Qualitative, transcendental-phenomenological research will generate rich and in-depth insight into the meanings expressed by police officers concerning their experiences with Jiu-Jitsu, specifically within the context of rural central Texas law enforcement officers. These findings may lead to evidence-based guidance on effectively developing and implementing a Jiu-Jitsu training program to protect both officers and suspects from physical harm during altercations. Such evidence is needed to guide intervention studies and influence

policy reform associated with the physical training and conditioning of police officers and law enforcement personnel in general.

Summary

This chapter included a synthesis of the literature that was located via a rigorous search process. The theoretical framework underpinning this study was first discussed, consisting of the general combat logic theory. There have been many contributors to this theory over time, and consideration was given to its evolution and current status. A justification for selecting this theory was then presented based on its core principles and their applicability to law enforcement training. Then, related literature associated with the problem and purpose of this dissertation is presented and critically evaluated. Background literature was presented first, followed by the current status of the evidence associated with Jiu-Jitsu training among law enforcement personnel. Gaps in the literature, research design, and methodological issues were then identified, leading to the rationale and justification for the proposed study.

Based on the evidence presented in this review, it appears that the literature associated with Jiu-Jitsu training has continued to evolve and expand. However, many gaps in the literature, research design, and methodological issues continue to exist that have prevented a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Specifically, there have been no known, recent, published studies associated with the perceptions of law enforcement personnel about the potential effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training for law enforcement professionals. This gap in the literature is a problem because research presented in this review has shown that police officers need to be sufficiently trained in the use of physical defense and restraint techniques, such as chokeholds or decision-making involving the use of force.

This lack of sufficient training, particularly in high-tension situations, has been partially responsible for several recent and high-profile involving the inappropriate use of force by a police officer resulting in the injury or death of a suspect. Training police officers in both the philosophical and physical aspects of Jiu-Jitsu may improve their defense and restraint skills and decision-making involving force use. Jiu-Jitsu training has also been shown to support law enforcement personnel's mental health and well-being, including those who suffer from post-traumatic stress following a traumatic experience while on duty. Before implementing interventions in specific departments within central Texas or changing policies associated with police physical conditioning or training, in-depth evidence from the experiences of police officers who have had Jiu-Jitsu training is needed regarding the feasibility and effects of a Jiu-Jitsu training program and its likelihood to be adopted is necessary.

Therefore, the proposed qualitative, transcendental-phenomenological study aims to evaluate how Jiu-Jitsu training positively impacts the interactions between law enforcement officers and suspects in rural central Texas. Results from this study may lead to improved insight into the likely impacts and feasibility of a Jiu-Jitsu training program for police officers in this department. They may also provide the groundwork for further intervention studies involving Jiu-Jitsu and for potential police reform associated with the physical training of law enforcement personnel. This concludes Chapter 2. Chapter 3 of this proposal contains a detailed description of the methodology to be implemented to achieve the study purpose.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. A deeper understanding, rather than current thoughts and practices, of how law enforcement officers use physical force to subdue a combative and violent suspect may help address the continuing concern of unreasonable or excessive force (Akinlabi 2020; Christopher et al., 2020; Deuchar et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020; Staller et al., 2019, Torres, 2020). This chapter details the research design, central and sub-research questions, the setting and participants, researcher positionality, procedures, and the data collection plan. The chapter will detail the steps taken from three data collection sources and the analysis and synthesis procedures of the collected data. Finally, this chapter will address the researcher's trustworthiness and related ethical considerations of the proposed study and a chapter summary.

Research Design

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. Improved police training could help ameliorate the perceived strained relationship with the public stemming from perceptions of overuse of force (Torres, 2020). This study focused on the lived experiences of law enforcement officers trained in Jiu-Jitsu in rural central Texas. A qualitative approach for this study was appropriate because the research was designed to examine lived experiences to enhance the understanding of numerous perspectives (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Miller et al., 2018; Rahman, 2020). This method is ideal for exploring individuals' or groups' attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences. Qualitative research involves collecting data through interviews,

observations, focus groups, and other methods that allow researchers to understand the context and meaning behind participants' responses (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, it focuses on acquiring a more profound understanding of a phenomenon; it is not a quantitative study that merely seeks to show a phenomenon's existence (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). Qualitative studies aim to investigate and better understand the meaning of lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Moustakas, 1994; Rahman, 2020). The current study focused on such a topic: gathering the perspectives of law enforcement officers in Jiu-Jitsu training.

I employed a phenomenological approach because I was interested in exploring the lived experiences of others concerning a specific phenomenon, gathering multiple qualitative perspectives from real-world settings (Miller et al., 2018; Rahman, 2020). Qualitative phenomenological studies concentrate on learning the human experience and its potential effects by gathering thorough and direct reports of lived experiences and then using themes and codes to analyze and interpret those experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miller et al., 2018). A phenomenological method was appropriate for this study because by investigating law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences, I learned what officers must do to convey relevance when facing a combative or violent suspect (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miller et al., 2018). This response to high-stakes situations has significant downstream effects on police-society relations in responses to perceived instances of excessive use of force (Torres, 2020).

Phenomenological research is a philosophical approach to understanding reality. Phenomenological research was first widely published in Edmund Husserl's work, *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (Sokolowski, 2018). The leading methods of phenomenological studies are transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic; each differs in its focus (Miller et al., 2018).

Transcendental phenomenology asserts that while human beings interpret reality through the prism of their own lived experiences and beliefs, it is possible to transcend this paradigm and observe reality objectively. New information is understood through preconceived paradigms and the interactions between said paradigms and information (Moustakas, 1994). The key components of phenomenology include understanding and interpretation (Dangal & Joshi, 2020).

Given that this research fundamentally investigated human interaction between law enforcement officers and their training, the key variables remained in the experiential realm. The central concern is how the subjects understand, interact with, and ultimately experience the world around them (Moustakas, 1994). It is worth noting that I have experience in law enforcement and Jiu-Jitsu training, which affects my positionality and understanding of the phenomena. This fact is inseparable from the research design. Thus, a transcendental phenomenological approach was appropriate to examine law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences. The transcendental phenomenological design guided this study toward understanding how Jiu-Jitsu affects an officer's use of force and makes sense of law enforcement officers lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences.

Research Questions

Researchers develop questions to gather meaningful participant information about their lived experiences (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). Furthermore, according to Lauterbach (2018), researchers should be mindful that questions are open-ended so that participants have broad latitude to convey their experiences. Therefore, this study included a central research question with two supporting sub-questions designed to collect detailed participant data.

Central Research Question

How can the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas improve relations between officers and suspects?

Sub-Question One

In what ways do officers believe this training is an effective tool for policing?

Sub-Question Two

How do law enforcement officers specifically implement Jiu-Jitsu curricula to a law enforcement audience?

Setting and Participants

The setting and participants selected for this study were appropriate and relevant to the data collected because they offered a useful sample of the target population and a manageable environment. Miller et al. (2018) suggest that qualitative research should be descriptive enough to elucidate the discussed experiences and immerse readers in the setting. Settings can potentially compromise the integrity of the research if the setting is not naturalistic or if they are unrelated to the phenomenon being studied. In addition, Dangal and Joshi (2020) stress that subject participation must be voluntary, and subjects must have relevant experiences of the studied phenomenon. As is the importance of a setting, participants without relevant experience might compromise the research's integrity; therefore, selecting an appropriate setting and participants with relevant experience is critical. The setting and participants selected for this study were appropriate and relevant to the data collected, as they offered an accessible, ample sample of officers who train in Jiu-Jitsu.

Setting

For the study's setting, local law enforcement officers from different agencies in rural central Texas were selected as participants. The selected law enforcement agencies included three police departments and two sheriff's offices. The average number of sworn officers is 147, and they are responsible for law enforcement services to an average population of 112,000 across three cities and two counties. In addition, each agency has several divisions, which include community affairs, criminal investigations, patrol services, special operations, training, and support services. The training division for each department is responsible for providing in-service training to all personnel. These trainings include legislative updates, cultural diversity, defensive tactics, and a host of other state-required courses.

Participating officers trained at a regional law enforcement training center. The regional training center is a state-of-the-art campus with multiple classrooms, multi-purpose training rooms, and a firearms range. The center is suited for the study because many officers train or provide Jiu-Jitsu training to rural central Texas police departments and sheriff's offices. Choosing participants from the central Texas area was beneficial because the staff and leadership have recognized the potential utility of Jiu-Jitsu as a police training aid and can provide insights into their experiences.

Participants

Participants in this study were state-certified law enforcement officers. These officers spoke enough English to participate in an interview conducted in English. The participants were between 21 and 51 years old. Each participant was a full-time, duly employed state-certified peace officer with full arrest powers. The specific demographics of the participants are discussed in Chapter Four. The participants were all volunteers; they were not compensated.

Researcher Positionality

I planned this study as a transcendental phenomenological study, selecting this design because of my interest in deeply understanding law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences. I aimed to learn precisely what these officers' experiences were and how training has impacted the interaction between officer and suspect. The participants interviewed for this study have lived the experience of being trained in or training others in Jiu-Jitsu. Again, it is important to note that I have law enforcement and Jiu-Jitsu experience, which is why a transcendental phenomenological approach was appropriate. Also, I recognize and acknowledge potential biases and employed accepted mitigation strategies such as *critical reflection* and *opening up inquiry* (Dibley et al., 2020; Kahn, 2000). Both my personal experience and formal study design positioned me to collect, analyze, and synthesize data related to the phenomenon, which might offer insightful perspectives and usable information to learners and scholars alike.

Interpretive Framework

Social constructivism to guide the interpretive framework, or research paradigm, for this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), constructivism considers knowledge as constructed as we work to make sense of our experiences. Therefore, I selected this framework because it maintains that even in similar situations, people can have different experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Interestingly, I subscribe to the idea that people create their own experiences, and factors, such as past experiences, belief and value systems, biases, and expected outcomes, influence our experiences. Therefore, I suspect that different study participants may have different experiences using this research paradigm and that, according to Vygotsky (1978), each experience has validity and worthiness. Furthermore, my own experiences in law enforcement and Jiu-Jitsu enable a degree of cognitive empathy for the participants in this study through

shared experiences, training, and belief systems. Thus, I am well-positioned to facilitate understanding and extract useful data from the subjects.

Philosophical Assumptions

This section will discuss my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that these assumptions guide researchers in developing their problem statement, constructing research questions, and interpreting the results of collected data. I believe these steps are critical because my perspective will influence this study; I acknowledge bias and have sole ownership of evaluating research data. I intend to employ Epoché practices to mitigate potential biases. Epoché practices allow the active suspension of assumptions reflectively, thereby developing inquisitiveness (Shufutinsky, 2020). Ultimately, it is essential to understand that potential assumptions I may harbor have led me to want to complete this study and that any potential assumptions might influence the work.

Ontological Assumption

According to Yulianto (2021), ontology represents an explanatory framework that allows going beyond the borders of ordinary thinking. Often, qualitative research examines individuals' varied experiences, reflecting different truths reported by those individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yulianto's (2021) and Creswell and Poth's (2018) assertions align with a social constructivism approach and my belief system. To me, individuals construct their sense of reality based on historical experiences, where we are in our lives concerning our status, and the goals we seek to achieve. Mindful of the role experience and belief play in perceptions of reality, I am confident that I appropriately and ethically reported the different perspectives of the participants' realities communicated in this study.

