

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN THE POST-FLOYD ERA: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT

By
Carlos Alberto Vesco

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice Leadership

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APPROVED BY:

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a phenomenological approach to analyze law enforcement professionals' perspectives regarding police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County after the murder of George Floyd. The study focuses on two primary issues: the ongoing shortage of police officers and the absence of effective retention measures. The study's theoretical approach is informed by the principles of transformational leadership theory and Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. The research utilized a qualitative methodology, including face-to-face interviews with a total of twenty-nine participants from three police jurisdictions within Miami-Dade County. These individuals were selected based on their experience in the field. The data was collected, coded, and examined by manual means. The study yielded noteworthy results, which may be summarized as follows: (1) The responses provided by officers from different jurisdictions indicate a shared perspective that recruiting efforts in Miami-Dade County have not been sufficiently prioritized. (2) The consensus among law enforcement officers is nearly uniform in acknowledging the persistent challenges associated with recruitment and retention, emphasizing the need for further examination and intervention.

Keywords: recruitment, retention, police, qualitative research, Miami-Dade County

Dedication

To my mother, who suffered from cancer and believed in me, I love you endlessly and will see you again one day.

Acknowledgments

This has been an unforgettable journey, and I am so thankful for the love and support of many who have encouraged me throughout this endeavor. Although this dissertation is mine, it is also for the people to read and critique the many challenges facing police recruitment and retention, not only in Miami-Dade County, Florida but also in the United States of America.

I want to acknowledge, first and foremost, the Oneness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was through the power of this Divine Trinity that I was able to accomplish this arduous task. I want to honor my wife, Cary, a lieutenant in law enforcement, for her unwavering support and encouragement during the many times I wanted to give up. The Lord and Cary witnessed the frustrations and gratifications I endured through the development of this dissertation. I had many sleepless days and nights to complete this dissertation as it was intended to be written and finalized. There were many personal sacrifices made along the way. I want to thank my professor and Chair, Matthew Lamade and Professor Greg Vecchi, for their patience. Professor Lamade was a great mentor, and I chose wisely when selecting him as my Chair. Professor Lamade, thank you for your patience. I am glad to have chosen Professor Vecchi as my Reader. I chose him as my reader because of his years of experience with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and his years of wisdom. Not only do I consider Professor Lamade and Vecchi excellent professors, but I also consider them brothers in Christ and law enforcement—special thanks to Liberty University and its staff.

Surely, this was a challenging task. However, with God's help, I persevered. As the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It is this biblical verse that kept me persevering to the end.

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List of Abbreviations

1. BWC: Body Worn Camera
2. COP: Community-Oriented Policing
3. FTO: Field Training Officer(s)
4. GED: General Educational Development
5. IACP: International Association of Chiefs of Police
6. IRB: Institutional Review Board
7. PEQF: Police Education Qualifications Framework
8. PERF: Police Executive Research Forum
9. PPO: Probationary Police Officer
10. PTO: Paid Time Off
11. QDA: Qualitative Data Analysis
12. SWAT: Special Weapons and Tactics

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the 21st century, policing is just as vital and complex as it was in ancient times. The career of a police officer is an exciting journey for those called to do so. Police officers can make a difference in society. Communities cannot function without policing because there needs to be law and order. Policing is so critical that ancient writings such as the Bible discuss the profession's importance. For example, Romans 13 addresses the importance of governing authorities and those in such positions.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. (New International Version, 1978/2022, Romans 13:1-5).

Just as policing was necessary in ancient times, it is also essential and challenging in the 21st century. Prior research by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) suggests problems

with police recruitment and retention. According to PERF (2019), challenges associated with recruitment include a long trend of reduced staffing, fewer applicants, and retirement. The challenges related to recruitment are exacerbated by law enforcement's expanding roles in community policing, homeland security, and emerging crimes. This research study explores the phenomenon of police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020.

Background

A career in law enforcement is demanding and, at times, dangerous. There is a special calling in becoming a police officer. Currently, the public expects law enforcement officers to demonstrate the following qualities: exceptional leadership skills like Moses, wise judgment like Solomon, courageousness like King David, strength like Samson, patience like Job, kindness like the Good Samaritan, faith like Daniel, and tolerance and love like Jesus Christ.

According to PERF (2019), more law enforcement recruitment and retention efforts are needed. The analysis highlighted three significant factors that were causing the problem: (1) fewer people were applying to become police officers, (2) more police officers were reaching retirement age, and (3) more officers left their jobs voluntarily. Police recruitment and retention are undoubtedly challenging and complex for any police agency. The reduction or turnover of personnel impacts the safety of police officers, as it diminishes the availability of possible support during dangerous situations. An increase in officer workload, the ability of officers to react to service calls, and the ability to focus on criminal investigations to provide justice for crime victims all impact public safety.

The law enforcement hiring process, which can consist of rigorous background checks, psychological evaluations, medical evaluations, and other hiring criteria, has made it difficult for many applicants to become police officers. Retention factors such as low pay, lousy leadership, job stress, or burnout can also contribute to police officer turnover. The murder of George Floyd has only added to the difficulties of hiring and retaining police officers. Several police agencies in the United States reported a significant surge in officer resignations due to massive anti-policing demonstrations in the summer of 2020 (Bailey, 2020; Colton, 2020; Mourtgos et al., 2022). The racial tension created civil unrest, which prompted the rise of Black Lives Matter, followed by the “defunding the police movement,” which has made policing challenging (Cobbina-Dungy et al., 2022). Many police departments were placed on high alert. Law enforcement organizations went into 12-hour shifts to keep communities safe. Americans were tuned into their television, watching looters and anarchists destroy communities in anger.

The George Floyd riots and civil unrest resulted in the departure of over 100 officers from the Minneapolis Police Department, the Portland Police Department, and the San Francisco Police Department. The Chicago Police Department had a 15 percent increase in retirements. The New York Police Department had its greatest loss of officers in ten years, while the Seattle Police Department was on the pace of losing 200 officers by the end of 2020 (Mourtgos et al., 2022). While several large police departments had record-high turnovers, this phenomenological study will focus on three police departments in Miami-Dade County to explore whether the murder of George Floyd had an impact on the region.

Historic Overview

A comprehensive historical analysis of police is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the researcher felt it necessary to provide a quick overview of the historical events

that set the stage for modern police in the twenty-first century. Even the oldest societies developed systems to ensure that law and order were upheld. In the days of slavery in colonial America, where the origins of policing can be found, slave patrols were the first unofficial police force in the United States. Their job was to track down and return runaway slaves to their enslavers in the South. Fast forward to the Reconstruction Era, brutality was the preferred method of police. The police were utilized to make the white communities feel safe while keeping the black neighborhoods separate and fearful (The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2022).

United States law enforcement struggled during the '60s and '70s. In the 1960s, hundreds of riots and violent demonstrations took place across the country. African Americans and other minority groups felt mainly targeted by police brutality. Police brutality during civil rights and antiwar demonstrations, some shown on live television, also sparked widespread outrage.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a growing number of police agencies adopted a strategy known as community policing. The foundation of community policing is dedicated to fostering trust and mutual respect between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve (Department of Justice, 2017). Community policing was adopted as part of a broader national campaign to reduce crime in the United States in the 1990s. Conflicts between law enforcement and minority groups have been another significant influence on policing and public opinion of the police in recent years. Several high-profile cases sparked protests against police stereotyping, violence, and the use of fatal force, especially against African Americans.

Looking further into the 21st century, protests by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement were sparked by the shooting deaths of several black men by white police officers. Hundreds of civilians reported instances of police brutality on social media after the BLM

movement pushed people to record and report any incidences they saw. In the summer of 2020, public outrage was sparked by a video recording of George Floyd's murder. Thus, the BLM movement spread across the country and, eventually, worldwide. Crises such as police bias have given police executives concerns in vetting qualified candidates. The push and pull between respect for personal liberty and the desire to fight crime have led to discussions about the role of law enforcement, the boundaries within which police officers operate, and the genuine threats that police officers face daily.

Situation to Self

As a veteran law enforcement officer of 30 years, the researcher has been employed by three separate police agencies: a state agency, a municipal government agency, and a university police agency. Having served these agencies, the researcher has witnessed turnover due to retirement or resignation and recruitment difficulties. Having served as a background investigator, the researcher has seen first-hand that the hiring process of a police officer is one of the most critical functions of a police department. The researcher recognizes that police work is not accessible due to many variables. The officers chosen for entry-level roles are generally the future supervisors of the organization. The quality of the agency will be determined by the caliber of the employees hired.

Many emergency calls that officers respond to involve stressful situations such as homicide, sexual battery, domestic violence, and officer-involved shooting, to name a few. These types of stressful situations can take a toll over time. It is understandable when escalated situations, such as city riots that can occur at any time and place, would prompt officer(s) to resign from their law enforcement position(s). Situations such as these prompted the researcher

to conduct a thorough phenomenological study into police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County following the murder of George Floyd.

Problem Statement

Following the murder of George Floyd, this qualitative study addresses the problem of police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. Before the death of George Floyd in the summer of 2020, one of the most relevant research studies conducted on the subject was carried out by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). This study found that:

- 78 percent of police agencies had issues recruiting qualified candidates.
- 65 percent reported having fewer candidates apply than in previous years.
- 75 percent said that recruitment was more difficult in 2019 than it was five years ago.
- 50 percent of police agencies have had to amend many of their policies and procedures to attract candidates.
- 25 percent of agencies have had to reduce or eliminate certain agency services, units, or positions because of staffing difficulties (IACP, 2019).

This study showed that the effectiveness and quality of law enforcement depend on successful recruitment and retention efforts. Recent events have seen several of the largest U.S. police departments report a substantial surge in officer resignations in the summer of 2020 following mass protests against policing (Mourtgos et al., 2022). However, long before demonstrators shocked by the murder of George Floyd advocated for police reform and, in some extreme cases, abolition, police organizations struggled with officer recruitment and retention (Freilich & Chermak, 2022). This phenomenological study aimed to design an intervention to address the problem of police recruitment and retention in select police agencies in Miami-Dade County.

Following the death of George Floyd, recruitment and retention worsened. For instance, the Minneapolis Police Department lost over 100 officers. The Chicago Police Department experienced a 15 percent increase in retirement in 2020 compared to 2019, and the Seattle Police Department was anticipated to lose 200 officers in 2020 due to George Floyd's murder (Mourtgos et al., 2022). Although there are difficulties in police recruitment and retention across the country, the contribution of this research will be an attempt to resolve specific questions regarding the strain on police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County following the murder of George Floyd. A literature review has failed to produce any study that explored, identified, or supported any studies in Miami-Dade County police departments concerning recruitment and retention.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study aims to understand and develop an intervention to the problem inhibiting post-Floyd era police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. A qualitative research method was used in this pragmatic approach. The researcher chose three law enforcement organizations in Miami-Dade County to participate in this study. The three collaborating agencies are distinct from one another in terms of size, location, and physical makeup. The strategy consisted of conducting interviews in a semi-structured fashion with a total of ten participants from each of the three police agencies. Participants are police officers and non-administrative police sergeants.

The theories that will help guide this study include transformational leadership and Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. Transformational leadership is defined as a leader's behavior that affects followers' ideals and aspirations by igniting higher-order needs and motivating them to put aside their interests for the company's interests (Russel, 2014). This

theory will help determine whether the issues concerning recruitment and retention are related to leadership concerns.

Frederick Herzberg, a behavioral scientist, created the two-factor theory, encompassing motivators and hygienic factors. According to Herzberg, these factors give rise to workplace dissatisfaction (Bhatt, Chitranshi, & Mehta, 2022). Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory will also help guide this study by determining if the employees, as it relates to organizational policies, pay, working conditions, interoffice relationships, benefits, and job security, have any bearing on recruitment and retention.