Epistemological Assumption

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), epistemological assumption asks what counts as knowledge, how to justify knowledge claims, and the relationship between the researcher and the subject researched. Simply put, epistemology discusses acquiring knowledge (Yulianto, 2021). Although I have nearly three decades of law enforcement experience, including being a party to use-of-force incidents, I am relatively new to Jiu-Jitsu as a defensive tactic. These experiences affected how I interpreted experiential data and understood the outside world. Thus, a transcendental phenomenological study and, as previously mentioned, Epoché, was appropriate to manage my knowledge by intercepting biases or assumptions. Doing so presented the phenomenon better and the relationship between me and the subject researched. I described the study participants' training, education, and background to validate their knowledge. Doing so justified knowledge claims and accounted for the neutrality of qualitative research. Furthermore, this research assumed good faith on the part of the participants. Information gathered from data collection methods may, therefore, be interpreted as reflecting the true experiences and beliefs of the participants.

Axiological Assumption

Axiology examines the value associated with the utility of gained knowledge (Yulianto, 2021). Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) state that those values brought into a study to manage bias is equally critical. As a career law enforcement officer and novice Jiu-Jitsu practitioner, I am passionate about seeing law enforcement agencies implement Jiu-Jitsu into their training curriculum. I believe wholeheartedly in Jiu-Jitsu's utility in safely subduing non-compliant suspects and its other added physical and mental benefits. I am mindful and transparent concerning my beliefs and communicate this information with the readers of this

dissertation. I hope they understand my potential biases and weigh them against the collected data so they may draw their own conclusions after effectively consuming my research. As mentioned, I practiced Epoché to manage biases and insulate my values to objectively collect and interpret data for this study.

Researcher's Role

As the principal investigator in this study, I objectively collected data from a sample of law enforcement officers trained in Jiu-Jitsu and examined their lived experiences concerning the utility of their training. Law enforcement officers can sometimes be reluctant to participate in voluntary studies because they are unsure about the study's intent or the researcher's motivation. However, because of my law enforcement experience, current role in a state law enforcement agency, and experience as a Jiu-Jitsu practitioner, I developed a rapport with the participants due to shared experiences (Bryman, 2016). I graduated from the Los Angeles and San Francisco Police Academies, hold several law enforcement certifications, and have advanced degrees: a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, a Master of Science in Management and Leadership, and a Master of Business Administration. Thus, I believe I have experienced the same phenomenon as the participants. This phenomenon has several layers, but they all interconnect. The first layer seems to be that Jiu-Jitsu-trained officers experience fewer injuries to themselves or suspects when engaged in a use-of-force encounter. Also, Jiu-Jitsu-trained officers seem to be able to take a non-compliant suspect into custody with greater effect, using minimal effort compared to non-Jiu-Jitsu-trained officers. As a researcher, I acknowledge the perceived or real potential for bias or assumptions; however, I also believe that my systematic research approach limited those potential biases and assumptions (Bryman, 2016).

I assume that my training, experience, and education have had a favorable and effective impact on my career, and my assumptions have not interfered with studying law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences. As a researcher, I took a transcendental phenomenological approach, using Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) general theory of combat (Brizin and Kernspecht used Carl von Clausewitz's combat logic theory as their foundation) to guide this study and make sense of the phenomenon experienced by the sample population. The implication of this study is that it might give decision-makers at rural Texas law enforcement agencies perspective, perhaps allowing them to consider the continuous advancement of their Jiu-Jitsu training curriculum because of its benefit to officers evidenced through their lived experiences.

Procedures

In qualitative research, procedures are necessary to familiarize the audience with the permissions granted to conduct the study, the different data types and how they are collected, and the methods of analysis used in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The field research component of this study began after receiving permission from Liberty's IRB (see Appendix A). The included recruitment plan showed the participant sample size taken from law enforcement officers, law enforcement trainers, and training staff. A representative sample was selected from this recruitment pool, which yielded data through an online qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observation. Also included are how the online qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and naturalistic observations produced data and how data was analyzed and triangulation achieved.

Permissions

Gaining permission to conduct qualitative research can be challenging, time-consuming,

and stressful (Monahan & Fisher, 2015). Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and regional training center permission to conduct the research was the first step in the research process and key to any progress in this study (see Appendix B). The regional training center training officer was the gatekeeper to law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences. The gatekeeper expressed permission to interview officers, distribute an online qualitative questionnaire, and observe training, which satisfied ethical obligations because of human participation in the research and verified the cooperation between the regional training center and me. The Appendix section of this dissertation shows copies of permission letters from the IRB approval from the regional training center.

Recruitment Plan

Purposeful sampling is the driver for selecting the participants and site for this study. This study's sample population consisted of rural central Texas law enforcement officers. This study's target sample size was 10 to 15 participants to ensure saturation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Regional training center staff are subject matter experts and identified officers meeting the previously discussed selection criteria. Once the trainers identified the participants, a meeting occurred to confirm suitability. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposeful sampling affords an understanding of the phenomenon studied based on a participant's knowledge and experience. Furthermore, qualitative research seeks to purposely select participants who are the most suitable based on their ability to explain specific topics, ideas, or events to aid the researcher in understanding the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, for this study, purposeful sampling was the most appropriate method because it provided the most suitable group to furnish information concerning the research problem.

Email addresses were gathered through contacts at the law enforcement agencies.

Recruitment emails (see Appendix C) were distributed to participants, including information about the study's purpose. In addition, the email explained that study participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without providing a reason. Finally, the email included an attached voluntary consent form (see Appendix D).

Once I acquired the consent forms through email, I responded to the participants, thanking each of them and asking that they complete a demographic qualitative questionnaire along with instructions on scheduling their interviews. The demographic information included name, race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as their education, role in the organization, and years of grappling training.

According to Braun et al. (2021), demographic questions equip researchers and readers alike with a research participant's background, yielding high-quality usable data that researchers can use along with other research tools. Likewise, Duran and Jones (2019) suggest that demographic questions help researchers understand any overlapping social identities, which might aid in accurately describing an experience or phenomenon. Therefore, demographic questions played an essential role in this study. To the degree possible, given the potential subject pool, individuals were selected from various gender, ethnic, and age backgrounds to ensure a diverse sampling of experiences and beliefs.

I aimed to identify qualitative questionnaire participants of varying positions, including officers, trainers, and training administrators. As with the interviews, I used purposeful sampling when selecting participants for the online qualitative questionnaire. Participants had least five years of policing or trainer experience and had experience in Jiu-Jitsu. Again, selecting participants was deliberate and purposeful because of their ability to give insight into the research topic (Ames et al., 2019). This study aimed for 10-15 participants, each receiving an

email acknowledging their voluntary participation. Given the dense nature of interviews, smaller sample sizes were needed to achieve data saturation. That is, gathering enough data to effectively answer the research questions (Morse, 1994). Research into effective sampling by Guest et al. (2006) demonstrated that the generation of new codes in interviews significantly diminished significantly beyond ten interviews and showed minimal new code generation after 18 interviews. Thus, Guest et al. (2006) suggest that an effective sample size of approximately 10-15 interviews is adequate for data saturation given purposive sampling.

Data Collection Plan

Empirical and reflective activities collect data for transcendental phenomenology (Fuster Guillen, 2019). In addition, Creswell and Guetterman (2019) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that a researcher can best triangulate data and achieve validation by collecting data from multiple sources. Therefore, data from the qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, and naturalistic observation were collected and analyzed for this study. Data from these sources were organized, analyzed, and synthesized to support and validate the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since this study was designed to examine lived experiences to enhance the understanding of numerous perspectives researchers might discover (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Miller et al., 2018; Rahman, 2020), using multiple data sources to capture these lived experiences was critical.

Qualitative questionnaires, interviews, and observations were appropriate data collection approaches in qualitative inquiry and research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McKenna et al., 2011). Because this is a transcendental phenomenological study investigating law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences, I learned about the participants' experiences through immersion and asking questions. Therefore, an online qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured

individual interviews, and naturalistic observation were appropriate means of data collection for this study.

Qualitative Questionnaire

An online qualitative questionnaire was the first data collection approach for this study. This approach examined the lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of participating law enforcement officers and their perspective on the impact their training has had while performing their duties. An open-ended qualitative questionnaire was used to collect data. Survey Monkey, a cloud-based platform, digitally administered the qualitative questionnaire. Qualitative questionnaires are widely accepted data collection methods researchers use in qualitative and quantitative studies (McKenna et al., 2011). Qualitative questionnaires in qualitative research offer several advantages over other data collection forms. First, they are relatively easy to distribute and complete, ensuring high participation rates from the data pool. Furthermore, they may be distributed digitally and completed from the comfort of one's home or office, reducing the burdens placed upon participants. Finally, the qualitative questionnaires do not suffer from observer effects. Individuals may be more willing to divulge sensitive or embarrassing information to a questionnaire versus a face-to-face interview (Bryman, 2016). For this study, the qualitative questionnaire allowed participants to respond to each question.

After gaining permission from the subjects to conduct data collection and receiving an attestation confirming voluntary participation, I emailed the participants with the qualitative questionnaire link to Survey Monkey and qualitative questionnaire instructions. The participants had one week to complete the qualitative questionnaire. Survey Monkey analyzed the responses using its propriety analysis tool and identified codes and themes. The qualitative questionnaire responses were used with other qualitative data from the interviews and observational data to

support or reject the findings. The qualitative questionnaire had ten questions synthesized from the literature.

Qualitative Questionnaire Questions

The following questions were asked of participants. Please note that layman's terms were used where necessary to ensure that participants understood the questions. However, the terms in the questions below are assumed to be understood based on police personnel's experience with tactical training.

1. Please describe your experiences with hand-to-hand defensive tactics training in disciplines and martial arts, including but not limited to Jiu-Jitsu, Judo, Karate, Taekwondo, boxing, mixed martial arts, or wrestling. CRQ
2. Please describe any experiences you have with Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) training, including its extent? CRQ
3. During Jiu-Jitsu training (grappling), how do instructors engage in meaningful dialogue with students concerning the real-life application of shown techniques? SQ1
4. Describe how managing training goals helps prevent injuries to officers and suspects. SQ1
5. In what ways does Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) and defensive tactics training curriculum support continued development? SQ1
6. Does Jiu-Jitsu training (grappling) include factors that students control that help with learning, and if so, how? SQ1
7. How extensively does Jiu-Jitsu training (grappling) includes factors students cannot control? SQ1
8. How, if at all, has Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) allowed you to deal with non-compliant suspects more effectively? SQ2

9. Please describe your satisfaction with the department's approach to implementing Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) in its defensive tactics curricula. CRQ
10. How has Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) changed your approach when interacting with non-compliant suspects in volatile situations? SQ2

Using multiple instruments to gather information on the same phenomena can provide several advantages. For example, interviews can suffer from observer effects. Individuals may be influenced to answer questions in a particular way, given the presence of another person (Bryman, 2016). Gathering data without direct supervision or interaction from researchers (e.g., surveys or questionnaires) provides an avenue to answer questions without the presence of another person, improving the validity of answers and ensuring further data saturation (Bryman, 2016; Morse, 1994; Creswell, 2013; McKenna et al., 2011).

The first question intended to identify whether or not an officer had previous martial arts training. Officers trained in martial arts or other forms of self-defense show improved handling of high-anxiety situations compared to non-martial arts or self-defense-trained officers in the same situations (Da Silva Duarte & Ferraz, 2022). Understanding the likelihood of improved handling of high-anxiety situations among trained officers might show the utility of martial arts in law enforcement.

Question two intended to show that officers trained only in Jiu-Jitsu could handle volatile situations confidently and efficiently. Fundamentally, Jiu-Jitsu is designed to train the smaller, weaker person to control larger and stronger opponents using leverage, joint locks, and body mechanics (Lartey, 2021). Perhaps understanding why Jiu-Jitsu is an effective and less violent alternative to past defensive tactics techniques might shed light regarding its utility throughout the law enforcement community.

Question three aimed to recognize the level of commitment between students and instructors concerning Jiu-Jitsu training. Howe et al. (2019) assert that dialogue sparks engaged learning through an open exchange of perspectives that deepens students' understanding of an issue or topic. This partnership perspective of student-instructor interaction might give insight into what constitutes meaningful training during class instruction and concept application.

Question four sought to determine how managing expectations plays a role in mitigating risk and injury prevention. Students who set goals and have sensible expectations increase their chances of success from theory to application (Sandford et al., 2020). Knowing this data might show an interplay between expectation management and injuries.

Question five aimed to show that theoretical frameworks concerning student learning persistence apply to non-traditional educational settings and not only traditional learning environments. Tinto (1975) asserts that student academic and social integration is critical to continued learning. Instructors equipped with this information could strengthen curriculum development because understanding a student's mindset plays a significant role when they decide to continue learning when challenges arise.

Question six aimed to understand participants' perspectives and perceptions of the relationship between internal factors and how they learn. According to Ramli et al. (2018), The influence of internal factors, which students can control, influence self-directed learning. Therefore, understanding that internal factors might contribute to learning might give instructors insight into the relationship between a student and training effectiveness.

Question seven aimed to understand participants' perspectives and perceptions of the relationship between external factors and how they learn. External factors significantly affect internal factors and learning readiness (Ramli et al., 2018). Instructors who see interconnectivity

between external factors and learning might positively alter or adapt their teaching style to affect student injury.

Question eight sought to understand the effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu from a cost-benefit perspective. According to Shervheim et al. (2018), Jiu-Jitsu programs may improve officers' fitness, memory, and weapon retention skills. Collected data from this study and information from the literature might help instructors strengthen their current curriculum or give law enforcement agencies without a Jiu-Jitsu program the information they need to implement one.

Question nine aimed to learn the satisfaction level of officers with the current training curriculum. Those charged with training and education should consider a multidisciplinary approach to learning (Silvennoinen et al., 2022). Understanding different approaches to education in an adult learning environment is likely best addressed through processes that might allow instructors to take a holistic approach to delivering training.

The last question sought to determine if police leadership has implemented injury intervention measures to reduce student injury risk. Law enforcement agencies, such as the Marietta, GA, Police Department, who have adopted Jiu-Jitsu as a training modality, attest to an increase in officer confidence in their physical abilities, which has shown to make them more willing to verbally communicate with non-compliant suspects before using physical force or other force options (Lartey, 2021). Reducing the need to use force or minimizing potential injury if force is required benefits police agencies and their officers because it promotes community trust and investment in continued training.

Online Qualitative Questionnaire Data Analysis Plan

Evans and Mathur (2018) assert that researchers have used methods such as surveys and questionnaires to collect information from a sample of individuals through their responses to

questions more frequently. The academic community has accepted online qualitative questionnaires since 2005. Furthermore, according to McKenna et al., 2011, qualitative questionnaires are a widely used data collection method in qualitative and quantitative research. Online methods such as surveys and questionnaires that collect information from a sample of individuals through their responses are attractive to researchers because they offer a global reach, flexibility, speed and timeliness, convenience, and data entry and analysis (Evans and Mathur (2018).

I constructed an online qualitative questionnaire using open-ended questions to collect data. I digitally administered the qualitative questionnaire using Survey Monkey, a cloud-based platform. It is important to note that question validation is a critical step before researchers use qualitative questionnaires; they are often overlooked. According to Ball (2019), researchers refer to validation as truthfulness or accuracy. They are mindful of these when confirming that questions capture the predicted data and are not analyzed differently by other researchers or participants. Therefore, I constructed my questions with my central research question and sub-questions in mind.

Once I collected the qualitative questionnaire data, I used Survey Monkey to analyze the responses using its propriety analysis tool. The answers to the qualitative questionnaire provided me with data I used to support (or reject) themes found in the interview and observational data. The Survey Monkey dataset buttressed the other sources of information by allowing me to understand the frequency and intensity of patterns found within the other datasets. Then, I filtered the results by cross-tabulating codes and themes, examined the data, analyzed the results, and drew conclusions.

Prior to implementing the data analysis, I used the Epoché strategy, or bracketing,

championed by Husserl. Epoché involves temporarily setting aside one's preconceived ideas, beliefs, and assumptions about the phenomenon under investigation to approach it openly and non-judgmentally. The goal is to describe the phenomenon as the participants experience it without imposing subjective interpretations or biases.

Moustakas' (1994) approach to transcendental phenomenology involves sequential and interlocking data analysis steps. It begins with a recognition that while the researcher cannot entirely eliminate their own biases, paradigms, and experiences from the analysis process, rigorous research requires an attempt at reducing their role in research. Once data has been gathered, the researcher performs a structural analysis, wherein they identify underlying structures, patterns, and other features in the text, a process called phenomenological reduction. Moustakas advocates a process wherein the researcher first uses horizontalization to organize the transcribed data into relevant ideas, patterns, or occurrences. The codes are then organized by theme into themes, eliminating redundant or irrelevant codes in accordance with the data analysis approach, which will be discussed in more detail later in this manuscript. Finally, the remaining codes are clustered and organized to produce insights. The data subsequently undergoes analysis, where the identified structures, patterns, and features are placed in the context of the subject's personal or cultural experience. The process of imaginative variation requires the researcher to construct individual and synthesized experiences into mental constructs. Finally, Moustakas advocates a synthesis of the two streams of analysis to illuminate not only the empirical features of the phenomena but the subjects' relation to it. Moustakas' method of transcendental phenomenological analysis is by no means a strict process and acts more as a guiding framework as the researcher moves back and forth between steps in a recurrent fashion. Consideration was given to alternative coding processes, such as Saldaña's two-cycle coding process (Saldaña &

Omasta, 2016). However, it was ultimately determined that Moustakas' method offered a greater level of comprehensiveness.

Individual Interviews

The second data collection source was semi-structured interviews. The interview process allowed me to develop questions based on specific research topics. This interview technique was conducted based on the recommendations of Rubin and Rubin (2011). The semi-structured format enabled me to format questions, incorporating previous answers based on each respondent's experiences. Conducting interviews provided me with a pathway for addressing the purpose and problem of the study and answering the research questions. I used purposeful sampling, deliberately selecting the interviewees based on their ability to explain specific topics, ideas, or events, as well as consideration for demographics such as age, ethnicity, and gender (Ames et al., 2019; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2017). The participants were all sworn law enforcement officers with at least five years of experience, and each was directly involved in or with Jiu-Jitsu training. The interviews consisted of 15 participants. The participants' training, experience, and education make them suitable for assessing their Jiu-Jitsu training knowledge.

I used standard interview protocols to conduct virtual interviews on Microsoft Teams (McGrath et al., 2018). Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes, and I recorded and used the Teams transcription feature for data collection and transcription purposes. Throughout the interview, I noted the participants' facial expressions, body language, tone, and emotions to better understand their perspectives on each interview topic. Once I exchanged pleasantries with the participants, I obtained their consent and began the interview. The 15 questions below were my interview questions.

Individual Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. What defensive tactics and arrest control training have you received? CRQ
2. What defensive tactics training have you found to be the most effective?
 - a. Why have you found them effective? CRQ
3. How has Jiu-Jitsu training helped you deal with aggressive subjects or potentially combative suspects? CRQ
4. How has Jiu-Jitsu training not helped you deal with aggressive subjects or potentially combative suspects? CRQ
5. How much of a role does training integration play when it comes to deciding whether to pursue Jiu-Jitsu training beyond the mandatory training requirements? SQ1
6. How do training goals affect your defensive tactics learning? SQ1
7. What has been your experience in Jiu-Jitsu curricula after the academy? SQ1
8. To what extent does the curriculum play in law enforcement training? SQ1
9. How do you think Jiu-Jitsu training has changed your interaction with suspects? SQ2
10. How has Jiu-Jitsu training impacted your tendency to feel anxious in stressful situations?
SQ2
11. To what extent has applying Jiu-Jitsu in use-of-force situations reduced the likelihood of injuries to you or a suspect compared to other defensive tactics in which you have been trained? SQ2
12. What, if any, reforms should be made to law enforcement training? CRQ
13. Please describe how effective Jiu-Jitsu training has been compared to other martial arts.
SQ2
14. How has the culture of law enforcement encouraged or discouraged your decision to pursue Jiu-Jitsu training? CRQ

15. How did Jiu-Jitsu courses conform to specific demands in law enforcement? SQ1

The first question examined the participants' different types of defensive tactics training experience. Dawes et al. (2018) attest that resolving conflicts that cause a threat to public safety is an essential part of a law enforcement officer's duties. Furthermore, defensive tactics and arrest control training are required by law enforcement agencies because officers must be able to defend themselves against an uncooperative subject when the public is in immediate danger or when using physical force to quell a dangerous situation is warranted.

Question two sought to identify the different types of martial arts and defensive tactics methodologies widely used by law enforcement agencies. The peer-reviewed literature shows that martial arts and defensive tactics in the context of law enforcement training include Jiu-Jitsu, Muay Thai, boxing, karate, judo, kickboxing, and other martial arts (Torres, 2020). Knowing and understanding the alignment between different training styles and the peer-reviewed literature might uncover the efficacy of one martial art or defensive training technique over another. Doing so could ultimately help training instructors develop the best defensive training curriculum that promotes safety for both the officer and the suspect.

Question three was designed to understand the effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu training in volatile situations. According to Lartey (2021), recent data from Texas State University shows a downward trend in the use of force incidents involving a Georgia, USA, police department since the implementation of Jiu-Jitsu training. By asking question three, I might learn if an officer's training includes continued learning and application from past use of force experiences.

Question four sought to determine if Tinto's (1975) theory on retention can apply outside higher education institutions or traditional learning. Tinto (1975) theorized that student integration, in the form of a student's potential and social connection, is critical to their

perseverance. Furthermore, a student's mindset during the early stages of learning could affect their decision to persist with their learning despite its challenges. Finally, understanding student persistence might suggest teaching modifications and new output measures.

Question five aimed to uncover how student expectations affect their continued learning. Students with defined goals and reasonable expectations are more likely to achieve their goals despite their challenges (Sandford et al., 2020). The answer to question five is potentially critical to law enforcement instructors, who might be able to draw parallels between managing expectations and student persistence in a training modality.