Significance of the Study

In the 21st century, hiring law enforcement professionals in a market with a dwindling pool of competent applicants is a significant challenge for law enforcement organizations. Before the murder of George Floyd, substantial changes in police reform (and abolition), agencies battled with recruitment and retention; however, the situation intensified after Floyd's murder (Freilich & Chermak 2022). This qualitative study examines three law enforcement departments' recruitment and retention challenges in Miami-Dade County. The purpose of this research study is to explore the challenges facing police agencies in Miami-Dade County in the post-Floyd era. To the researcher's knowledge, research is absent about the recruitment and retention practices implemented within law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County. This study will identify new information on recruitment and retention challenges in Miami-Dade County, as recruiting and retaining new officers is one of the most critical tasks for any law enforcement agency.

Research Questions

The research questions modeled for this study are the following:

(RQ1) What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ2) What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ3) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ4) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ5) What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?

(RQ6) What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?

Definitions

Burnout: “A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do “people” work of some kind” (Violanti & Paton, 1999, p. 54).

Recruitment: “The intentional process of seeking law enforcement candidates that match the predetermined qualities and attributes that contribute to job effectiveness” (Oliver, 2014, p. 77).

Retention: “Maximizing factors pulling employees into an organization while limiting the factors pushing employees out of the department” (Orrick, 2018, p. 9).

Summary

The recruiting process for prospective police officers can be more complicated than just persuading many candidates to apply for employment. If police executives hope to acquire suitable candidates successfully, recruiters must utilize more than a few brief remarks about the organization. To enhance their effectiveness, agencies must thoroughly analyze their recruitment practices. Before an agency begins to recruit officers, a staffing study and evaluation of the average attrition rate should be conducted to determine the number of officers needed. Once the required personnel have been defined, the agency's fundamental principles and distinct characteristics should be specified. This information is crucial for evaluating the caliber of police officers needed and the benefits provided by the department. As a result, police recruitment and retention continue to be arduous for police executives. However, in the post-Floyd era, the challenges have been more difficult. The rigorous background checks, psychological evaluations, medical evaluations, and other hiring criteria have made it difficult for many applicants to become police officers. Retention factors such as low pay, lousy leadership, job stress, and burnout contribute to police officer turnover.

Chapter One conveyed the problems of police retention and recruitment that police agencies have been facing following George Floyd's murder. Law enforcement's effectiveness and quality depend on successful recruitment and retention efforts. As previously stated, finding qualified applicants is a work in progress. This chapter provided an overview of recruitment and retention issues, the situation to self from a personal experience standpoint, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the significance of the study, and working definitions. Chapter two will cover the literature review and the critical components related to the phenomenological issues of police recruitment and retention.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

One of the most critical issues law enforcement agencies in the U.S. currently confront is the difficulty of hiring and retaining law enforcement personnel (Linos & Riesch, 2020). This study aims to solve the problem of police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. In this pragmatic approach, qualitative research will be used. The researcher chose three Miami-Dade County police departments. The three participating organizations vary in size, location, and physical makeup. The method consists of semi-structured interviews with 10 participants from each of the three police departments, ranging from uniformed officers to supervisors.

Methods

For this study, several sources were used in the literature search on police recruitment and retention, including Google Scholar and Liberty University's Library, which allowed access to doing searches. Databases include the International Journal of Police Science & Management, National, ProQuest, Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, Journal of Criminal Justice, and other scientific journals. The researcher discovered hundreds of links to various resources about police recruitment and retention in the U.S. using search terms like burnout, police, police retention, and police turnover. Because of the deluge of information, the researcher examined a small sample of articles to determine how closely they fit the precise search criteria. The researcher filtered down 122 scholarly sources that addressed police recruiting and retention after reading 170 papers. The literature review covers the factors that impact recruitment and retention, including recruitment, benefits, written examination, polygraph, psychological evaluation, physical agility, drug testing, background investigation, leadership, retention,

resignation, and retirement. In addressing the problem of police recruitment and retention, this study attempts to determine if the murder of George Floyd affected recruitment and retention with police agencies in Miami-Dade County.

Limitations

While a literature review process has some strengths and benefits, it also has limitations. For instance, analyzing the available data might give only some answers to the problems this study set out to address. There might be literature that requires further evaluation of data. Another limitation found while searching through numerous scholarly literature was that no studies had been conducted on any police agencies in Miami-Dade County regarding police recruitment or retention issues, including following George Floyd's murder. In the final chapter of this proposed dissertation, this study will examine the findings and identify potential future research and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

Numerous theories address the social phenomenon of leadership and turnover within law enforcement. Each of these theories is relative to the recruitment and retention problem as the theories are all founded on the principle of relationship. The theoretical framework of this study will be guided by Transformational Leadership Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory.

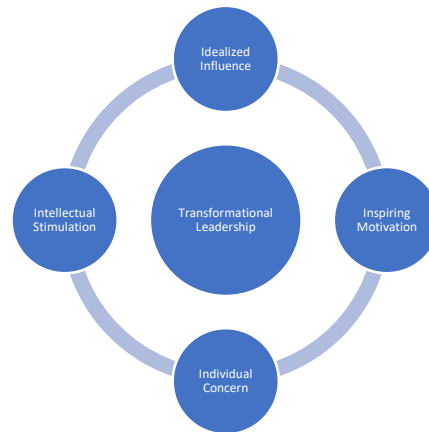
Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as leader behavior influencing both the values and aspirations of followers by activating higher-order needs and arousing followers to transcend self-interest for the organization's benefit (Russel, 2014). While many leadership theories exist,

transformational leadership theory is founded on the premise that it can establish connections with followers in an atmosphere where leaders and subordinates strive to achieve organizational objectives. Transformational leaders are inspirational motivators, which is beneficial to subordinates. They inspire their subordinates to accomplish goals and objectives that seem impossible. “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2019, p. 5). Leaders need to be inspirational motivators to enhance organizational success. Transformational leaders can transform their subordinates by being effective while generating desired outcomes. Transformational leadership continues to gain popularity among law enforcement leaders. According to Pyle & Cangemi (2019), delegation, trustworthiness, sensitivity, and collaboration are among the central leadership and performance metrics that municipal managers value. Each of these traits is indicative of transformational leadership.

This leadership style was conceptualized as a reward and aversive influence (Antonakis & House, 2014). This leadership theory is favored among many officers because it does not have the traditional militaristic approach, which does not offer a reward incentive approach. Leadership plays a significant role within a police organization and could impact turnover rates. Poor leadership can cause subordinates to suffer burnout, poor performance, and disgruntled towards the agency. Therefore, transformational leaders should recognize their impact on subordinates by practicing effective leadership in building relationships to establish a healthy working environment. According to Mbindyo et al. (2021), there are four distinct components of transformational leadership: (1) idealized influence, (2) inspiring motivation, (3) individual concern, and (4) intellectual stimulation (Figure 1). These building blocks in leadership are critical to prevent turnover due to poor leadership.

Figure 1.
Four Distinct Components of Transformational Leadership



Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Those interested in a policing career most likely have done their research to understand the benefits associated with the job. Frederick Herzberg was a behavioral scientist investigating the elements contributing to employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene factors focused on the psychological needs of the employees as it relates to organizational policies, pay, working conditions, interoffice relationship, benefits, and job security (Bhatt et al., 2022). One of the primary aspects a police candidate seeks is job conditions. According to Skaggs et al. (2022), police officers investigate hygiene factors encompassing job conditions such as pay, benefits, policies, and work relationships. Additionally, promotion and recognition are also considered motivating factors.

Bodziany et al. (2020) identified hygiene as the institution's policy, control system, interpersonal relationships, working environment, and remuneration. Suppose these elements do not match the expectations of recruits or officers who have been on the job for a considerable time. In that case, it can lead to undesirable outcomes, such as officers quitting the agency. As a

result, it has a variety of negative repercussions on police agencies' productivity and expenses. In addition to the direct costs incurred when an officer quits, the agency often incurs indirect costs, such as the time and money required to educate new personnel.

21st Century Policing

Law enforcement has undergone numerous developments throughout history and is still developing today. Initiatives to involve the community in policing decisions have become essential due to problems with racial discrimination and police violence. Community policing is founded on mutual respect and trust and serves to engage the people. Community policing is the belief that trust and mutual respect between police and the communities they serve are essential for public safety and that law enforcement strategy emphasizes the systematic use of community engagement, partnerships, and problem-solving techniques to proactively address conditions that foster crime and social disorder (National League of Cities, 2016). Today, many police departments have a broad spectrum of racial, gender, linguistic, and professional diversity within their communities. Policing is a fluid profession that is frequently evolving. Police executives and policymakers have emphasized the necessity for more diversity in law enforcement to respond to the legitimacy crisis facing American policing.

Value of Law Enforcement

The beliefs of managers and employees that guide how work-related behaviors are evaluated and explain organizational members' activities are known as organizational values (Engelson, 1999). An organization and its staff are guided by its values. Three critical values in law enforcement are integrity, respect, and professionalism. Different branches of law enforcement will have distinct priorities.

According to Blumberg et al. (2016), the National Institute of Justice claimed that police integrity remains one of the most significant impediments to public trust and confidence in the police. A police career necessitates the achievement of rigorous criteria to evolve into a competent officer. The choices one makes reveal the moral principles that guide one, including what one considers good and evil. It is no wonder police agencies are strictly selective in hiring qualified candidates. Hiring a bad candidate can make all the difference in how that police agency will be reflected. Hire an untrustworthy candidate and receive negative repercussions. Hire a trustworthy one and reap the benefits of productivity.

A study by Barthelemy et al., (2016) revealed that while some individuals held law enforcement officers in high regard, most respondents had contempt, viewed them with suspicion, and saw them as agents of violence. From a humanity standpoint, respect should be mutual between two people despite differences. The value of respect is crucial to any one person, group of people, or organization. Respect in an organization creates an ethical work environment that encourages higher productivity and builds relationships. Respect builds relationships and brings peace between law enforcement organizations and the communities they serve.

Professionalism is seen as a value in law enforcement organizations. Currently, professional associations accredit state and municipal agencies in a variety of sectors (Hughes & Teodoro, 2013). One of the professional associations is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA). This organization wants to improve public safety services by keeping a complete set of law enforcement standards, setting up and running an accreditation process, and giving awards for professional excellence. It is the professionalism of men and women in law enforcement.

Community Policing

Community policing is a proactive problem-solving strategy centered on resource mobilization and organizational adaptation that strives to create relationships and trust with the public, address underlying concerns about public safety, and adapt to changes in the community (Community Policing Consortium, 1994; Department of Justice, 2017; Shupard & Kearns, 2019; Weisburd & Eck, 2004; Zhao, 1996). Creating a cohesive vision of professionalism that promotes thriving community policing and embraces collaborative problem-solving is one of the profession's most significant difficulties. Mending broken connections between the police and communities can be accomplished with community policing. The current movement for police reform stems from a "we against them" mentality. Information on police policies and procedures that encourages educated input and raises knowledge of available policing tools can help bridge this gap between the police and the public.

Law Enforcement-Related Stress

According to Challacombe et al., (2019), over 750,000 law enforcement officers are in the United States. Law enforcement is a stressful career. The profession brings evolving tasks that are challenging. Those who serve in this capacity understand the uniqueness the job brings to the table. The balancing act of police work, family, and other factors can be stressful enough. Many stress factors can produce a negative image of officers if not handled professionally and ethically.

Negative Image

Positive public impressions of police are a reliable predictor of compliance and voluntary collaboration with the police, according to a large body of research (Choi, 2021; Mazerolle et al., 2013; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Tyler & Huo, 2002). However, the media can have a negative effect on policing, causing the public to look at law enforcement from

a negative aspect. For instance, this negative perception of the police from examples such as Ferguson and George Floyd's murder can detrimentally impact police officers and the communities they serve.

Although the perception of policing is primarily positive, there is always the possibility of bringing a negative portrayal of the police. Police executives should implement and encourage educating their communities and leaders by getting them involved in the challenges facing policing and building a more positive relationship.