Question six sought to show a connection between initial training and continued learning. According to Kleygrewe et al. (2022), a police officer's education falls into two distinct phases: basic police academy training and continuing education or professional development. Practitioners or instructors who understand the importance of bridging the gap between initial training and continued learning might be able to focus better on development and risk mitigation.

Question seven intended to show the role curriculum plays in law enforcement training. Training facilitators, instructors, and administrators attest that what makes training sufficient is what trainers can achieve within the framework of their state-approved curricula and with the resources available (Kleygrewe et al., 2022). Therefore, a better understanding of curriculum development might shed light on training sustainability.

Question eight called for officers to consider their Jiu-Jitsu training and how it affects their exchange with individuals suspected of committing a crime. Jiu-Jitsu is effective for officers of all sizes; it was designed to demonstrate that technique wins in a fight, not strength (Brower, 2018). Furthermore, the literature suggests that Jiu-Jitsu will improve not only fighting skills but also self-esteem and confidence on the streets.

Question nine aimed to explore whether Jiu-Jitsu training lowers trait anxiety. According to Knowles and Olatunji (2020), trait anxiety is associated with an attentional bias toward threats and an enhanced memory of threatening information. Individuals with trait anxiety also demonstrate an impaired ability to inhibit distracting information, even under non-stressful conditions (Knowles & Olatunji, 2020). Practitioners, instructors, and administrators could benefit from understanding a possible nexus between Jiu-Jitsu-trained officers and remaining poised when dealing with stressful situations.

Question 10 determined if the interviewee experienced reduced injuries to themselves or suspects during a confrontation. According to Marietta Police (2021), data shows a 48% reduction in injuries to officers who had to use force, a 53% reduction in injuries to suspects, and a 23% reduction in the use of an electronic control device (commonly known as a Taser) since Jiu-Jitsu was integrated into their training program. Furthermore, Umanah (2022) reported that the City of Marietta also saw a \$67,000 decrease in workman's compensation due to fewer officer injuries. Although it is unreasonable to expect that injuries will not occur in a use-of-force situation, there might be ways to mitigate them.

Question 11 explored the relative use of Jiu-Jitsu as a specific martial art. Although several researchers have touched upon the utility of general martial arts, Jiu-Jitsu remains understudied (Parks, 2022; Torres, 2020). While martial arts may generally reduce injury to police officers, Jiu-Jitsu is a specific martial art that may have a different effect than others. The question is centrally concerned with officers' personal safety, affecting how they respond to external threats.

Question 12 measured officers' opinions about the general state of training within the police department and whether mandatory reforms are needed to improve outcomes. Law

enforcement training in the United States is highly variable depending on jurisdiction, and this lack of standardization has led to wide divergence in training practices (Kaminski & Martin, 2000). Question 12 investigates police perceptions of training diversity and diagnoses what officers think about the state of affairs.

Question 13 was not relevant to all respondents but for those who have trained in multiple disciplines. The question sought to compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of different styles because of relevance for future training regimens. While the respondents will have undergone Jiu-Jitsu training, some of them have also undergone other types of martial arts training.

Question 14 sought to understand the numerous factors in influencing why officers pursue extra-curricular training (Kleygrewe et al., 2022). Optional training is thus likely motivated by various statutory and cultural influences within a given police department. Question 14 explores the cultural, rather than regulatory, factors that motivate officers to seek further training.

The final question directly confronted pedagogical questions about how training can best be given to law enforcement officers. Individuals may pursue martial arts training for various reasons, but for police officers, it has regular application in practical situations. These situations that a police officer is likely to face has relevance for how the training is presented and what types of situations the officer is likely to use their training.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Like the qualitative questionnaire data, I utilized the Epoché strategy, which involved bracketing or putting aside my preconceived beliefs and biases to examine the phenomenon in its own right. By suspending judgment and being open to the phenomenon as participants

experience it, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, the interview data also followed Moustoukas' (1994) phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis process.

I transcribed the interviews using the Microsoft Teams transcription feature and analyzed them after the interviews. Afterward, I prepared and organized the data using information from my interview notes. Data analysis began with Moustaukas' (1994) method of analysis. Finally, I manually indexed the data. I expected and discovered that the interview responses produced codes and themes that were useful in this study.

The appropriate analysis methodology for this approach was coding and categorizing, which allowed me to align the collected data with the literature, as Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) assert. Qualitative research coding is a system that assembles collected data and categorizes them into sorted themes that provide an organized platform for defining purposes (Belotto, 2018). Furthermore, Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) state that coding and categorizing can help separate responses, organizing them under themes and non-themes. I aimed to answer the research questions and showed the importance of this study through collected qualitative data based on responses from the qualitative questionnaire responses, semi-structured interview questions, and observations.

Naturalistic Observation

Naturalistic observation was the third approach to data collection for this study. According to Angrosino (2016), a naturalistic observation study involves examining subjects in their natural setting. In addition, observation is a viable research approach for studies that aim to study behavior in a subject's natural surroundings (Jhangiani et al., 2019). Observing teaching methods, training tempo, and content and applying learned concepts can produce qualitative

results and is critical to providing evidence of instructor and student performance when teaching and learning. For this study, three defensive tactics classes with Jiu-Jitsu components were observed. Each training session was an all-day event. I used field notes during the observations, and a rubric (see Appendix E), which supported the observation data.

The observation aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effective utility of Jiu-Jitsu when officers must deal with combative suspects?
2. How detailed are instructors or administrators when implementing and delivering their Jiu-Jitsu curriculum?
3. How can Jiu-Jitsu training change the interactions between an officer and a suspect?

The research utilized the Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol (TDOP). I selected the TDOP for several reasons. It is a well-regarded and fully validated method of instructional observation focused on the events in the classroom rather than an instrument to rate teachers. Furthermore, it allowed for flexible coding and observation of both student and teacher actions, both interactive and independent (Hora, 2015). Jiu-Jitsu instruction requires extensive physical practice, which is not typically recorded in instructional observation protocols.

Naturalistic Observation Data Analysis Plan

I used a rubric to assess the training I observed during the data collection and analysis phases. The rubric had one standard with three separate indicators. The standard was the training content and the instructor's delivery of the modality, aligning with the indicators demonstrated during instructor-led classes. The first indicator recorded the translation of concepts and techniques to real-life applications. The second indicator recorded the spent time teaching concepts and techniques, observing students consume content. The last indicator recorded student supervision as they applied the learned concepts. Each indicator had the following

scoring: poor, satisfactory, and excellent.

Analyzing observation data involves eventually synthesizing the information into elements and combining them with other data sources. Thomas (2021) suggests that once researchers complete their observations, they should assemble reflective journal entries for each observation. These might include things that went well and did not, concerns, lessons learned, and gained insights. The observations were combined with codes and themes derived from the interview and qualitative questionnaire data. Once I made my journal entries, I had them transcribed so the data was understandable to an end-reader. I noted the observation events, including my reflective notes, and forwarded them to the training officer to review for accuracy. Finally, I coded observational notes and attempted to identify themes following Moustakas' (1994) horizontalization, elimination, and clustering methods.

Data Synthesis

As mentioned, this phenomenological study included three data collection methods but will also offer various data analysis types. This research used a modified Van Kaam method in conjunction with Saldaña's (2021) approach to coding (Moustakas, 1994). These approaches were combined for coding practices. The modified van Kaam approach offered utility in organizing interview transcriptions in four ways: listing, reduction and elimination, clustering, and final identification. First, according to Moustakas (1994), the listing step requires a compiled list with all expressions related to a study, which in this case, is the lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers. Moustakas (1994) refers to compiling lists with all expressions related to a study as *horizontalization*, which suggests that researchers treat all data equally. *Horizontalization* is the preliminary coding and grouping process that captures quotes relevant to the study Williams and Moser (2019) state that coding can reveal themes entrenched

in data, offering a thematic trajectory toward organizing data through which meaning can be reconciled, codified, and delivered. Accordingly, by identifying recurring codes through data-collecting processes, this study shall submit summative topics that illustrate the final findings.

The second step in Moustakas' approach is using reduction and elimination to identify and discard the immaterial and nonessential terms unrelated to a study's purpose (Moustakas, 1994). Clustering is the third step, which will organize data codes, organically forming them into themes based on coding from the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) support clustering by suggesting that noting different words or phrases during each interview related to a study supports precise coding. Saldaña (2021) attests that codes can help confirm the descriptions made by participants concerning their experiences because pattern codes can emerge from repeatedly observed "routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships; local meanings and explanations; commonsense explanations and more conceptual ones; inferential clusters and "metaphorical" ones; and single-case and cross-case observations." Therefore, thematic analysis through coding is a qualitative inquiry that assigns summative meaning, which is critical in data synthesis.

Emotion coding was appropriate for this study because it helped investigate an officer's intra- and interpersonal lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences and actions related to or associated with their training. Saldaña (2021) discusses the appropriateness of emotion coding in qualitative research and how it gives researchers insight into a participant's perspectives, worldviews, and personal conditions. Furthermore, according to Saldaña (2021), researchers can sub-code or categorize emotion codes when studying a complex phenomenon or one that occurs longitudinally across time (e.g., educational journey or professional), which enables a researcher to pinpoint which experience occurred and when throughout the phenomenon.

Finally, Moustakas (1994) asserts that determining a theme(s) is the purpose of final identification. Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) also support the theming step by stating that after coding, researchers can consolidate and classify into themes based on connection, reducing the codes into smaller classifications for thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is subjective and relies on a researcher's judgment; careful reflection on their choices and interpretations is critical (Saldaña, 2021). Moustakas (1994) argues that describing what occurred and how it occurred, organized into individual and collective units of meaning through coding, can accurately describe phenomena.

To aid in the data synthesis process, I employed Nvivo software to aid the coding. Nvivo allows for digitally coding written documents, transcripts, and notes. The Nvivo software was used to streamline the coding process. The coding, thematic analysis, and data synthesis will take place during, and after the qualitative questionnaire, interview, and observation processes and will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is readers' confidence in a researcher's report after interpreting the written work (Stahl & King, 2020). Furthermore, Yin (2018) states that qualitative researchers test the trustworthiness of empirical research through the appropriateness and dependability of a study. Using multiple data sources, sequential data documentation, and proper feedback when constructing a written product helps readers better understand a researcher's aim (Yin, 2018). To build internal and external appropriateness and dependability, Stahl and King (2020) suggest employing rigorous data analysis, such as pattern identification, and examining the potential of generalizing the study. Researchers can establish trustworthiness by triangulating multiple data sources (Stahl & King, 2020). This study's sources were an online qualitative questionnaire,

interviews, and observations. Further steps, explained in this section, cover credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical considerations of this study and was used to establish the trustworthiness of the work.

Credibility

Credibility examines the congruency between the findings and reality (Stahl & King (2020)). Said another way, researchers establish credibility when their findings illustrate a reasonable conclusion drawn from the data collected and the researcher accurately interprets the data. According to Stahl and King (2020), researchers can achieve credibility through triangulation, involving informants, parallel construction, and member-checking at the peer level.