COVID-19

The pandemic of the Novel coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) was undoubtedly a stress factor among law enforcement officers as close contact between law enforcement officials and the general population increases the danger of exposure. Changes in everyday practices such as roll call, training, court attendance, and close personal contacts were restricted and modified. Social distance, Zoom meetings, online training, and mask-wearing were the new norm. Many became victims of this deadly disease, even in the law enforcement community. The fear of COVID-19 was on everyone's mind. Stress-related issues due to the pandemic led to a perceived high divorce potential among spouses (Collazo, 2021). These stressors were in the likes of physical, emotional, or psychological. COVID-19 proved to be a worthy opponent for law enforcement.

Suicide

It is argued by many that policing is a stressful occupation, and many officers have committed suicide as a result. A study by Dixon (2021) claimed that one research found that the suicide rate among law enforcement personnel is twice as high as the rate of officers who die in the line of duty, three times as high, and even eight times as high. Another study revealed that

the police organization is another significant source of stress because of departmental politics, inadequate resources to do the job, lack of support and recognition from management, and autocratic leadership styles (Loo, 2003). Police leadership must foster a departmental mindset of assistance-seeking from the top down. Suicide interventions should be discussed among all agencies to prevent the next officer from taking their life. Chae and Boyle (2021) revealed that at least five key themes emerged as content domains connected with police suicide: organizational stress, critical incident trauma, shift work and irregular work hours, relationship issues, and alcohol misuse. Suicide among police officers is a chronic problem that develops over time due to stress factors. Those in law enforcement leadership positions should recommend or even mandate officers dealing with high-stress levels to seek support groups or professional counseling to better cope with this detrimental situation facing law enforcement today.

Police Misconduct

The President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing recommended that procedural justice ideas be used in police organizations to increase internal credibility (Fridell et al., 2021). Police unions have occasionally been effective in preventing officers from being disciplined for misconduct. Many of these collective bargaining unions make it difficult for officers to be disciplined due to certain rights. For example, Florida is a state that recognizes the right to work (Article One § 6 Florida Constitution, 2022). This means one can work in a unionized workplace without being a union member. Second, there is less room for collective bargaining to achieve the same results in Florida due to the Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights, a statute incorporating several procedural safeguards for officer's subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Third, compared to states without this sanction, the impact of collective bargaining for law enforcement officers in Florida is also constrained by a state-level Florida Department of

Law Enforcement (FDLE) disciplinary system (FDLE, 2022). The FDLE has the authority to "decertify" personnel, so any other law enforcement agency in the state cannot employ them. Individual agencies can only discharge an officer; this power is difficult to restrict through collective bargaining. There should be no room for police misconduct of any sort. Police misconduct should be handled accordingly by each agency's policies and procedures through a thorough investigation.

Bias and Prejudice

Prejudice-motivated crime is described as crimes motivated by bias, prejudice, or hatred against members of specific groups, communities, or people (Miles-Johnson et al., 2018). Racial disparities have been debated for many years and have been well documented. Some have contended that racial discrepancies in policing stem from pervasive racial prejudice. Stelter et al., (2022) researched racial disparities in police traffic stops in 1,413 U.S. counties and county-level measures of racial bias from more than two million online respondents. The study revealed that black drivers were stopped disproportionately in most counties nationwide. Further, their preliminary analysis showed that black motorists were stopped 2.75 percent more frequently than white motorists in one county. Today, many agencies provide racial profiling and human diversity training to help improve relationships with community members and lessen the fear of being targeted because of indifferences.

George Floyd

While there has always been a strong focus on policing in the U.S., it has intensified in the last decade due to the killings of African Americans such as Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina, Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, and George Floyd in Minneapolis (Pryce & Gainey, 2022). George Floyd entered a

convenience store in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020. The store clerk contacted the police on suspicions that Floyd was attempting to use a counterfeit bill. Officers responded and subsequently arrested Floyd. Americans and the rest of the world saw now-former officer Derek Chauvin kneel on Floyd's neck as officers Thomas Lane and J. Alexander Kueng restrained his body, as captured on eyewitness video and subsequently by police body camera film. Floyd said that he could not breathe and died shortly after that.

After the police killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor in March 2020, when the worldwide coronavirus pandemic and related lockdowns began, Floyd's murder was the third of such high-profile fatalities. What ensued because of George Floyd's murder was rioting and the national instability that followed. The murder of George Floyd and the ensuing civil unrest across the nation have contributed to the strain already felt by law enforcement. Consequently, the institution of policing was again embroiled in reform demands (Mourtgos et al., 2022). As a result, the police received hostile rhetoric from the public. Scholars believe that more than 20 million people participated in rallies against this homicide and other police misconduct in the U.S., making these the most significant social demonstrations in American history (Freilich & Chermak, 2022). Numerous police officers in the U.S. resigned due to the lack of support from the general people, including some politicians. For example, over 100 officers left the Minneapolis Police Department; Portland and San Francisco had staggering records of resignation; the Chicago Police Department experienced a 15 percent increase in retirements in 2022 compared to 2019 (Mourtgos et al., 2022). The worst turnovers in the post-Floyd era are that of the NYPD and the Seattle Police Department. The monthly loss of NYPD officers was roughly double that of 2019, resulting in the department's lowest headcount in a decade (Mourtgos et al., 2022). The reports are highly alarming when the nation's largest police agency

faces backlash from the public and its elected politicians. According to reports, the Seattle Police Department was on track to lose about 200 officers by the end of 2020 in what was described as a "mass exodus," leaving the agency with the fewest personnel since 1990 (Mourtgos et al., 2020, p. 10). The year 2020 was not a good year for police agencies. The police have everyday obstacles in maintaining order. Yet, a lack of public support and political backlash contribute to high tensions among officers, causing many to abandon the agency and, in many cases, the police profession.

In reaction to George Floyd's murder, numerous political activists and stakeholders called for reallocating local police budgets and, in some cities, a recommendation to abolish the police. A call for demilitarizing the police was also a contentious issue. The idea received support from people who wanted to emphasize community-oriented police, boost the representation of women and other diverse officers, and favor laws that encourage a "guardian" mindset and appearance over overt military gear (Koslicki, 2021). Diversification has also been a topic of discussion among communities. Since the President's Commission of Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, there has been a push for police departments to increase their racial and ethnic diversity (Nowacki et al., 2021). The inspiration behind this concept is to help alleviate racial tension in specific communities.

Events and Aftermath

The movement of protesters and rioters took to the streets demanding justice under the banner of BLM. The murder of George Floyd by former officer Derek Chauvin generated peaceful protests in some places and violence in others. The U.S. was not exclusive in the demonstrations, as many European nations joined the protest that became visible in American living rooms. Some European countries were Denmark, the United Nations, and Germany

(Christian et al., 2022). While some protests consisted of marching in major metropolitan cities, others were not so peaceful. Many businesses were ransacked, and some were scorched as violence escalated in Minneapolis and across America. Many were influenced and participated in protests, making their voices heard against police brutality.

The movement of protesters and rioting prompted numerous police agencies nationwide to deploy all available personnel. Many law enforcement officers were hurt, and some suffered severe injuries from thrown objects. Police geared up in riot gear, not knowing what to expect next. In Minneapolis, the situation deteriorated so rapidly that the entire police department had to be evacuated as violent looters overran the building. The problem was so problematic that the State of Minnesota requested reinforcement. Minnesota went into a state of emergency, and the National Guard had to come out and assist with the out-of-control situation.

Use of Force

The troubling actions taken by former Minneapolis police officer Derrick Chauvin captured worldwide attention when he used excessive force on George Floyd. The current training on police use of force adheres to the standards established by federal and Supreme Court decisions (Moravits, 2022). The objective of using force is to take control over a subject and halt their hostility. For the use of force to be effective, it must be court-defendable, as stated in *Tennessee v. Garner* White, B. R. & Supreme Court of the United States. (1984). Every police department has a standard operating procedure manual that specifies when and how to use force if necessary. When determining the appropriate use of force level, an officer must consider the entire situation. However, former Minneapolis police officer Derrick Chauvin's use of excessive and inappropriate force resulted in the death of George Floyd. Post Floyd-Era, many police departments have had to revisit their policies and procedures on the "Use of Force." Chauvin's

wrong and fatal actions have cautioned police agencies to be extra careful in bringing on board new police candidates.

Recruitment

Police recruitment and retention is a constant challenge for police agencies. Following significant public protests due to George Floyd's murder in the summer of 2020, some of the largest police agencies in the U.S. reported an increase in officer resignations (Mourtgos et al., 2022). As a result, police officers have left in droves because they have felt villainized by their communities, elected officials, the media, and, in some cases, their police executives. Some activists and organizations have demanded that the police be defunded (Cobbina-Dungy et al., 2022). Not only do many law enforcement organizations struggle to find and hire suitable applicants, but they also struggle to retain them. The disqualifying factors of the hiring process and recommendations by many to defund the police and, in some instances, abolish the police have undoubtedly placed an arduous task on police agencies to retain their officers. In addition, other issues have plagued police agencies around the country, such as poor pay, an inability to compete with the private sector, and an increase in the number of officers quitting their jobs early to seek other vocations (Copeland et al., 2022; Hilal & Litsey, 2020). One of the factors plaguing police agencies has been the pandemic and its impact on the U.S. economy. A surge in global hunger, a significant increase in evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness, as well as detrimental effects on the availability of affordable housing, is due to unemployment (Bohoslavsky, 2020).

Low pay is one of the major causes of why turnovers are so high, having officers seek employment elsewhere. While average to low income has contributed to turnover, officers turn to their local unions for bargaining support in meeting their salary demands for better payment.

Analyzing data from a national sample of more than 2,000 law enforcement agencies, researchers discovered that agencies with higher compensation had a lower likelihood of voluntary and involuntary departure (Mourtgos et al., 2022).

Recruiting qualified police candidates can be challenging for any police department. Every agency wants to have the most qualified candidate to represent their agency. However, police agencies still need help with hiring candidates. For instance, following the death of George Floyd, there has been a growing movement in the U.S. to defund the police, and agencies have experienced high turnover rates and dwindling applicant pools (Skaggs et al., 2022). Reasons such as this can deter someone from applying to become a police officer. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on agencies hiring candidates. As of October 2020, the pandemic has significantly affected the number of jobs and people's work (Koch et al., 2021). Due to the number of deaths caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, several agencies were compelled to suspend hiring. Social distancing became the new norm, and random testing with vaccine mandates had an enormously negative impact. Fatigue among healthcare professionals and emergency personnel began to take a toll on the high demand for caring for others who became victims of COVID-19. A study conducted in May of 2021 by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health revealed that the prevalence of burnout ranged from 49.3 percent to 58 percent among emergency personnel, specifically healthcare professionals (Gualano et al., 2021).

There are several requirements that candidates must complete to be eligible for the law enforcement vocation. For example, in the State of Florida, to be eligible to apply for the position of a police officer, there are minimum qualifications that must be met, such as a high school diploma or the General Educational Development (GED), possession of a valid driver's

license, and a minimum age of nineteen (Officer's Minimum Qualifications for Employment or Appointment, Fla. Stat. § 943.13, 2021). If the minimum qualifications are met, then the examination process follows.

Many, if not most, law enforcement agencies use recruitment and hiring policies to guide the selection process of new personnel. This policy can be found within the agency policy manual or is part of a more significant human resources policy for the state, county, or city that oversees hiring for the organization (Reynolds, 2017). Some of the most challenging obstacles during the hiring process are the psychological evaluation, physical agility, lie detector, drug testing, and background investigation, as these steps predominantly determine most of the passing or failing of the recruitment process. This process entails a pre-history questionnaire, an online application (usually referred to as a personal history questionnaire), a resume, an interview process, fingerprints, physical agility, polygraph (in some police agencies), drug test, psychological evaluation, medical check-up, background investigation, interview with the police chief, and a final offer of employment by the Department of Human Resources.

Background of Law Enforcement Recruitment

Conducting backgrounds on potential candidates can be a long process. Some backgrounds can take months to complete. Investigators review the candidate's resume and job application and ensure all information aligns correctly. Some background investigation aspects include prior employment, military records, criminal records, credit history, and references. Any omission or misinformation can be grounds for terminating the process. A law enforcement agency may apply additional standards, including physical measures that must be met (Hilal, Densley, & Jones, 2017). Law enforcement agencies constantly seek the best candidate to

represent their police department. Therefore, selecting the most qualified candidate cannot be understated.

Law Enforcement Recruitment Crisis

Historically, policing has been a highly sought-after career because of its stable employment, civil service benefits, and middle-class salary; however, following the murder of George Floyd, there has been a movement to defund the police. Much of the negative publicity from the media has caused many to reconsider entering the law enforcement field. It is difficult to pinpoint why officers leave their agency, perhaps because many variables are involved. Studies indicate that poor leadership, income and benefits, lack of growth opportunities, un-met work objectives, inadequate feedback, insufficient recognition, and inadequate training and equipment contribute to officer turnover (Oliver, 2014; Orrick, 2008; Taylor et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2010). Law enforcement is a long-term job, yet not everyone who enters the profession stays until retirement.

Dangerous Profession

Law enforcement careers can be dangerous. From January 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021, 59 police officers were killed while on duty, according to records submitted to the FBI. The number of police officers slain in 2021 is up 51 percent from last year (FBI, 2021). The pace of officers being killed in the line of duty is unprecedented. Officer deaths result from shooting fatalities and other factors such as vehicle crashes, medical conditions, etc. The law enforcement profession is not a regular nine-to-five job. It is a profession that works around the clock. In 2020, according to FBI-reported statistics, 93 law enforcement personnel were killed during their duties. Forty-six officers died due to criminal conduct, while 47 died in accidents (FBI, 2021).

The law enforcement profession is not for everyone, and it takes a special calling to become part of the men and women who put their lives on the line to make communities safe.

Generational Differences

Generating differences in the law enforcement profession can affect recruitment and retention. The generational cohort theory published by Inglehart in 1977, asserts that there are four American workforces: (a) Traditionalists (born 1928-1946); (b) Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964); (c) Generation X (born 1965-1979); and (d) Millennials (born 1980-2000). In having different generations working for a police agency, diversity is seen and recognized by the public who is being served (Hilal et al., 2017). There are, of course, challenges that come with working with a different generation. Although there are few, if at all, traditionalists working in law enforcement today, the brief focus will be on the later generations, which consist of baby boomers, millennials, and Generation Z.

Traditionalists

The term "Traditionalist" refers to those members of a generation who were born before the conclusion of World War II (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). This generation's values are collective over individual well-being. It is rare to find police officers of this generation involved in 21st-century police work. The traditionalist generation endured much poverty, such as the Great Depression and World War II. This generation placed much faith in institutions, rarely questioned authority, and was highly respectful towards others.

Baby Boomers

Many baby boomer police officers have retired since the turn of the 20th Century, and many more will be retiring. This is quite concerning for police executives because the boomer

generation of officers is veteran officers. This generation of officers is the one that is supposed to train newcomers such as Generation X and Millennials. Boomers are sometimes portrayed in the media as a greedy, egotistical age that has benefited from the current welfare state's generosity but appear determined to deny those benefits to their offspring and grandkids (Martin & Roberts, 2021). Despite generational differences, the baby boomers will now be responsible for training the next generation of police officers.

Generation X

Members of Generation X police officers are concerned with striking a work-life balance to have sufficient time to spend with their families (Mahmoud et al., 2021). As baby boomers leave employment, members of Generation X, who are the parents of many members of Millennials (Generation Z), are rising to senior positions. Generation X will have to take the next generation of Millennials and train them to become the next generation of police officers. The generational baton continues to be handed off to the next generation to protect and serve their communities.

Millennials

Millennials are socially conscious, have a propensity for asking questions, enjoy getting feedback, and are self-assured, team-oriented, and loyal (Martinez-Buelvas et al., 2021). Technology and the improvements in entertainment, education, and communication that came with modernity are second nature to today's generation of young adults. Similarly to baby boomers, millennials have been vilified as a "snowflake" generation that refuses to grow up and take on adult responsibilities since they have felt the terrible impacts of late capitalism in the form of job instability, school debt, and housing affordability (Martin & Roberts, 2021). The

millennials of today will be tomorrow's police officers. The older generation has trained today's millennials working in law enforcement. It is a baton that continues to be passed down for generations.

Hiring Process Challenges

According to some Florida regulations, some requirements must be met before becoming a police officer (Fla. Stat. § 943.13, 2021). The hiring process can be quite challenging for the police candidate. During the screening process, a candidate can become disqualified or deemed unsuitable. There are a series of steps that must be completed to determine suitability.

Benefits

There are various reasons why someone would want to become a police officer. Benefits can be one of the reasons the profession can become attractive to potential candidates. According to an empirical study, factors like money, job stability, service, authority, and status may motivate a person's decision to work for a police organization (Elntib & Milincic, 2020). In addition to serving and protecting the community they serve, becoming a police officer offers more advantages than one may imagine. Salaries vary on several factors. Some states, counties, and cities provide better-paying packages than others.

Written Examination

Written examinations are a standard procedure for many hiring police agencies. For example, in Florida, agencies do not require written examinations as part of the hiring process. Instead, agencies require a high school diploma or general educational development (Officer's Minimum Qualifications for Employment or Appointment, Fla. Stat. § 943.13, 2021). Some agencies now require an associate's or bachelor's degree aside from a high school diploma to

obtain the most qualified. Recent research suggested that intellectual ability is the best indicator of academic performance among police students (Koropanovski et al., 2022). Numerous organizations prioritize the hiring of individuals with college degrees. A college degree is beneficial in police work because there is a significant amount of report writing that comes with the profession. For instance, a study found that law enforcement agencies requiring college education arrested black persons at a rate just over one and a half times higher than agencies that did not require a college education (Johnson et al., 2022).

A college degree in today's culture can benefit future police candidates. However, according to Huey et al. (2018), minimal empirical evidence supports the notion that a degree influences recruitment outcomes. Nonetheless, an educated police recruit is always desirable. A study in Canada found that while a degree in criminology or criminal justice may provide applicants with an initial advantage, benefits are frequently lost as soon as applicants start their training or work in the sector (Huey et al., 2018). Perhaps this study is worth analyzing further in helping to understand and improve police recruitment in America.

Polygraph

A polygraph test is frequently required in the hiring process in law enforcement. The polygraph test is to determine truthfulness. This phase of the hiring process comes down to a pass-or-fail criterion. The polygraph pre-employment screening can help agencies hire suitable candidates. Some agencies are advocates of using polygraph screening, while others are not. A polygraph is a group of equipment that linearly graphs blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, and perspiration (White, 2020). The use of this device in determining truthfulness has many skeptical about its validity.

While the polygraph has proven to be a successful investigative tool for law enforcement, it could be better. While it aims to measure physiological changes produced by sympathetic nervous system activity, there is currently no way to independently check the truth or falsity with absolute assurance (White, 2020). However, although many police agencies use the polygraph tool during the hiring process, not all agencies use it as a screening procedure. One of the biggest disqualifiers during recruitment is using illegal drugs, such as marijuana (Bottema & Telep, 2021). The polygraph test findings are susceptible to purposeful or accidental manipulation. Errors, particularly a predisposition toward false positive determinations, can negatively affect the police department and the applicant. Police departments should not base an adverse hiring decision solely on a pre-employment polygraph exam.

Psychological Evaluation

The psychological examination is a crucial part of the hiring process. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 is one of the most popular instruments for applicant selection (Loya et al., 2022). For example, it is used on military personnel in making psychological evaluations. Recent Veterans Affairs surveys used it more often than any other personality inventory during neuropsychological exams. It is one of the most widely used symptom validity tests (Ingram et al., 2019). Used by many police agencies, police candidates either pass or fail this process.

A survey of police psychologists asked where the most problematic issues were in hiring police candidates. Nearly half of the psychologists said that the main concerns discovered during an applicant's pre-employment psychological assessments were background-related problems, such as substance use, impulsivity, and antisocial behavior (Inwald & Thompson, 2021). When determining whether the police candidate should be recommended to undertake the obligations

and responsibilities of becoming the next police officer, the burden of responsibility falls on the shoulders of the psychologist. When questioned about the underlying causes of the perceived drop in the police/public safety candidate pool, 42 percent of polled psychologists attributed the decline to changes in culture, politics, and the media (Inwald & Thompson, 2021). Psychologists and police executives should work together to determine better ways of improving the selection process.

Despite the public's demand to ensure police candidates are mentally fit, some argue that pre-employment psychological screenings may not function as intended. Although emergency services frequently use this kind of pre-employment screening, its usefulness has been questioned (Marshall et al., 2020). For example, a psychological screening cannot predict an officer's actions when confronted with a situation. Measurements include antisocial conduct, violence, impulsivity, the drive to dominate others, and overall views toward law enforcement. Still, their ability to predict future behavior is seriously questioned (Plass, 2021). Nonetheless, if the applicant fails to pass the psychological evaluation, then the agency will no longer proceed with the applicant.

Physical Agility

Many police agencies require a pre-employment physical agility test as part of the hiring process. These physical agility tests ensure that officers are ready and fit. Police officers must be prepared to engage in a physical confrontation if the situation deems it necessary. Police candidates must complete a 220-yard run, obstacle course, dummy drag, revolver trigger pull, and an entrance/exit from a vehicle (MDC, 2022). To determine a potential candidate's level of physical fitness in Miami-Dade County, they must perform a physical agility test at the Miami-Dade College Assessment Center. This part of the process is determined by a pass or fail grade.

According to a study by the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, extensive research assessed the physical fitness level of participating police officers and discovered that low cardiorespiratory fitness might impair the effectiveness of their service, endangering the officers' lives (Marins et al., 2019). The purpose of this study was to stress the importance of police officers in maintaining an above-average physical fitness level in their duties. The study concluded that cardiorespiratory fitness is one of the most important factors because it contributes to performing their duties, such as foot pursuits, physical confrontation with offenders, and removal of victims in vehicle crashes (Marins et al., 2019).

Drug Testing

In the United States, drug addiction and abuse have reached epidemic proportions, and marijuana is the most often used and abused illegal narcotic. With the legalization of medical marijuana, many hiring agencies could loosen their strict policies and procedures. In the U.S., 36 states and four territories have legalized cannabis for medical and recreational use (Perlman et al., 2021). Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I substance according to the Federal Controlled Substances Act and is prohibited by US federal law. Patients, medical students, doctors, and hospitals face difficulties due to the discord between state and federal laws. This communication provides a breakdown of the primary policies affecting the use of Cannabis sativa in the U.S. and the numerous state and federal legislation. It identifies potential future consequences for healthcare institutions.

In a recent study, the viewpoints of Arizona's top law enforcement officials and university students taking criminology courses at Arizona State University were collected regarding drug use by prospective police officers (Bottema & Telep, 2021). The results revealed that while the chief of police and students have different perspectives on several issues, some

overlap could serve as the impetus for a future revision to existing drug standards and disqualifiers about marijuana and prescription medications (Bottema & Telep, 2021). Eventually, police agencies must look closely at the policy and guidelines concerning certain categorized “illegal drugs” to see if modifications are required.

Background Investigation

Conducting an applicant’s job application is essential because it helps agencies with a historical background determine whether the applicant would be a good fit. Nearly every agency has a policy mandating checking one's driving record, criminal history, or other background information (Donohue, 2021). This part of the hiring process can help screen out unfavorable candidates. Numerous background investigators require applicants to submit copies of their birth certificate, high school diploma or GED, college transcripts, all marriage certificates, all divorce documents, DD-214, adoption or legal name change, driver's license, social security card, naturalization papers, debts, and records of all traffic accidents and citations. If any of these required documents are not provided, there is a high probability that the applicant will not proceed in the hiring process.

According to Florida State Statute 943.13 (2021), these credentials are required as evidence that the candidate satisfies the basic requirements for the position of a police officer. In addition, some Miami-Dade County police agencies would like for applicants to provide any additional documents, such as training certificates, that would help determine the applicant’s qualifications in a specific law enforcement area, such as SWAT, Field Training Officer, or other specialties that may aid their chances in being hired.