Triangulation was ultimately achieved by converging all collected data from my different sources. Informants were the key data collection source for this study. Collecting and analyzing first-hand accounts from participants is a best practice for understanding lived experiences (Solarino & Aguinis, 2021). It is important to note that a single theory and methodology is not the basis of qualitative research. Instead, Williams and Moser (2019) discuss the utility and necessity of parallel construction of different developmental lines from data, allowing qualitative researchers to leverage philosophical and methodological works from different orientations and practices associated with executing qualitative research. Therefore, parallel construction added credibility to this study. The participants strengthened the online qualitative questionnaire, and member checking strengthened the accuracy of the interviews and observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Stahl & King, 2020). Member checking at the peer level ensures credibility because it allows a knowledgeable peer to review the work and provide feedback regarding the findings as they analyze themes in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that transferability is when other researchers can externally apply the research findings. Simply put, transferability in qualitative research concerns generalizing a study to be relevant beyond the original study. A study is generalized and has credibility when researchers develop a solid case through theoretical frameworks with supporting evidence (Yin, 2018). Since this study endeavors to learn about law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences, stories from participants that provide thick, rich, and detailed descriptions will be critical to creating the conditions for transferability. Researchers cannot assure transferability; they can only create the conditions for transferability (Hayashi et al., 2019). This study's interview and online qualitative questionnaire questions allowed the participants to share their specific, lived experiences to ensure transferability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Furthermore, the observations related to this study, supported by reflective notes, ensured transferability by not making any specific claims beyond the specific observations conducted (Maxwell, 2021).

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) perspective on dependability centers on the study's trustworthiness and how researchers actively build trust through concrete research, peer debriefing, or scrutiny. Furthermore, researchers aim for dependability because others who can repeat their research with the same results validate their work (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020). Another aspect of dependability is how the researcher maintains their data. According to Yin (2018), preserving an evidence chain of custody is critical so readers can know the data's provenance. The evidence chain increases a case study's quality and rigor (Gall et al., 2007; Yin,

2018). For this study, the research achieved dependability through an inquiry audit, whereby the dissertation chair and committee member reviewed the research process and products.

Confirmability

Stahl and King (2020) suggest that confirmability within qualitative research intends to stress a restriction that clearly defines boundaries to get as close as possible to objective reality. To support this assertion, Korstjens and Moser (2018) also suggest that confirmability is the degree to which other researchers can affirm an original researcher's findings. This study achieved confirmability by asking open-ended and follow-up interview questions and ensuring the preciseness of observational notes. For added strength, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) helped organize data, aiding in affirming the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, using CAQDAS helped achieve neutrality by identifying codes and themes unbiasedly. Finally, reflexivity minimized or eliminated influences on the participants in the data collection process ensuring neutrality. According to Yin (2018), a researcher's interest in the study can influence the interview process, threatening neutrality. Researchers employ audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity to establish confirmability and combat neutrality threats (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nguyen et al., 2021; Vu, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical research practices benefited the study and stakeholders, and I exercised researcher due diligence at all stages of the research process, which mitigated participant risk and validated the study. Roth and Von Unger (2018) state that researchers should aptly conceptualize ethical conduct as continuous and necessary with shared dialogical engagement concerning moral and political questions of conducting research. This study exercised ethical research practices by conveying information unfiltered and through the lens of the participants. Before collecting data,

the participants were given full information on the research objectives, scope, and methods (Bryman, 2016). The informed consent was critical in ensuring open communication between me and the subject. Furthermore, pseudonyms replace sensitive information such as names and locations, and the online qualitative questionnaire had no personal identifying information (Bryman, 2016; Cresswell, 2013). In addition, a cloud-based storage utility that uses end-to-end encryption and requires two-factor authentication housed all collected data. In addition, my biometrically protected computer's local hard drive acted as a redundancy apparatus for data security. Hard copies of the data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my locked office. This study incorporated these ethical considerations to preserve research integrity and study results. Finally, Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) acted as the final ethics tripwire, ensuring the protection of the rights and welfare of research participants in my research activities. The IRB reviewed all research related to or associated with human participants for this dissertation.

Summary

Chapter Three explained the particulars of the research design, research questions, setting and participants, researcher positionality, procedures, and the data collection plan for this transcendental phenomenological study. This chapter provided a rationale for the selected study design and detailed instructions for collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data. Understanding the rationale for the study design and the steps taken to collect and analyze data validates how this study on law enforcement officers lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences might address the problem of training in modalities that can cause injury to officers and suspects. Sharing this dissertation's level of detail through the research process, information from the literature, and the study's findings also positions this work for future use by researchers because of its

transferability. The collection and analysis of data and its vetting through trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical considerations, this study intended to describe law enforcement officers' lived Jiu-Jitsu training experiences, which others can use as a practical tool to help address the continuing concern of law enforcement use of force.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of my study and the analysis of the collected data. This chapter begins by describing the participants who volunteered for my research. Next is sharing the narrative themes that describe the collected data from qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observations. This chapter concludes by answering the central research question and sub-research questions.

Participants

This study focused on the lived experiences of rural central Texas law enforcement officers. As discussed in the previous chapter, participants in this study had to be state-certified law enforcement officers in Texas. These officers needed to speak English to participate in an interview conducted in English. They also needed to be between 21 and 51 years old and a full-time, duly employed state-certified peace officer with full arrest powers. The participants were volunteers, and they received no compensation. For the safety of the participants and at their request, I used pseudonyms instead of their actual identities.

Table 1

Rural Central Texas Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Participants

LEO Participant	Sex	Age	Highest Degree Earned	Current Assignment	Years Experience
Lt. A	M	51	Bachelors	Shift Commander	28
Lt. B	M	48	Masters	Shift Commander	26
Sgt. A	M	37	Bachelors	Patrol Sergeant	15
Sgt. B	F	35	Bachelors	Patrol Sergeant	12
Cpl. A	F	29	HS Diploma	Patrol	6
Cpl. B	M	28	Bachelors	Patrol	6
Det. A	M	42	Associates	Criminal Investigations	18
Det. B	M	44	Bachelors	Criminal Investigations	21
Ofc. A	M	33	HS Diploma	K-9 Handler	10
Ofc. B	F	22	HS Diploma	Patrol	1
Ofc. C	F	25	Bachelors	Patrol	3
Ofc. D	M	27	Associates	Patrol/SWAT	5
Dep. A	M	30	HS Diploma	Patrol	7

Dep. B	M	29	Bachelors	K-9 Handler	5
Dep. C	M	21	Associates	Patrol	1

Results

Following an extensive evidence-gathering process and triangulating from qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observations, clear themes emerged from the collected data. The themes were consistent with each participant and identified through thematic analysis discussed in Moustakas (1994), Creswell and Poth (2018), and Miller et al. (2018). The primary themes identified were officer safety and reflection, tactics and experiential learning, skill level, and learned applications. In addition, I identified concepts and ideas as sub-themes aligned with the primary themes. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict how the identified themes align with Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) general theory of combat.

Metacognition's utility and structured reflection were sub-themes that emerged from the officer safety and reflection theme. Discretion, candor, and the value of shared experiences were sub-themes under the tactics and experiential learning theme. Diverse learning and diverse perspectives were sub-themes from the skill level theme. Finally, scenario-based training and feedback were the sub-themes under the learned application theme.

Figure 4.1 Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) general theory of combat hierarchy diagram

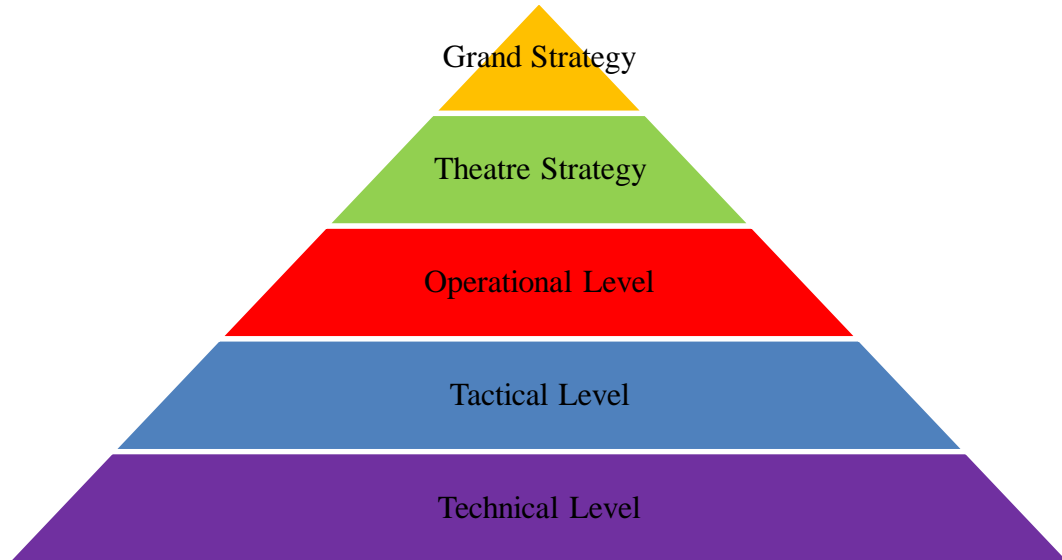


Figure 4.2 Themes of this study



General Training Strategy

The regional training center's general training strategy embraces Jiu-Jitsu's principles and concepts. Within the realm of martial arts, physical strength serves as a foundational element for overcoming adversaries, a principle that holds true to varying degrees across diverse fighting systems (Williams et al., 2019). However, Jiu-Jitsu distinguishes itself by placing significance on the efficient execution of techniques and the economical allocation of physical energy.

Furthermore, Jiu-Jitsu empowers its practitioners with a skill set that encompasses a spectrum of takedowns, pins, joint locks, and choking techniques, underpinned by principles of leverage, fulcrum use, and precise body positioning.

Officer Safety and Reflection

The interviews, answers to the qualitative questionnaire, and observations indicate that officer safety is a widely accepted concept among law enforcement professionals. Moreover, officers at all levels promote officer safety early in an officer's training. Instructors teach, and police leaders reinforce, that if something or someone is unsafe then an officer must adjust their course of action until they establish safety. Furthermore, officer safety is a phrase that is synonymous with a "go home at all costs" attitude, reinforced in daily briefings and continuing education training designed to prevent an officer's injury or death.

Training administrators at the regional training center agree that today's law enforcement leaders practice encouraging supervisors and officers to reflect or debrief with peers after their shift or after a traumatic event as a coping and learning tool. Lt A stated, "officer safety is about going home – period. We, as leaders, have an obligation to tell our people to do whatever it takes to go home to their loved ones. How we reinforce this is through learning from the mistakes of others and reflecting how to avoid those mistakes. Unfortunately, in law enforcement we train based on the mistakes of others, so we don't repeat those mistakes." Lt. B stated, "In the context of hand-to-hand defensive tactics, we train our officers in grappling, primarily in Jiu-Jitsu concepts because Jiu-Jitsu is an effective way to control someone. Most people are uncomfortable when they're on their backs; Jiu-Jitsu trained officers are not."

Many law enforcement agencies have dedicated time to focus on introspection geared toward personal and professional development during in-service training or pre-shift and post-

shift briefings. The interviews, answers to the qualitative questionnaire, and observations support the significance and relationship between officer safety and an officer's time to reflect and learn from situations they encounter. For example, during several breakout sessions groups routinely discussed the utility of reflection when examining dangerous or potentially dangerous situations.

Metacognition's Utility

Metacognition is the dynamic process of acquiring knowledge about one's learning, emphasizing the learners' capacity to strategically plan, thoughtfully monitor, and effectively regulate their learning processes (Shea, 2020). Lt. A attested to the importance of “our officers needing to be critical thinkers,” and how, “Jiu Jitsu promotes critical thinking because it's like playing human chess,” while Lt. B opined that “mindfulness, whether it's in a fight training scenario or on the street, is what develops an officer throughout their career” and that “to use Jiu Jitsu effectively means that you have to know what the body is capable of doing.” In a Jiu Jitsu training and learning context, it is significant to focus on developing an officer's thinking process and challenging them to strengthen their self-awareness and self-management. According to Lt. B, “effectively learning to manage how I learned and my ability to reflect on past experiences was career-changing and prepared me to deal with stressful situations when encountering combative suspects.” Lt. A mentioned scheduled times of reflection built into the academy curriculum, saying, “It's important that newer officers learn early on that reflecting on what they learned and how they consume the information their instructors teach them is what might save their lives one day.”

Structured Reflection

Sgt. A described today's law enforcement training as being highly structured with dedicated time allotted for breakout groups to discuss reflection and introspection. Sgt. A said,

“during in-service defensive tactics training, officers are allotted time at the end of the training module, or after they grapple with their training partner, to discuss and reflect with peers on the techniques they used or found useful. We remind our officers that one of the key elements in reflection is sharing similar experiences.” The dedicated time to discuss reflection and introspection was vital to training because it provided opportunities to learn from others and participate in self or shared development.

All participants described the importance of reflecting and discussing different outcomes to the same situation, especially during a use-of-force situation, such as subduing a combative suspect or an officer-involved shooting. Dep. A described a typical “situational debrief (reflection)” as “reading my report and putting myself in the situation, running different decision options as I’ve been trained, talking through those decision options with peers and supervisors, and articulating why I made the decisions I made.” Dep. A gave an example of a recent encounter with a violent suspect who was under the influence of methamphetamine. In short, Dep. A. attempted to arrest the suspect for a felony warrant, and the suspect resisted the arrest, which a fight ensued. The suspect outweighed Dep. A by “at least 50 pounds.” Dep. A attempted to use less-lethal options (electronic control device commonly known as a Taser and impact weapon commonly known as a baton) to no avail. Dep. A engaged the suspect physically, using his Jiu Jitsu training, and was able to take the suspect into custody as responding deputies arrived.

Tactics and Experiential Learning

Sgt. A described how officers learn from their peers’ experiences by listening and discussing different use of force scenarios and response perspectives of the officers in the classroom. The learning opportunities are especially enhanced during in-service (continuing

education) training because the classes all have a mixture of newer and well-experienced officers. The newer officers share new material they learned in the police academy and the experiences officers offer real-world experiences that textbooks do not or cannot teach.

Sgt. B acknowledged the criticalness of peer relationships and discussion, saying “the opportunity to learn from others through shared experiences” promotes classroom interactions and discussions. Lt. A further expounded on experiential learning in Jiu-Jitsu and underscored the growth and development in training, saying, “The interactions in class, or on the mats where we use our Jiu-Jitsu training, among different officers with different perspectives, experiences, and skill level is really where learning happens and when officers grow and build confidence.”

Discretion and Candor

The enrichment of experiential learning is facilitated when a designated space is perceived as safe, fostering an atmosphere where participants feel encouraged to be open, honest, and genuine during conversations (McCrocklin, 2020). Furthermore, the discussions in a learning environment are restricted if students are apprehensive in sharing their thoughts and experiences or if instructors promote a learning environment that limits interactivity and discourages honest and open conversations. Det. A, Officers B and D, and Deputies B and C each said that the regional training center and its instructors encourage open and honest dialogue and student interactivity, particularly in defensive tactics and force options training. Lt. B said, “We like to give our training managers and instructors the freedom to facilitate open conversations, especially regarding officer safety training,” and Sgt. A said, “Having an administration that supports free and open conversation about an officer’s shared experience, especially when dealing with officer safety issues, whether that officer is a student or instructor, creates a true learning environment.”

The relationship between the student and instructor is also critical to discussions that promote candor among participants. Siegel-Stechler (2023) suggests that positive relationships between student and teacher connect them to a body of work and open classroom discussions and interactivity. Det. B said, “In training, and I think I can say this for most officers, we feel like we have the freedom to openly express concerns and give feedback. In any given training cycle, we might have the same officers in class for a couple of years, and the longer that you're training together, the more open you're going to be.”

Value of Shared Experiences

The willingness of students to share their experiences led to deeper discussion. Ofc. A described the impact they experienced with strong student-teacher relationships had on classroom dialogue and said the conversations “Really dive deep because of the trust that’s developed and knowing that I’m learning something that I might actually use on the streets.” All participants’ feedback indicated that hearing other officers speak openly in class without reservation showed them that instructors were free to teach and that the learning environment promoted candor and sharing of different experiences.

According to Ross and Regan (1993), shared experiences and the reflective process that follows them serve as the catalyst for both the transmission and generation of knowledge. Classroom discussions provided ample opportunities for the regional training center students to share experiences and transfer knowledge through dialogue. Participants asserted that learning through shared experiences was more effective in an in-person learning environment with open discussions than other professional law enforcement training programs such as online learning. Ofc. B underscored the opportunity to be in a cohort of differing perspectives and experiences and said, “The training environment provided opportunities to share our experiences and learn

from one another.” Det. A reiterated the value of learning through sharing different perspectives and experiences, saying, “For me, there’s no better way to learn this job than learning from officers who have done this job for a long time. I even learn from the new officers because they bring a younger generation’s perspective.”

Skill Level

The methodologies employed in training police officers in complex motor skills, such as the use of force, exhibit notable disparities on a global scale and may undergo transformation over the course of an officer's career trajectory (Di Nota & Huhta, 2019). Furthermore, underlying motor learning from novel skill acquisition, such as Jiu-Jitsu, to complex behaviors, such as situational awareness and split-second decision-making, help inform an officer's action. Sgt. B said, “An officer’s skill set is their greatest asset. Being physically capable and having mental toughness can be modified through training and experience, which influences decision-making on the streets.” Most of the participants, except for a few who only have limited time as law enforcement officers, attested to being better officers presently compared to five years ago. The participants attributed their assertion to learning from others’ diverse perspectives and through diverse learning modalities.

Diverse Learning

The learning diversity at the regional training center extended to the different modalities instructors used to train and educate officers in force options, such as Jiu-Jitsu, when encountering a non-compliant individual. Lt. A said officers are “learning differently than when I first started. Our officers today get to experience different ways of learning, and they are encouraged to engage with instructors and their peers.” Lt B said the same and highlighted the importance of scenario-based training, guest speakers, peer discussions, concept application, and

practical exercises. For example, during my many observations of officers training in Jiu-Jitsu during this study, I noted the number of times instructors put officers in disadvantageous fighting positions and talked them through how to overcome their stronger and larger opponents. Then, the officer, the officer's training partner, and the instructor would systematically deconstruct the scenario and the technique until all three were satisfied with the discussion and the learning outcome.

The officers benefited from diverse guest instructors with varying experiences and skill levels. Sgt. A said instructors ranged from Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) officers to police executives to attorneys, who provided lectures and led robust discussions concerning using force and how it impacts the officer, the agency, and the community. Real-life scenario-based instruction and after-action debriefs were a highlight that offered unique learning opportunities for the trainees. One of my qualitative questionnaire questions asked participants to describe their satisfaction with their department's approach to implementing Jiu-Jitsu (grappling) in its defensive tactics curricula. Unanimously, the participants responded with an iteration of their satisfaction with the Jiu-Jitsu training approach because of how realistic the training is and how the after-action discussion reinforced the concepts and application.

Diverse Perspectives

The classroom instruction and Jiu-Jitsu after-action discussions underscored the diverse perspectives on approaching a hand-to-hand use of force situation and the divergent thoughts on officer safety strategies. One of the questions I sought to answer from my observations was the effective utility of Jiu-Jitsu when officers must deal with combative suspects. I noted Dep. B offering perspective during an in-class discussion, saying they acknowledge the benefit of diverse perspectives in use of force training when "three different trainees, from three different

agencies, are working on the same problem, from the same situation, and were able to work together and see how these different officers' processes when problem-solving or facing and developing a solution at various stages." Continuing, Dep. B also said, "The best part is that regardless of which agency you work for, we are able to compare our way of thinking and mostly agree on strategies that would best support officer safety and how effective Jiu-Jitsu really is. Being able to do this creates an initial learning layer that we can use to build upon." Ricciardelli et al. (2021) suggest that law enforcement leaders who are unaware of or discount diverse perspectives or law enforcement agencies that contribute to groupthink because they do not encourage differing opinions are more likely than not to have sound policies that promote community or officer safety.

Learned Application

The officers learned to use Jiu-Jitsu as a force option by applying tested concepts through practical application and scenario-based exercises, a concept referred to as experiential learning or learning by doing (Kolb, 2003). The participants all described practical components of the Jiu-Jitsu training program that enhanced their learning during the course of the training cycle. For example, Ofc. A discussed scenario-based exercises and said, "I believe in training concepts and applying them to real-life scenarios. I learn best by doing, so having the chance to practice what might actually happen on the street and learning from other officers will better my chances of making it home after my shift." All participants had a similar perspective as Ofc. A, concerning learned training application, incorporating different experiences and perspectives from peers, videos of officers from other parts of the world, guest speakers, or training staff, and applying new concepts and ideas to their classroom learning, practicums, or law enforcement positions.

Scenario-Based Training

The “Crucible,” which is a final exercise that puts physical stress and sensory distractions on the officer before they engage in a practical demonstration of physically subduing a combative suspect, was an event that immersed the participants in different “life-and-death” scenarios and allowed them to engage suspects and apply concepts through different force options. However, regardless of the different force option outcomes, curriculum developers ensured that students could not avoid a “hand-to-hand” physical fight. Put simply, every officer needed to demonstrate their Jiu-Jitsu or grappling competency. According to Cushion (2022), scenario-based training provides an effective and challenging means to practice dilemmas in police personal safety training. Lt A discussed his experience as an instructor, curriculum developer, and training manager, saying, “Without a doubt, in law enforcement, nothing beats scenario-based or real-life training, especially when we’re training force options, such as Jiu-Jitsu.” Echoing Lt. A, Ofc. B and Dep. C, the two participants with the least law enforcement experience, agreed that scenario-based training, especially when training force options such as Jiu-Jitsu, is the most beneficial way of learning.

Feedback

Tang and Zhan’s (2021) longitudinal study on cognitive diagnostic assessment concluded that feedback promotes learning. Networking, engaging in dialogue, feedback, and experiential learning with peers at the regional training center were key elements of the participants' overall training experience. Det. B said, “I think that the greatest benefit to all of us as students, in this type of training environment (defensive tactics) is the feedback we get from each other and the instructors.” The feedback officers shared and received also helped shed light on how detailed instructors and administrators were when implementing and delivering their Jiu-Jitsu curriculum. For example, during my observations, I noted that it was the feedback component of training

when the participants said some iteration of, “Oh, I get it now,” or “Yes, that makes sense!” or “Why didn’t I see that before?” In addition, the common response to the question “During Jiu-Jitsu training (grappling), how do instructors engage in meaningful dialogue with students concerning the real-life application of shown techniques?” from the qualitative questionnaire included a feedback component and how important feedback was to the participant.