Oral Interview

Following the successful conclusion of the review of the candidate's application, the agency will contact the applicant to arrange a time for the oral board interview. A candidate risks being rejected if they do not appear for the interview. Applicants would, for instance, participate in semi-structured face-to-face interviews that are more in-depth and open-ended than traditionally structured interviews. Such interviews could serve two purposes—searching for red flags (e.g., signs of prejudice, bias, or dishonesty) and screening-in characteristics of the participant (Terpstra et al., 2022). Agencies want to make sure they select the best-qualified applicant for the job. Moreover, “The oral interview should be utilized to establish whether the candidate possesses the criteria established for the law enforcement officer's career. It additionally evaluates the candidate's verbal communication skills (Oliver, 2014, p. 78). An oral interview is a form of test, and it must meet the requirements for the validity of the applicant(s) to move forward in the hiring process.

Leadership

Leaders affect the direction and personnel of an organization through their decision-making skills. “Leadership is about one individual influencing others to accomplish common goals” (Northouse, 2019, p. 6). There are various leadership practices utilized in law enforcement; these include transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019), authentic leadership (Northouse, 2019), ethical leadership (Hoch et al., 2018), and servant leadership (Northouse, 2019), to name some. When recruits graduate from the police academy, they report to duty and are assigned a field training officer (FTO). Some agencies would provide more than one FTO through numerous training phases, so the new probationary police officer (PPO) would get a

taste of different leadership styles. The exposure would be of a sound learning basis, and the leadership styles are mainly reflected and seen at the first-line supervisors' level and above.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is one of law enforcement's most common leadership styles. The emergence of this leadership style took place in 1978 by Political Sociologist James MacGregor Burns (Northouse, 2019, p. 164). Scholars define transformational leadership in various ways. According to Northouse (2019), Burns described "transformational" leadership as the process through which a person engages with others and builds a link that boosts motivation and morale in both the leader and the followers.

This relationship between leader and follower can significantly impact the PPO's first probationary learning period. This leadership style significantly affects a PPO because it provides self-confidence over specific job assignments and the power to make decisions once properly trained (Khan et al., 2020). Transformational leadership continues to be researched by scholars as to the effectiveness it brings to the workforce. Burns (2003) observed that shared values defined by transformative leaders reflect the highest and most stable ideals of their societies. There is also another style of leadership that presents itself with the high moral character described as the authentic leader.

Authentic Leadership

According to Hoch et al. (2018), authentic leaders are described as high on moral character and those who are "deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and

strengths” (p.505). This positive leadership is a style in which the PPO can take root and develop further from it.

Ethical Leadership

The “ethical” leader is seen as the exhibition of normatively proper behavior through personal acts and interpersonal interactions, as well as the promotion of such behavior among followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Hoch et al., 2018). The PPO can learn much through observing this leadership style by absorbing the positive aspects of integrity, fairness, and the willingness to think responsibly.

Servant Leadership

In 21st-century policing, servant leadership is a paradigm that is rarely discussed. Robert Greenleaf founded this leadership style in the 1970s (Northouse, 2019). This leadership style places the needs of followers and stakeholders first and is considered a humble leader. Perhaps this is what is missing in today’s 21st-century policing. The philosophical thinking in servant leadership is that long-term organizational objectives can be attained by fostering followers' growth and well-being (Hoch et al., 2018). The fundamental basics of learning hands-on police work are taught by the FTO and the leadership they provide to their PPO. Whatever leadership style the PPO is willing to follow or reject, what is most important is the values that are in place behind that leadership. All leadership values should incorporate modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). To effectively provide proper values to a PPO, the FTO must consistently display ethical leadership throughout FTO training.

Influential Leaders

Effective leadership must demonstrate to PPOs how to act as role models. In doing this, either the FTO or first-line supervisors must be leaders of examples in finding their values to install values to their PPOs. Influential leaders must inspire a vision by sharing it with the PPO. In other words, Kouzes & Posner (2017) stated, “You can’t command commitment; you have to inspire it” (p.15). Following recruit graduation, the most important person(s) in a PPO's law enforcement career is their FTO. Therefore, the assigned FTOs must have the values and commitment to inspire their PPOs. “Leaders need to search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 16). Influential leaders are not idlers but venture out and take risks in creating practical ideas for their agency. Exemplary leaders utilize life as a laboratory to conduct as many experiments as feasible (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Due to the expectations and responsibilities of the leadership role, exemplary leadership is a challenging standard to meet.

Learning from mistakes and not repeating them can help make a better police officer. Enabling others to act is a critical component of exemplary leadership. Influential leaders should emphasize others, be role models for their PPOs, and build trust. Leaders should be encouragers of the heart. An essential aspect of the working relationship between the FTO and PPO is that the PPO wants their FTO to believe in their abilities to perform their duties effectively; therefore, the FTO should be an encourager to the PPO. “Encouraging the heart might very well be the hardest job of any leader because it requires the most honest and sincerity” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 20). The five leadership practices are an operating system for leaders to pass on to their new PPOs. Perhaps, installing these fundamental practical values from leadership to officers will lessen the possibilities for police turnover as currently seen today.

Other Factors

Mental and physical exhaustion is another contributing cause to why police officers leave their careers. A study conducted on a sample of retired police officers in Ontario, Canada, revealed that police politics is another cited reason. While being interviewed, one retiree from the Ontario Provincial Police made it clear that he had no hard feelings toward the police department but was glad to leave because he had had enough of office politics (Parnaby & Weston, 2020). The post-Floyd era is challenging, and police executives know the constant challenges.

The PERF surveyed 411 small (33%), midsize (40%), and large (27%) law enforcement agencies in the United States to understand the extent of the profession's recruitment and retention issues (PERF, 2019). The research findings concluded that fewer people are applying to work for police agencies, more officers are leaving their positions before retirement, and more officers are getting older, which does not make matters any better. There are other reasons why many do not enter the law enforcement profession. In recent decades, police have faced negative publicity from unfortunate or disappointing circumstances such as police brutality or other misconduct. In making matters worse, negative media coverage has also been a contributing cause to the low level of hiring. Some additional reasons are the following:

- Low pay (Luo et al., 2019).
- Personal lawsuits (Hancock, 2021).
- The dangers of police work (Mourtgos et al., 2022).
- Sleep deprivation (Ma et al., 2019-2018).
- Political shifts (Mourtgos et al., 2022).
- Emotional stress on self or family (Papazolou et al., 2020).

- Civil disorder/unrest (Mourtgos et al., 2022).
- Stress/burnout factor (Mourtgos et al., 2022).

The procedural justice theory contends that how law enforcement officials interact with the public is a significant factor in determining the likelihood of future citizen cooperation (Aiello, 2021). Therefore, police administrators must be selective when hiring the right recruit. The hiring of a police officer(s) is a representation of the agency itself. Public interaction with the police must be amicable, respectful, and friendly. For instance, most recently, England and Wales have taken a more professional approach to police training and 12 qualifications. For example, since recruit training is changing rapidly, the Police Education Qualifications Framework wants all police recruits to obtain a degree-based qualification to become police officers.

According to Belur et al. (2020), police officers must be able to challenge conventional thinking, think critically, reflect and deliberate effectively, exercise judgment, contribute independently to the growing corpus of evidence-based work, and make independent decisions to be successful. The police officer(s) wear many hats as they encounter what is to be and not be expected and act upon the situation.

Retention

Retention has been a problem for police agencies. High levels of voluntary turnover can be detrimental to an organization's effectiveness, hurt organizational performance, and incur substantial expenditures associated with recruiting and training replacement employees (Charman & Bennett, 2022). Law enforcement agencies put much time, resources, and effort into screening and hiring police candidates. In turn, they should strive to have a method in trying to retain them.

Concerns of Law Enforcement Turnover

The most recent police-related fatality did not happen in 2020 with George Floyd. For example, on July 17, 2014, Eric Garner, an unarmed black man, was put in a chokehold in the process of being arrested by a New York City Police Officer for selling cigarettes in the streets of New York City. During the struggle with the officer, Eric Garner was pronounced dead on the scene due to the chokehold (Marier & Fridell, 2020). Due to the tragic event, protests rang out in New York City and other cities nationwide. Michael Brown, a Black 18-year-old, was shot and killed by white police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014 (Marier & Fridell, 2020). As a result, riots ensued in Ferguson as emotions ran high. The cost of property damage was in the millions of dollars. While calls for defunding the police were made generally in certain areas, budget cuts and reforms were made for several police agencies.

Tamir Rice, a black 12-year-old playing with a toy pistol in a public park on November 22, 2014, was shot by police after someone in the park phoned the authorities (Marier & Fridell, 2020). Tamir Rice passed away the following day, and anger and hostility ensued in Cleveland, Ohio. Laquan McDonald, 17, was shot and killed by Chicago police on October 21, 2014, after they responded to allegations of him breaking into and vandalizing cars on Chicago's Southwest Side (Marier & Fridell, 2020). Events like these tend to receive strong emotional reactions from the public, creating enormous tension and a lack of trust in the police. These incidents involving police confrontations with black individuals have caused widespread suspicion of police in black communities across the country. It has also been demoralizing for police agencies, knowing that reparation between the police and the community is critical.

A study conducted by Linos et al., (2017) revealed that three out of every four police officers in the United States are white, making police forces over 30 percent whiter than the

populations they serve. Recruiting strategies should be revisited to improve ethnic representation among communities. Specifically, police agencies need to do more to distribute recruitment materials or target areas that could draw a more significant percentage of African American and Hispanic applicants (Nowacki et al., 2021). Police agencies should have diversity across America, and many have.

Effects of turnover

The effects of police turnover can be detrimental to any police department. One of the effects would be the rise in crime. If police agencies are understaffed, serving the community as needed would be easier. Response times would be slow as they would have to be prioritized. An employee's decision to terminate the employment relationship incurs high costs, both in terms of direct costs (e.g., loss of high performers, recruitment and selection, training, and development) and (perhaps more importantly) indirect costs such as increased workload for those still employed (Saleem et al., 2021). The effects of police turnover hurt the hiring agencies and the community they serve.

“Ferguson Effect” and Under-Policing

The Ferguson Effect posits that negative news surrounding law enforcement decreases officers' willingness to do their daily jobs. Multiple high-profile incidents involving African Americans killed by police garnered nonstop coverage. In the first case, an unarmed African American named Eric Garner died in a chokehold by NYPD officers on Staten Island. The event was captured on cell phone footage that swiftly spread over the internet and included Garner repeatedly saying, "I can't breathe." However, the event catalyzed the August 2014 murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The Ferguson incident sparked weeks of social unrest and

reignited a long-running debate in the U.S. over police partnerships with African American neighborhoods and excessive use of force. Furthermore, Ferguson demonstrated that the Garner case was not a unique incident, and both tragedies remained in the headlines for months, inciting protests throughout the country and international media coverage (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Several occurrences involving African American deaths in police custody have continued since. Stories behind each incident involving the deaths of unarmed African Americans have unquestionably sparked protests and riots across the nation, adding much stress on law enforcement. Officers have felt that their communities and politicians have not supported them enough, making many officers question whether the job is worth having anymore.

Law Enforcement Retention Strategies

In today's police climate, numerous officers wonder if it is worthwhile to remain in law enforcement due to ongoing stress factors and other issues. This is not limited to American Law Enforcement but in other countries. Discontent in a workplace will force an employee to seek employment elsewhere. The discontentment officers may feel towards their department will undoubtedly bring less productivity and a greater desire to leave their current place of work. For example, in a study conducted in England and Wales, "officers who had left the organization felt an overriding sense of organizational 'injustice,' to such an extent that the delicate balance between employer and employee had been breached. It was also this sense of 'injustice' that proved to be the 'final straw' for those leaving the police service, with almost half of the respondents referring to features relating to injustice, such as a lack of autonomy and a lack of 'voice' is the 'decisive moment' which led to their resignation" (Charman & Bennett, 2022, p. 173). Police executives must implement retention strategies to keep officers from leaving and make the department a revolving door. The cost of hiring, purchasing uniforms and equipment,

and training can cost the police department in the thousands. Enhancing compensation and benefits and improving organizational leadership would be essential in lessening turnovers.

Enhance Compensation/Benefits

Police officers, especially newly hired ones, want to see a department that can afford them the opportunity to keep them content. The new police officer who comes on board a police agency will likely end up going to the least favorable shift, usually midnights. Keeping an officer in a shift they do not like for a prolonged period will probably become a deterrent in wanting to stay with that department because of a lack of opportunity to obtain a preferential shift (e.g., mornings or afternoons). Employees who experience tensions between their professional and personal lives are more likely to consider leaving their current position and look for work elsewhere (Jabeen et al., 2020). Therefore, compensation and benefits could prevent officers from going and seeking employment elsewhere.

The collective bargaining history of Florida has been examined from the perspectives of sheriff deputies and municipal police officers (Doerner & Doerner, 2013). In Miami-Dade County, a grand majority of police agencies are unionized. That means that the police agency's collective bargaining union will represent the officers of their department and make requests on behalf of the officers they represent. For example, pay, police-involved shooting, training, retirement and pension plans, vacation time, and sick time are some benefits a unionized police department will offer their officers. A collective bargaining agreement covers approximately 66% of municipal law enforcement officers (Doerner & Doerner, 2013). One of the primary functions of the CBU is entering into negotiations with police executives on articles and coming to agreements or disagreements on the articles of discussion. Much thought of either staying or

leaving an agency depends highly on the compensation and benefits package the agency is willing to offer.

Improving Organizational/Leadership Effectiveness

Patrol officers are the backbone of their department. These officers are exposed to high strain levels when responding to specific calls. Straining situations such as high-level stress calls (e.g., murder, rape, or shootings) can bring acute and chronic stressors to officers. However, another factor that can bring about unnecessary tension among officers is their organizational leadership. A lack of support, severe workloads, interpersonal problems with coworkers and supervisors, insufficient resources, time demands, and an overly bureaucratic organizational structure that punishes and manages police officers unfairly are due to ineffective executive leadership (Acquadro et al., 2022).

An open-ended survey was conducted at the FBI National Academy identifying negative leadership traits. Five acts of commission, including a focus on self over others, ego/arrogance, closed-mindedness, micromanagement, and capriciousness, and five acts of omission, including poor work ethic, failure to act, ineffective communication, lack of interpersonal skills, and lack of integrity, emerged as recurring themes in the survey responses (Schafer, 2010). It is highly recommended that police agencies send those in command staff positions to command schools such as the FBI National Academy or the Southern Police Institute to gain a better perspective on organizational leadership and the effects of what ineffective leadership can do on police officers. Leadership training should be a priority in understanding and keeping up with the ever-changing culture of new police officers entering the field.

Resignation/Retirement

The impact of resignation or retirement can be detrimental to any police department. “The most basic definition of retirement is a person’s exit from the labor market” (Carney et al., 2021, p. 258). Although it is difficult to predict whether George Floyd’s murder had an enormous impact on resignations or retirements, there has undoubtedly been an increase in turnover predominantly from large municipalities. There is no question that police work is a stressful occupation. Stress alone can throw an officer's health into question and force them to resign or consider early retirement voluntarily. Mental stress at the workplace can have detrimental effects on job performance. Police burnout is associated with suicidal ideation, use and acceptance of violence; increased illness, withdrawal, and job dissatisfaction; increased aggression and suicide; family conflict; substance abuse; and cardiovascular disease (Adams & Mastracci, 2019). Police officers should seek help if any of these symptoms have occurred. Police officers under high-stress levels will not be as effective in serving their community.

Stress-Burnout

Being a police officer is a highly demanding occupation and stressful. Police stress and burnout have received much attention, and many studies have been conducted on either early resignation or retirement. A study was conducted in May 2020 by several Portuguese psychologists to measure burnout or occupational stress among Portuguese police officers. The sample size in this study consisted of below 500 participants, including 24 additional countries, demonstrating interest in the study being investigated (Queiros et al., 2020). The study utilized the PSQ-Op, the Spanish Burnout Inventory, and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale on 2,057 police officers from the National Portuguese Police, a force that polices metropolitan centers (Queiros et al., 2020). The conclusion of this study was both informative and suggested.

The study revealed that burnout had a dramatic increase, thus, in some cases, resulting in tendencies to use excessive force on potential subjects. Queiros et al. (2020) recommended developing a stress management intervention.

Stress and other contributing factors, such as the 2020 George Floyd murder case, initiated a plethora of retirements and resignations across central metropolitan police departments such as the New York Police Department, Seattle Police Department, Chicago Police Department, Minneapolis Police Department, Portland Police Department, and the San Francisco Police Department. Police recruitment and retention continue to be challenging in the 21st century, and policies within each police agency must be examined to rectify the issues. For example, a study conducted by Mourtgos et al., (2022), using 60 months of employment data from a large police department in the western U.S., revealed that although resignations were not significantly altered in the post-Floyd period, voluntary resignations were. The study showed that retirement and involuntary resignations were not “significantly” changed following the murder of Floyd. Nonetheless, there was a spike in voluntary resignation. Mourtgos et al., (2020) further concluded there was a 279 percent increase rate post-Floyd sociopolitical environment, which positively affected officer resignation.

The risk of occupational burnout among police officers has long been acknowledged. Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by tiredness, cynicism, and inefficacy (Griffin & Sun, 2017). This type of hazard has ramifications for the officers and their families. Many of the stress factors that can lead to burnout come from the community that the officer encounters and, at times, more so, from the police administration. General complaints from police officers stem from internal politics between patrol officers and command staff personnel. For example, unfavorable shift assignments can be disheartening for officers who do not do well

working the midnight shift. Only some officers like their work schedule as it relates to days off. Some officers can be stuck with having to work every weekend and have their regular days off during weekdays.

Geographic assignment can become unfavorable as well. It is common knowledge that some community grids have a higher emergency call volume than other areas, thus leading to possibly having the officer(s) develop disgruntled attitudes or behaviors. Burnout also has medical consequences. Employees suffering from burnout tend to experience general tiredness associated with headaches, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, muscle tension, hypertension, sleep abnormalities, and depression (Griffin & Sun, 2017). Police work is dangerous and can take a toll on officers if not appropriately addressed by seeking professional health before burnout worsens.

Summary

In 2020, research was conducted on the difficulties facing police agencies and candidates. For instance, a report from the PERF referred to the current state of affairs as a "workforce crisis." The president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police stated that "the field of law enforcement is broadly experiencing a recruitment and retention crisis" (Bottema & Telep, 2021, p. 1). The "workforce crisis" mentioned by the IACP is unquestionably challenging in 21st-century policing.

This chapter's literature review identified several factors contributing to police recruitment and retention in America. A detailed breakdown of the hiring process was explained to help understand the general hiring process in Miami-Dade County. The recruitment process can be arduous and far-reaching at times. From the time an applicant turns in their application

until the time they are hired, it can take months, and perhaps, in some circumstances, depending on the agency, it can take up to a year to be hired. For police agencies, the difficulties in hiring and retaining police officers, particularly in the wake of widespread protests over George Floyd's death, have not been favorable. As a result, a wave of resignations and retirements followed. Political leaders and police executives should agree on implementing policies for attracting police candidates and developing strategies to lessen the attrition rates for the agency's sake and, more importantly, for the community they serve.

CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED METHODS

Overview

This qualitative study aims to comprehend and develop a solution for the problem impeding Miami-Dade County's recruitment and retention of police officers in the post-Floyd era. In this pragmatic approach, qualitative research methods were applied. The researcher selected three Miami-Dade County law enforcement agencies to participate in this study. The three participating organizations differ in size, geography, and physical composition. The technique consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with ten participants from each of the three police agencies. The first police agency was a county agency with broad county jurisdiction. The second was a city police agency. The third was a state university. Participants are police officers and non-administrative police sergeants.

Despite nationwide difficulties with recruitment and retention, police officials seek to hire the most qualified individual for a police officer position. The three police agencies share the same goal—to serve and protect the residents of their respective jurisdictions. This qualitative research study aimed to explore the lived experiences of police officers working in Miami-Dade County and the challenges surrounding police recruitment and retention post-Floyd era.

The theoretical framework for this study will be centered on the theories of transformational leadership and the hygiene of motivation put forth by Herzberg. All hypotheses are predicated on relationships, making them all related to the recruitment and retention challenges. Because each of these theories is based on the premise of a relationship, the researcher may consider each relevant to the recruitment and retention of police employees.

Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology for this study was appropriate because it provided the researcher with first-hand data from the personal testimonies of active participants in the field. Further, the researcher focused on experienced officers to elaborate on past, current, and future practices on the methodological approaches used in hiring and retaining law enforcement officers.

Research Design

The qualitative method is the most appropriate method for examining real-world problems, such as police recruitment and retention. The qualitative methods approach to the study is best suited to comprehending the real-life experience of the participants. “Qualitative methods aim to gain a deep understanding of a specific organization or small group consisting of one-on-one interviews, group discussions, diary and journal exercises, and in-context observations” (Acharyya & Bhattacharya, 2020, p. 30). The researcher utilized a qualitative methodology to obtain personal accounts of law enforcement experience and perceptions of police recruitment and retention.

The phenomenological research will enable participants to articulate their personal experiences in their own words. This research was more suited to a qualitative approach since it allowed the researcher to collect first-hand knowledge from the experiences of those actively engaged in the criminal justice field of policing. The qualitative methods approach also will enable participants to offer solutions for addressing the challenges of police recruitment and retention.

O’Leary (2008) describes qualitative data analysis as “an approach that aims to create new understandings by exploring and interpreting complex data from sources such as interviews, group discussions, observation, journals, archival documents, etc., without the aid of quantification” (p. 255). In this study, the researcher interviewed experienced law enforcement personnel from all three jurisdictions to gather data on police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County following the Floyd era. The phenomenological design employed face-to-face interviews and qualitative observation. Participants in the face-to-face interviews were members of the three chosen police agencies, police officers, and non-administrative police sergeants.

Research Questions

The departmental locations and demographics may impact long-standing hiring procedures intended to attract, choose, filter out, and hire ethical and transparent officers. It is feasible to gain in-depth knowledge of specific hiring processes and concerns relating to recruiting and retention by examining the recruitment practices of county, city, and state law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County. The research questions modeled for this study are the following:

(RQ1) What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ2) What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ3) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ4) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ5) What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?

(RQ6) What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?

Setting

This study consists of three different police agencies in Miami-Dade County. The first location is a state university within unincorporated Miami-Dade County, with a sworn law enforcement personnel count of sixty-seven. The second location is a private university campus within the City of Coral Gable's jurisdiction with a sworn personnel count of thirty. The last group is a municipal police agency located outside unincorporated Miami-Dade County with a personnel count of twenty. Choosing three areas made it less difficult for participant involvement and offered greater insight into comparing the agencies' differences and how they were impacted. Each agency has its own independent leaders and organizational structure. The reason why the police agencies were chosen was simple.

The three chosen agencies exhibit variations in terms of the target population they serve. For example, the state university agency serves the university community within its designated territory. The private university also shares those same responsibilities within their own jurisdiction. The municipal agency provides services to the residents of the urban area. Every law enforcement officer has taken an oath to faithfully fulfill their duty to serve, protect, and promptly react to requests for assistance within the boundaries of their designated authority.

While all three police agencies possess comparable policing powers, each maintains distinct policies and procedures. Of utmost importance is the opportunity for each participant representing their agency (state university, private university, and municipality) to contribute their unique viewpoint on matters about police recruitment and retention.