Research Question Responses

During the data collection phase, I employed a systematic and methodical approach to address the central and sub-research questions. I identified themes and sub-themes through the coding process, and each theme and sub-theme that emerged bore a direct and purposeful alignment with the research question or one or more of the sub-research questions, elucidating insights into this study’s purpose, seeking to understand how Jiu-Jitsu training positively impacts the interactions between law enforcement officers in rural central Texas and suspects.

Figure 4.3 Research Questions and Themes Relationship

How can the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas improve relations between officers and suspects?	In what ways do officers believe this training is an effective tool for policing?	How do law enforcement officers use Jiu-Jitsu training to improve their tactical knowledge and skills?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer safety and reflection (theme 1) • Structured reflection (sub-theme 2) • Tactics and experiential learning (theme 2) • Value of shared experiences (sub-theme 2) • Skill level (theme 3) • Diverse perspectives (sub-theme 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer safety and reflection (theme 1) • Metacognition’s utility (sub-theme 1) • Structured reflection (sub-theme 2) • Tactics and experiential learning (theme 2) • Value of shared experiences (sub-theme 2) • Skill level (theme 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer safety and reflection (theme 1) • Tactics and experiential learning (theme 2) • Value of shared experiences (sub-theme 2) • Skill level (theme 3) • Learned application (theme 4) • Scenario-based training (sub-theme 1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned application (theme 4) • Scenario-based training (sub-theme 1) • Feedback (sub-theme 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse learning (sub-theme 1) • Learned application (theme 4) • Scenario-based training (sub-theme 1) • Feedback (sub-theme 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback (sub-theme 2)
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Central Research Question

How can the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas improve relations between officers and suspects? The participants all endorsed the Jiu-Jitsu program and attested to their unique experiences during the training cycle. Ofc. C said, which was echoed by the other participants in one fashion or another, “To receive the type of training that gives you the space to learn and to invest in yourself, which ultimately makes you a better officer to your peers and to the community, and to be surrounded by instructors and students with different, but similar experiences, well there’s no better way of self-development, right?” Ofc. C’s statement highlights critical components of the lived experiences that all participants shared. Promoting personal and professional development, discussions with peers and instructors with varying degrees of experience, and the interactions that occurred over the course of the training cycle were key elements of the themes and sub-themes exhibited in Figure 4.3.

Sub-Question One

In what ways do officers believe this training is an effective tool for policing? The main themes of officer safety and reflection and learned application speak directly to Jiu-Jitsu’s effectiveness as a policing tool. Lt A said, “The military has embraced Jiu-Jitsu’s fundamental concepts to train our warfighters for years. We (law enforcement) are a little late to the party, but

we've seen its (Jiu-Jitsu) effectiveness time and again. In Texas, DPS (Department of Public Safety) has taken the lead with incorporating Jiu-Jitsu in its arrest and control tactics training, and smaller agencies across the state have followed DPS's lead." The participants applied the learning concepts and demonstrated Jiu-Jitsu's effectiveness during the Crucible event. Lt A said, "The learning opportunity, for both instructors and students, to have a full-blown, real-life, fight for your life exercise, and demonstrate what students learned is a unique and rewarding experience for everyone involved. This type of training will save the lives of officers or citizens."

Sub-Question Two

How do law enforcement officers use Jiu-Jitsu training to improve their tactical knowledge and skills? The scenario-based training activities were rigorous and robust, and instructors employed different modalities to afford students learning opportunities to apply their knowledge and increase their tactical fighting skills. Dep. A said he applied his learning through "the different scenarios in class, and of course, the final training exercise," Dep. B said he applied the concepts during discussions and feedback sessions in which "someone shared an experience about an arrest and control incident" while the class worked through practical applications in class, and Sgt. B described the force option scenarios and said, "Having discussions and debates on tactics and then trying to apply your classmates' inputs based on their experience made training so much better." The different stations allowed students to practice specific techniques with instructors and for additional mat time with fellow students, which broadened the student experience beyond the traditional defensive tactics curriculum of days past.

Summary

This chapter focused on the results of my study and the main themes and sub-themes I identified following my data collection and coding processes. I analyzed the responses to the qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic observations and identified four primary themes, each having two sub-themes. The first theme was officer safety and reflection, the second theme was tactics and experiential learning, the third theme was skill level, and the fourth theme was learned application. All participants provided information through their lived experiences, which I analyzed and coded and appropriately categorized information to the four primary themes.

The sub-themes that emerged from the officer safety and reflection theme were metacognition's utility and structured reflection. The second sub-themes, under the tactics and experiential learning theme, were discretion and candor, and the value of shared experiences. The sub-themes from the skill level theme were diverse learning and diverse perspectives, and scenario-based training and feedback were the sub-themes under the learned application theme. All participants provided information through their lived experiences or made strong inferences in their questionnaire responses and interviews that led me to the four sub-themes. I analyzed and coded the collected information and appropriately categorized the data into the four sub-themes.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. I conducted a transcendental phenomenological study to examine the lived training experiences of officers and deputies in rural central Texas during their annual training cycle. In this final chapter, I convey my interpretations of my study's findings and share my thoughts on the collected data. Furthermore, I discuss the potential implications of this study for policy and practice and describe its possible theoretical and methodological implications. I also explore some limitations and delimitations associated with this study. Finally, I provide recommendations for future research that, I hope, will build upon this study and the supporting literature.

Discussion

The participants in this study all communicated and demonstrated, through observations, an overall positive and valuable experience during training. Ofc. D said, "I think it is clear that our agencies are interested in expanding this type of training and developing their officers professionally and personally. I hope our leadership can convince the city, or the county in my deputy classmate's case, to think about how this training can save lives when giving us our budget." This section summarizes the thematic findings, interpretations, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

I identified four primary themes and eight sub-themes that surfaced from the data collection process and after thematic analysis. The primary themes identified were officer safety

and reflection, tactics and experiential learning, skill level, and learned application. Data collected from the participants developed this study's themes and aligned them with Kolb's (2003) experiential learning process and Clausewitz's general theory of combat logic (Brizin & Kernspecht, 2014). For example, Kolb (2023) asserts that effective learning occurs during a four-stage process of continuous navigation of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. In addition, Brizin and Kernspecht (2014) distill Clausewitz's work into a "general idea of how to fight optimally and efficiently" using methodologies from various combat arts and military tactics. My interpretation of findings was based on the themes, and I communicated my interpretation through those themes, the sub-themes, and Kolb's (2023) and Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) works.

Summary of Thematic Findings

In qualitative research, thematic findings emphasize the nexus between theoretical influence and raw data and are critical to a study's trustworthiness (Thompson, 2022). In this study, participants emphasized the significance of peer connections that enhanced their training experience, eliciting varied yet insightful thoughts on enhancing safety while advancing better community relations. In addition, the participants underscored how the scenario-based exercises proved the effectiveness of the training as a policing tool, driving them to go beyond their current skills and knowledge and apply new concepts and ideas. For example, even though the discussion on efficient defensive law enforcement tactics has been argued for decades (Lavoie et al., 2022), Kaminski and Martin (2020) assert that law enforcement leaders might lack objective information on whether training managers teach officers the most efficient methods for safely subduing resistive and combative suspects. However, instructors and students fundamentally agree that training through experiential learning promotes interactive discussions and the sharing

of lived experiences that offer solutions through conversation (Smith, 2022). Following the scenario-based exercises and the final event, the participants entered the reflection and feedback phase. The participants continued the learning cycle as they discovered new ideas through their classmates' lived experiences and how those experiences would help them in their careers.

Augmenting the Experience Through Personal Connections

The relationships law enforcement officers form are unique compared to other workforces because of shared experiences, stress, shift work, and situations that impact their attitudes (Somers & Terrill, 2022). The relationships formed and developed observed during this study were significant to the participants' learning experience. Communicating with and understanding the perspectives of peers and instructors enhanced the participants' relationships and ability to partner with their classmates in the future, whether in the classroom or in the field. The classroom discussions and feedback from practical exercises and the time spent together during their training cycle with such a diverse group promoted learning well beyond the curriculum. The relationships the participants developed supported the learning cycle and catalyzed them to draw from their lived experiences, consider alternative ways to perform, and share their perspectives to create new experiences for themselves and their classmates.

Jiu-Jitsu is More Than Just Another Training Component

The defensive tactics program structure, specifically its Jiu-Jitsu component, encouraged and provided time for reflection and thought, which promoted mental well-being. In their systematic review on the relationship between physical activity and mental health during the first year of COVID-19, Marconcin et al. (2022) concluded: “that higher physical activity is associated with higher well-being, quality of life as well as lower depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress, independently of age.” Although law enforcement agencies encourage personal

fitness outside mandatory training, time and facilities are sometimes scarce. The participants described the time the curriculum afforded them to train, and the state-of-the-art facilities were not only conducive to learning and gaining more skills but that it was a nice mental break from the day-to-day of police work. In addition to their Jiu-Jitsu training, the training cycle allowed the participants to spend time with friends and peers in a relatively enjoyable environment less stressful than the streets. The instructors' emphasis on improving overall safety, health, and wellness helped prepare the participants for learning by establishing a likeminded, positive learning environment.

Equipping Students for Present and Future Roles

According to Weng et al. (2010), goal progress, professional development, promotional, and higher salary opportunities are factors of career growth. The training in which the participants engaged in improved critical thinking and shifted perspectives toward a higher-level of tactical and strategic planning and engagement. The training focused on street-level officer scenarios and the practical exercises, although drawn from past but similar law enforcement encounters, centered on current officer safety and community service concerns. The discussions with peers and instructors, mostly tenured officers or officers in leadership roles, challenged the participants and thrust them into thinking at a level consistent with mid-level supervisory and senior leadership roles. Participants who had previously taken the training returned to their respective assignments informed, sharing their experience and knowledge with others, and thrilled to continue developing their professional relationships through networking and capitalizing on their new knowledge.

Implications for Policy or Practice

This study's results may have the potential to extend beyond the participants and their experience training Jiu-Jitsu. The participating law enforcement agencies and their leadership could implement policies or practices incorporating aspects of Jiu-Jitsu training that benefit the growth and development of officers in rural central Texas and all officers across Texas and the rest of the country at all levels of government. By understanding the themes and sub-themes from this study, law enforcement agencies may enhance their sworn workforce capabilities by implementing policies and practices that encourage officer safety, tactics, and feedback to make policing safer for the officers and the communities they serve.

Implications for Policy

This study shows the benefits of a rigorous and realistic training program. Unfortunately, time, resource, and policy constraints limit opportunities to participate in an ongoing Jiu-Jitsu training program. A policy mandating that officers take time during their shifts to train on or off-site is not feasible because of deployment or staffing issues. However, law enforcement leaders can support officer participation in Jiu-Jitsu training by incentivizing them to participate in programs that sponsor first responders or asking for additional funding to expand the training duration and frequency across the region and perhaps incorporate opportunities for remote learning for certain training components. In addition, law enforcement leaders can also seek opportunities to implement routine mini-in-person training during shift briefings or between shift changes, which might stimulate continued learning between training cycles.