The private university assists and safeguards its students, staff members, and those accessing the college campus. The city agency chosen for this study has a smaller workforce than the private and public universities of this study while also demonstrating a diverse composition. The state university's jurisdictional boundaries are notably more limited when contrasted with those of the municipal agency; however, it does boast a bigger police force in comparison to the private institution. The municipal agency serves primarily a community with a high proportion of Hispanic residents. The state university is located within a significant urban area. Unlike other municipalities that protect and serve larger populations, the university is missioned to protect and serve the body of staff, students, and visitors on campus while enforcing state laws and ordinances. The state university implements a community-oriented policing strategy to address issues and actively strives to prevent and investigate illegal activities, maintain the safety of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and resolve concerns impacting students, professors, and staff members. The state university is a relatively larger police agency compared to the municipal police agency and private police agency.

Population

The population in this research will consist of three police agencies in Miami-Dade County. Although the three agencies are in Miami-Dade County, they are geographically distant. The police chiefs from each agency will be asked for permission to conduct the research study. A meeting with each agency participant will be scheduled independently for a face-to-face meeting.

Each participating law enforcement officer will receive an informed consent form acknowledging a commitment to participate in the qualitative study.

All efforts and precautions were made to adhere to the ethical norms required to minimize the risk to human subjects. It was necessary to obtain consent from the Institutional Review Board to carry out the procedures. After gaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, consent forms were provided to all participants. The IRB was crucial in the research as the board bears responsibility for ensuring that the study complies with the university's ethical standards and federal requirements. Before gathering data, each participant was issued a document identifying the researcher and describing consensual participation, the study's objective, design, data-collection methods, confidentiality, and withdrawal processes. All individuals will be asked to agree to be interviewed. The participant's signature indicates their willingness to engage in an interview.

Before interacting with the participants, the researcher made sure to have approval from the police chief or designee of each participating agency. Participants were asked to sign their informed consent voluntarily. Informed consent is a declaration of agreement to participate in this qualitative case study. After collecting every participant's informed consent, it will be placed in a cabinet, in a codebook under pseudonym names, and secured under lock and key for seven years. Risks to participants will be mitigated by deleting their names and agency from the interview transcript.

Participants

This study's sampling includes Miami-Dade County police agencies in Miami-Dade County. The purpose of selecting three Miami-Dade County police agencies is because Miami-Dade County holds the largest population in Florida and is culturally diverse. The pool of participants is 29 law enforcement officers from three police agencies. The sample was recruited through a random and purposive process. The sampling process entailed ten law enforcement participants. The pool of participants was provided with informed consent forms that must be signed and completed before participation. The diverse groups consisted of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. During face-to-face interviews, the following criteria were suitable and successful in eliciting information.

Random and purposive sampling was used to choose participants from each of the three Miami-Dade County police agencies that had previously given their approval for this phenomenological study to be carried out on-site. "Random samples rely on random selection, or the process by which each element in a population has an equal chance of selection, for example, names drawn out a hat, or computer-generated random numbers" (O'Leary, 2008, p. 91). Random sampling was used for Site One participants. For Sites Two and Three, purposive sampling was used, in which the chief of police designee selected participants. According to Palinkas et al., (2015), "purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources" (p.534). The researcher is interested in discovering three departments with more than 20 employed law enforcement officers. The researcher aimed to choose 10 participants from each agency with at least three years of experience for this phenomenological study.

The researcher chose the sample based on the experiences of law enforcement officers from the three agencies in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and each agency chief or designee gave their consent through a letter of site authorization. Ten affirmative responses were obtained from Sites One and Two, and nine from Site Three. Site approval letters were delivered to the three chosen agencies in Miami-Dade County, Florida. If the officers from the participating agencies declined, the police chief was asked to partake or extend the invitation to a different participant with sufficient law enforcement expertise. Pseudonyms were used in place of real names and organizations to protect the anonymity of those who participated in the interviews. Information that must be kept secure will be stored on a USB thumb drive and in a lockable filing cabinet. Participants in this phenomenological study are not expected to obtain any tangible benefits.

Procedures

In qualitative research, having clearly defined procedures is necessary. Several steps are taken when participants of a police agency and stakeholders are involved. The methods that were carried out necessitated the approval of the Institutional Review Board. Site permission from each agency's top leaders will be obtained before interacting with participants. The participants will be required to provide their voluntary informed consent. An acknowledgment of consent to participate in this qualitative phenomenological study is known as informed consent (see Appendix A). A document identifying the researcher, outlining informed consent, the study's goal, its design, data collection techniques, and confidentiality policies, is given to each participant. By signing the informed consent form, the participant confirms they are willing to participate in an interview study. Each participant will be interviewed separately in a private area. The interview will be audio recorded. Each participant will be given a pseudonym to

protect their identity. The obtained data will be stored on a USB thumb drive and in a secure filing cabinet.

The Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher is to conduct ethical research. The researcher's motivating factor in conducting the research is two-fold: First, it was necessary to conduct a study following the murder of George Floyd to determine if the current situation regarding police recruitment and retention had any effects in Miami-Dade County. Second, to find the most recent solution to the problem of police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. The researcher will utilize data collection methods that involve several collection points. The methods employed will be face-to-face interviews. The technique used to collect data was determined by the study's nature. Individual interviews, document reviews, and observations are potential data sources concerning the research. Personal law enforcement experiences of police recruitment and retention will be gathered using qualitative methodologies.

Data Collection

The pragmatic approach to qualitative research will be utilized in this study. To determine the difficulties facing police recruitment and retention following the murder of George Floyd, an exploratory interview method will be employed to speak with police personnel at their police agency. The data collection will be through face-to-face interviews and qualitative observation. While conducting the study, the researcher will actively participate by asking several questions about police recruitment and retention. According to Nabi et al., (2020), Communication, journalism, sociology, business, and document analysis all have a long history of qualitative content analysis. It attempts to comprehend a particular context and arrive at

detailed descriptions of the various qualitative aspects of the interviewees' experiences of an observed phenomenon. There are 32 semi-structured interview questions addressing possible issues related to police recruitment and retention. Interviews will be conducted with police officers and non-administrative police sergeants to obtain data. Each participant was asked to complete an informed consent form. Risks to interviewees were mitigated by redacting their names and the names of their respective agencies. Once the interviews are conducted, the data collected will be analyzed manually for thematic analysis and then securely stored in a filing cabinet in a private room.

Analysis

A total of twenty-nine law enforcement personnel participated in face-to-face interviews, and afterward, the audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai software. The process begins with data uploading onto a USB drive and the transcription of audio recordings. After extracting the audio, a comprehensive analysis was done to identify recurring patterns in the participants' spoken words and phrases. Precise terminology was established for every participant, which may provide practical implications and valuable insights for other law enforcement agencies. The recurring patterns within the cohort of individuals who were questioned were effectively identified by the researcher through the utilization of a manual analytic technique. Utilizing a thematic analysis approach facilitated the recognition and exploration of suitable themes within the scope of this research. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant to protect their privacy throughout this stage.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental concepts or experiences expressed by the participants and recorded in observation notes, theme analysis commences with a thorough examination of the dataset. Braun and Clarke (2020) have put forth a six-phase

procedure that aids in the identification and consideration of the critical elements of a thematic analysis and facilitates the analysis. Nevertheless, the researcher acquaints himself with the data during this stage. According to Lochmiller (2021), prior knowledge of the dataset is crucial for thematic analysis, as it enables the researcher to detect preliminary patterns that could potentially serve as the foundation for categories (p. 2035). The researcher emphasized particular words and phrases that had the potential to provide answers to research inquiries. In the succeeding phase, an initial collection of codes is formulated. The researcher integrated descriptive identifiers, including, but not limited to, "compensation" and "various units." The information codes serve as a representation of the participants' conveyed experiences, opinions, or views, thereby exposing their foremost concerns. Then, a search for themes followed. The final stage results in the generation of themes. The researcher had to pose an array of questions to formulate the themes. Several questions were presented, including:

- To what degree do many participants' opinions support a theme?
- Which quotations or situations offer the most persuasive evidence supporting a theme?

The research questions facilitated the process of generating the most suitable themes. While not comprehensive, these inquiries provide opportunities to examine links that frequently result in uncovering a thematic element. It is customary in this field of study to incorporate an extensive array of categories when presenting themes in the ultimate written dissertation. By employing this methodology, the researcher is capable of proficiently communicating to the audience the progression of the subject matter and shedding insight into the analytical decisions that shaped the creation of the thematic conclusion. The outcomes of the analysis of qualitative

data were centered on six research questions. A total of eight themes surfaced from the data that was analyzed.

Data Set

The qualitative data set for this research study will consist of audio-recorded interviews. Each participant will be asked numerous questions of the six research questions:

(RQ1) What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ2) What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ3) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ4) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ5) What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?

(RQ6) What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?

The primary data from each participant will be recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The secondary data collection will consist of scholarly research papers and books that pertain to police recruitment and retention. Furthermore, each participant will be presented

with thirty-two questions (see Appendix B) aimed at addressing the research questions about their agency's involvement in the processes of recruiting and retention.

Locations

The data will be collected from three police agencies in the same county. One-on-one audio-recorded interviews will take place in a room with no other participants for integrity purposes. Isolating the participants will allow them to feel more at ease and candidly discuss the issues of police recruitment and retention.

Coding

For coding purposes, thirty-two answered data collection questions will be gathered from the participants by the three police agencies. According to Saldana (2016), coding assigns symbolic significance to gathered data. The coding was done through an inductive approach. The researcher will use specific wording in coding each participant. According to Glesne (2016), “a code is a word or short phrase, not a number/letter combination or a set of letters meant to represent some phrase, such as T-AHW for teacher use of art homework” (p. 195). The coding used for the officers and non-administrative sergeants will be participants F1 through F-10, U1 through U10, and W1 through W9.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to assist in the formulation of the questionnaire. Glesne (2016) writes, “Use the pilot study to test the language and substance of your interview questions, as well as the overall length of your interview” (p. 61). The researcher sought the selection size of three individuals with significant expertise in law enforcement who were non-study participants in the study to provide constructive feedback on the questionnaire. The

selection of the non-study participants also met the three-year or more criteria as the actual participants. The pilot research's goal was to test the validity of the interview questions by ensuring there was no room for misinterpretation. Following a comprehensive examination conducted by individuals not directly involved in the study, a few modifications were implemented to various questions within the questionnaire.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness

This qualitative phenomenological study relies on the five pillars of (1) trustworthiness, (2) credibility, (3) dependability, (4) confirmability, and (5) transferability to analyze the research given. The truthfulness of the research findings is the foundation of their credibility (Stahl & King, 2020). Using participant interviews, the research on the data analysis has been conducted in a manner that is reliable, consistent, and exhaustive. All law enforcement officers who participated in this study have extensive experience in the field, crediting the study's findings and ensuring the participants' honesty and integrity.

Credibility

When we discuss the credibility of the research findings, what we mean is that they are reasonable or credible from the point of view of the participants who took part in the research (Terrell, 2016). Finding common threads in responses to all interview questions from participants in the research will validate the reliability of this study. Findings will have more credibility and be more grounded if the researcher's theme concerns for the first responder are shared by the majority, if not all, of the study participants.

Dependability

Dependability measures how well the data collection, data analysis, and theory-making processes work together. Dependability is evidence that the outcomes are consistent over time (Stahl & King, 2020). In the present research, the researcher relied on data obtained through in-person interviews, which were then triangulated with data obtained from academic sources to enhance the reliability of the findings. In addition, the researcher used open-ended questions during interviews, which contributed to the increased reliability of the obtained data. Many of the findings from the participants were repeatable.

Confirmability

To achieve confirmability, the researcher relied on the audit trail. “This is a document created by researchers that provides a step-by-step account of the study, which helps the researcher trace activities to understand better the study results” (Terrell, 2016, p. 175). The data obtained did not reveal any unethical standard but professionalism on the part of all participants.

Transferability

Transferability is frequently connected to external validity in quantitative research and only attempts to demonstrate that your study findings are transferable to different situations (Terrell, 2016). In this study, the researcher considered a pool of 29 participants of non-administrative officers from three police agencies. To increase transferability, the researcher employed extensive descriptions in both the study and the conclusions of this research.