Implications for Practice

The participants highlighted the utility of discretion and candor among students and instructors to encourage honest discussions and feedback while building trust in the classroom

and on the mats. The concept of open and honest discussions among instructors and students may benefit law enforcement agencies if trained personnel manage the discussions and ensure positive and meaningful exchange. Law enforcement agencies that promote and encourage candid conversations in a training environment might strengthen their capabilities with diverse perspectives and an open-mindedness to consider new concepts and ideas.

In addition to the discretion and candor utility, applying learned concepts was valuable to the participants' understanding and skill development during their training cycle. Also, practicing routine engagements with partnering law enforcement agencies may be strategic benefit to an agency's professional development plan. For example, some agencies employ officers who are subject matter experts on a particular topic and those agencies can invite officers from surrounding departments to participate in training on those topics.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theoretical framework underpinning this study was Clausewitz's general theory of combat logic, discussed in Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) work. According to the general theory of combat logic, combatants must fight optimally and efficiently, eliminating misunderstandings and defining all terms to have a common base for clear communication. Furthermore, training prepares combatants to remain in order under chaotic fighting. The general theory of combat suggests that scenario-based training develops the idea of when and how to react under stimulus and stress (Brizin & Kernspecht, 2014). This study aligned with the theoretical framework, and the themes and sub-themes identified from the data collection process reflected Clausewitz's general theory of combat logic described in Brizin and Kernspecht's (2014) work.

Although there is no substantial literature on the utility of Jiu-Jitsu in police work, the literature on the effectiveness of Jiu-Jitsu on physical and mental health (Duarte & Ferraz, 2022;

Facinek & Košč, 2021; Hofer & Savell, 2021; Kukić et al., 2019; Maltsev et al., 2020), and its effectiveness in fighting outcomes (Figueiredo et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2021; Stellpflug et al., 2020), this study provides data on the lived training experiences of police officers and sheriff deputies from three different law enforcement agencies during their annual training cycle. The empirical findings of this study confirmed the previous understanding of how law enforcement officers approach training and how they believe that training empowers, improves, or influences their practice in the field. The participants in this study attested to the significance of scenario-based practical exercises and after-action feedback with classmates of varying experience levels and diverse perspectives while learning through extensive instructor-led peer discussions and problem-solving exercises on the mats. Supporting the participants' attestation, a recent study emphasized the heightened learning outcomes when teachers afford students dedicated time for reflection and discussion, encompassing both curriculum and non-curricular-related aspects throughout their learning program (Yozamp et al., 2023). This study contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the learning interactions and modalities at the regional training center and during in-service training.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are weak points in a study that can potentially affect the results and the conclusions one might draw from the research (Ross & Bibler, 2019). The limitations of this study were the participants' work shift and the population sample. The first limitation was the participants' work shift. The participants' work shifts were trifurcated to either a day, swing, or night shift and the training staff curated the training schedule to have day and afternoon sessions to accommodate the different shifts. The different shifts posed an issue with scheduling the semi-structured interviews and timely responses to the qualitative questionnaire. As a mitigation

strategy, I conducted interviews during a participant's respective shift and asked my facilitator to send reminder emails on returning the responses to the qualitative questionnaires. The second limitation was the population size and the number of participants who volunteered for this study. Law enforcement agencies nationwide are experiencing a workforce crisis due to increased retirements and fewer qualified applicants; therefore, finding volunteers at a single law enforcement agency was not feasible and the population sample needed to expand to three total agencies.

The first two delineations were essential in shaping this study's focus because the research aimed to delve deep into the lived training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. To meet this study's criteria, participants needed to be full-time, duly employed Texas peace officers with full arrest powers who spoke enough English to participate in an interview in English. The participants also needed to be between 21 and 51 years old. It is worth noting that the regional training center offers various training programs to neighboring law enforcement agencies and visiting law enforcement officers. This research concentrated exclusively on the Jiu-Jitsu component of force options and arrest and control tactics training, so the participants needed to be enrolled in that course.

Recommendations for Future Research

The most significant limitation of this study is the existing body of knowledge from the literature on Jiu-Jitsu's utility as a law enforcement tool to improve police-community relations. The force options and arrest and control tactics programs include other components for officer development. Future research should include a qualitative or quantitative study focusing on strategies to mitigate potential injuries sustained from Jiu-Jitsu training. Although the regional training center and participating law enforcement agencies offer different health, wellness, and

self-care programs, none offer strategies to mitigate Jiu-Jitsu injuries, which are unique to the art. A qualitative study focusing on the lived experiences of law enforcement instructors who are experts in law enforcement injury mitigation or a quantitative study comparing and contrasting injury prevalence in Jiu-Jitsu versus other combat sports will add to the current literature and understanding of professional police training programs.

In addition, researchers should consider conducting a qualitative study on the lived experiences of suspects involved in a police use of force encounter that used Jiu-Jitsu as a means of arrest and control. Although this study did not seek to understand a suspect's perspective, the participants mentioned significant differences between how they controlled a suspect before and after their training. A study highlighting the safety of suspects during an arrest and control situation with law enforcement would add knowledge to the current literature and provide data on the utility, effectiveness, and gentleness of Jiu-Jitsu compared to other force options.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas. The opportunity for the participants to learn Jiu-Jitsu concepts as a component of force options and arrest and control tactics (also commonly referred to as defensive tactics training) at the regional training center and during in-service continuing education enriched their knowledge and improved their confidence while performing under stressful conditions. However, on-going professional development could prove problematic in the future because time, financial and staffing barriers. Although barriers exist that might prevent law enforcement agencies from routinely sending officers to training, law enforcement agencies can support training by incentivizing staff to participate in Jiu-Jitsu programs that sponsor first responders and or asking municipal leaders for

additional funding to cover deployment gaps, which could expand training duration and frequency. Furthermore, training managers might also consider incorporating opportunities for remote learning for certain Jiu-Jitsu concepts that do not require in-person participation. The feedback from participants supported Brizin and Kernspecht's general theory of combat framework, so professional law enforcement education students should be afforded an opportunity to learn principals and concepts, understand attacks and defense, develop skills and abilities, apply sequential techniques, and knowing which technique to apply. Future research should expand on this study by qualitatively investigating strategies to mitigate potential injuries sustained from Jiu-Jitsu training or exploring the lived experiences of law enforcement instructors trained in injury mitigation. Other potential future research areas might include a quantitative study comparing and contrasting injury prevalence in Jiu-Jitsu versus other combat sports or examining the lived experiences of justice involved individuals during in a use of force encounter in which the officer used Jiu-Jitsu as a means of arrest and control.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval



October 3, 2023

Richard Segovia
Sabine Branch

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-198 THE LIVED JIU-JITSU TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN RURAL CENTRAL TEXAS: A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Richard Segovia, Sabine Branch,

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).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

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, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Site Permission



ROUND ROCK POLICE DEPARTMENT

Office of the Chief

Allen J. Banks
Chief of Police

James W. Richards
Assistant Chief of Police

Justin T. Carmichael
Assistant Chief of Police

July 8, 2023

Richard Segovia, Ed.D., MBA, MSML
Liberty University
School of Education

Dear Richard Segovia:

Please accept this correspondence as written approval for Richard Segovia, Ed.D, to conduct on-site research at the Regional Public Safety Training Center regarding jiu jitsu's role in law enforcement and you may interview staff, observe training, review documents, and request staff to voluntarily participate in whatever data collection method you deem appropriate. Officer Ashley Daley will be assigned to assist with any research needs and facilitate any communication with participating officers. Officer Daley will also act as a guardrail and gatekeeper to ensure the research subjects and all participants of this study are protected by ethical standards.

Respectfully,

Allen J. Banks, Chief of Police
Round Rock Police Department

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear Officer:

As a Ph.D. candidate in the School of education at Liberty University, [I am conducting research to better understand the lived training experiences of Jiu-Jitsu among law enforcement officers. The purpose of my research is to describe how the Jiu-Jitsu training experiences of law enforcement officers in rural central Texas might improve relations between officers and suspects, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be Texas state-certified law enforcement officers. These officers must speak enough English to participate in an interview conducted in English. The Participants must be full-time, duly sworn state-certified peace officers with full arrest powers between 21-51 years old. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, complete a questionnaire, and agree for me to observe them during training. Survey Monkey will administer the questionnaire and collect the responses. Seletected participants will receive an email with a link to complete the questionnaire. It should take less than one week to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please respond to this email attesting to your voluntary participation by stating, “I have read the attached letter and agree to voluntarily participate in one or all of the procedures.”

A consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria. 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 before study procedures begin.

Sincerely,

Richard Segovia, Ed.D., MBA, MSML
Ph.D. Candidate
Liberty University

██████████
████████████████████

Appendix D

Consent

Title of the Project: THE LIVED JIU-JITSU TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN RURAL CENTRAL TEXAS: A TRANSCENDENTAL - PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Principal Investigator: Richard Segovia, Ed.D., Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, 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 Texas state-certified law enforcement officer between 21 and 51 years old. You must speak enough English to participate in an interview conducted in English. Each participant will be a full-time, duly employed state-certified peace officer with full arrest powers. 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 describe how Jiu-Jitsu training positively impacts the interactions between law enforcement officers in rural central Texas and suspects.

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:

1. Participate in taking a questionnaire that will take approximately 30-45 minutes.
2. Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded interview that will take approximately 30-45 minutes.
3. Agree to be observed during your 1-hour in-service arrest and control training (ACT).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include making theoretical contributions to the body of academic literature and broader practical implications for police training programs to positively affect outcomes between law enforcement and individuals they encounter.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

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 kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and hard drives in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether 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 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 contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Richard Segovia, Ed.D. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Sabine Branch, at [REDACTED].

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 IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is 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[s] 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.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix E

Observation Rubric

Standard 1: Uses material information and perspectives aligned with appropriate
instruction

Indicator 1.1: Translation of concepts and techniques to real-life applications	
(1) Poor	Demonstrated or communicated inadequate depth or breadth of the translation of concepts and techniques to real-life applications.
(2) Satisfactory	Demonstrated or communicated adequate depth or breadth of the translation of concepts and techniques to real-life applications.
(3) Excellent	Demonstrated or communicated exceptional depth or breadth of the translation of concepts and techniques to real-life applications.

Indicator 1.2: Spent adequate time teaching techniques, ensuring satisfactory
information consumption

(1) Poor	Did not spend adequate time teaching the day's lesson nor cognitively ensured that the student satisfactorily learned the content.
(2) Satisfactory	Spent adequate time teaching the day's lesson and ensured that the student satisfactorily

	learned the content at least than half of the time.
(4) Excellent	Spent adequate time teaching the day's lesson and ensured that the student satisfactorily learned the content more than half of the time.

Indicator 1.3: Competently supervised students as they applied the learned concepts

(1) Poor	Demonstrated inadequate supervision of students as they applied concepts aligned with the day's lesson.
(2) Satisfactory	Demonstrated supervision of students more than half the time as they applied concepts aligned with the day's lesson.
(3) Excellent	Demonstrated supervision of students almost all the time as they applied concepts aligned with the day's lesson.