Ethical Considerations

This study will comply with accepted norms, federal laws, and Liberty University policies for conducting research with human subjects, including acknowledging that participation is anonymous and voluntary. Before the researcher began data collecting, participants completed an informed consent letter. Participants must sign a consent form indicating their agreement to participate in the study. The researcher's contact information is included on the permission form, along with an explanation of the participants' engagement, the potential risk, and measures taken to ensure anonymity. All participant information was securely stored in a filing cabinet in a separate room. The IRB was essential to the research since it is charged with verifying that it adheres to federal legislation as well as the ethical standards of the police agency. Much of the data collected for this study will pertain to the criteria outlined in departmental directives of the organization, including policies and procedures for the three departments, and is subject to requests for public records under the Florida Public Act, which identifies documents that must be made available for public inspection under Florida State Statute 119, Public Records.

Summary

The phenomenological study enabled the researcher to discover the issues certain agencies struggle to resolve. The design and procedures utilized to conduct the research study are described in Chapter Three. Data was collected through qualitative interviews with a sample consisting of 29 police officers from three agencies in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The data collection began after consulting with the participants and obtaining their consent to record the interviews. Chapter four will neutrally and objectively present the study's findings and provide insight from the participants involved. The highest ethical standards were upheld, including safeguarding the participants' privacy.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The problem addressed in this qualitative study was whether the murder of George Floyd had an impact on the recruitment and retention of police officers in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The study of police recruitment and retention is imperative, as effective and quality law enforcement depends on successfully recruiting and retaining qualified candidates (IACP, 2019). With the surge in law enforcement officer's resignations since the summer of 2020 (Mourtgos et al., 2022), the problem of recruitment and retention has become even more significant. This study aimed to understand and develop an intervention to the problem inhibiting post-Floyd era police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. This study's participants were non-administrative officers from three police agencies in Miami-Dade County. This phenomenological study analyzed the negative factors in police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County, post-Floyd Era, through the lens of Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory and transformational leadership. Six research questions (RQ) guided this study:

(RQ1) What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ2) What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ3) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ4) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ5) What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?

(RQ6) What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?

This chapter neutrally and objectively presents the findings relevant to the study questions and the level of knowledge experienced by each participant involved. The researcher developed semi-structured interview questions pertinent to the problems related to police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. Seven categories were being addressed: (1) demographic data, (2) participant data, (3) recruitment challenges, (4) retention challenges, (5) George Floyd affect, (6) improving recruitment, and (7) improving retention (Appendix B). This chapter concludes with a summary of key findings, which Chapter Five will discuss further.

Participants

The study's participants were voluntary law enforcement officers who received no rewards, threats, budget reductions, or other influential obligations. This indicates that the researcher or other organizational influences did not influence the participants. The sample chosen for this study was random and purposive selection. The participants for Site One were selected using an online randomization program known as "Wheel Random" to mitigate any biases. Purposive sampling was employed for Sites Two and Three, wherein the chief's designee selected the participants for this study based on their three or more years of employment. The research was conducted with the help of open-ended questions that were posed to patrol officers and non-administrative supervisors with at least three years of combined service and experience. The researcher conducted face-to-face audio-recorded interviews with 29 law enforcement

participants from all three police departments. Face-to-face interviews were conducted over a three-week period to allow for the greatest possible number of participants and to accommodate the necessary amount of time for each interview.

The actual names of the participants are known to the researcher. However, because participant's anonymity and confidentiality are paramount to this study, coding was used instead of real names. To ensure confidentiality, the agencies provided private office space for the interviews. Each of the 29 participants stated that they were willing and prepared to engage in the interviews that lasted up to 45 minutes. The participants were mostly Hispanic males, and the average participant age was 46. All participants possessed at least three years' experience with their agency and were identified as non-administrative officers. The participants and their associated demographics are listed in Table 1 below. The sample coded participant-F1 through F-10, Participant-U-1 through U-10, and Participant-W-1 through W-9.

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Education	Years of Service
F-1	H	M	31	Some College	10
F-2	H	M	47	High School Diploma	20
F-3	H	M	39	Associate Degree	9
F-4	H	M	29	Associate Degree	4
F-5	H	M	51	Associate Degree	12
F-6	W	M	44	Some College	22
F-7	H	M	56	Associate Degree	33
F-8	B	M	47	Bachelor Degree	17
F-9	H	M	61	High School Diploma	26
F-10	H	M	40	High School Diploma	5
U-1	H	F	56	Bachelor Degree	34
U-2	H	M	62	Bachelor Degree	37
U-3	H	M	33	Bachelor Degree	8

U-4	H	M	57	Bachelor Degree	28
U-5	H	M	55	Associate Degree	35
U-6	H	F	46	Bachelor Degree	23
U-7	B	M	43	Some College	16
U-8	B	F	47	Bachelor Degree	19
U-9	B	M	55	Bachelor Degree	20
U-10	W	M	54	Some College	34
W-1	H	M	39	Associate Degree	10
W-2	H	M	35	High School Diploma	3
W-3	H	M	40	Some College	7
W-4	H	M	36	High School Diploma	10
W-5	H	M	54	Some College	23
W-6	A	M	49	Bachelor Degree	18
W-7	H	M	56	Associate Degree	27
W-8	H	F	57	Master Degree	30
W-9	H	M	37	Associate Degree	10

Before beginning the interviews, the researcher presented participants with Liberty University-created informed consent forms and provided them with information about the study, its risks relating to privacy and confidentiality, and its benefits. Participants were advised on how the researcher would use, manage, and potentially share the information obtained from the interviews. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. The participants were advised that the researcher is the only one with access to identifying information, and the data obtained will not be provided to any third party. After this conversation, the researcher obtained informed and voluntary consent from participants agreeing to participate in this research. Signed informed consent forms were collected and saved by the researcher.

Before signing the informed consent form (see Appendix A) and starting the interviews, participants were allowed to ask the researcher any questions concerning the study. Each participant from the three agencies was asked a series of 32 questions that categorically focused on (1) demographic data, (2) participant data, (3) recruitment challenges, (4) retention challenges, (5) George Floyd affect, (6) improving recruitment and, (7) improving retention. All the interviews were conducted personally by the researcher in a face-to-face style interview format in a private setting. The face-to-face interviews did not exceed 45 minutes, encompassing further follow-up questioning due to some vague answers.

The summary of face-to-face interviews in this chapter encompasses the findings and outcomes of the study. Through these interviews, the researcher successfully identified the prevailing recruiting procedures and gained insights into the viewpoints of law enforcement personnel regarding potential enhancements to the recruitment process. It is also worth mentioning that the researcher extensively analyzed the data from recorded interviews. The themes were derived from the data by employing an inductive methodology. Multiple common themes were identified using a systematic process, including familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, definition, and naming. After acquiring the themes, a thorough examination was conducted to verify their use and accuracy as data representations. The qualitative research study reached data saturation, at which no new themes, ideas, opinions, or patterns emerged from the data as the researcher interviewed the participants. As a result, this saturation indicated that the researcher had collected sufficient data to draw the necessary conclusions relevant to the research problem and that further data collection would unlikely produce additional insights.

Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data

Trustworthiness is a term that involves persuasion, where scientists are perceived as making their activities transparent and subject to scrutiny (Gunawan, 2015). The research on this data analysis has been completed using participant interviews, ensuring reliability, consistency, and comprehensiveness. The research's conclusions are supported by the significant expertise of the law enforcement officers who participated, which enhances the study's credibility and ensures the participants' integrity and honesty.

Credibility

According to Terrell (2016), when considering the credibility of research findings, it relates to the reasonableness or credibility of the findings as seen by the people involved in the research. The identification of recurring patterns in the replies to all interview questions provided by the research participants served to establish the validity and dependability of this research.

Transferability

Transferability is a significant aspect of trustworthiness. The concept of transferability is often associated with external validity in quantitative research, and it primarily aims to establish the extent to which the findings of a study may be applied to various contexts (Terrell, 2016). This study used a sample of 29 participants consisting of non-administrative officers from three distinct police agencies. To enhance the transferability of the findings, the researcher utilized comprehensive descriptions in both the study and the conclusions of this research.

Dependability

Dependability is utilized in measuring the reliability and consistency of study results. Dependability encompasses the extent to which the processes of data gathering, data analysis, and theory formation exhibit effective coordination and integration. Dependability may be seen as the manifestation of consistent outcomes across a period of time, as supported by Stahl and King (2020). In this study, the researcher utilized data acquired through face-to-face interviews, which were afterward corroborated using data sourced from scholarly references to augment the dependability of the results. Furthermore, the researcher included open-ended questions during the interviews, enhancing the dependability of the collected data.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality of a research study. To ensure confirmability, the researcher utilized the audit trail. Terrell (2016) asserts that the document in question is a scholarly publication authored by researchers. Its purpose is to offer a comprehensive and sequential narrative of the study, enabling the researcher to systematically analyze the many activities undertaken and better comprehend the study's outcomes. The data collected did not indicate any instances of unethical behavior but demonstrated a high level of professionalism exhibited by all participants.

Results

The results of the qualitative data analysis are organized by the six research questions. This qualitative study explored the main research questions using 32 interview questions, as noted in Appendix B. The following results present data collected using face-to-face interviews. The questions from Appendix B were presented in an open-ended format to allow for follow-up

questions relevant to the main topic. In total, eight themes emerged from the analyzed data. The themes and their related research questions are summarized in Table 2.

The research study involved 29 participants from three participating sites who volunteered their time. All the agencies are located within Miami-Dade County. Site One was a state university police agency with 10 individuals who willingly participated in the study. The individuals included in this study were law enforcement community members who had at least three years of experience in the field, excluding those in command staff roles such as lieutenants or higher ranks. The study sample consisted of law enforcement personnel who held the rank of police officers or sergeants and were either currently serving in the patrol division or had prior experience in patrol duties and were presently assigned to a non-administrative role.

Site Two refers to a privately owned university police department situated in Miami-Dade County. The research study in question included a qualitative phenomenological approach and comprised a group of 10 individuals who willingly volunteered their time to participate in the study. The individuals included in this study were law enforcement community members who had at least three years of experience in the field, excluding those in command staff roles such as lieutenants or higher ranks. The study involved individuals who served as police officers or sergeants in the patrol division or had previously served in the patrol division and are currently assigned to a non-administrative role.

Site Three refers to a municipal police department located in Miami-Dade County. The research study in question applied a qualitative phenomenological approach and involved the participation of 9 individuals who generously dedicated their time to contribute to the study. The individuals included in this study were law enforcement community members who had at least three years of experience in the field, excluding those in command staff roles such as lieutenants

or higher ranks. The study included individuals who were either now serving as police officers or sergeants in the patrol division or had previously served in patrol and were currently in a non-administrative role.

Findings

The qualitative data analysis results are organized to align with the six research questions. In general, the analysis of the data produced eight overarching themes. Subsequent Table 2 presents a concise overview of the themes under consideration and the corresponding inquiries for the study. The researcher implemented a three-phase approach, including setup, analysis, and interpretation. Prior to doing a theme analysis, the researcher devotes a significant amount of time to preparing the data for subsequent analytical efforts. This procedure entails conducting an inventory of the dataset for further analysis.

The process starts with transcribing audio recordings and downloading data onto a thumb drive. After the audio was downloaded, a thorough analysis was conducted to discern patterns in the spoken words and phrases of the participants. Unique terms were determined for each individual involved, potentially offering valuable insights and practical implications for other law enforcement organizations. The researcher successfully identified recurring patterns among the cohort of questioned individuals by employing a manual analytic technique. Applying a thematic analysis technique enabled the identification and exploration of appropriate themes in this study. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym during this phase to safeguard their privacy.

The initial step in theme analysis is examining the dataset to comprehensively understand the key ideas or experiences conveyed by the participants and documented in observation notes.

Braun and Clarke (2020) have proposed a six-phase process, which can facilitate the analysis and help the researcher identify and attend to the important aspects of a thematic analysis. However, the researcher's approach begins with familiarization with the data at this phase. "Familiarity with the dataset is key when conducting a thematic analysis as it allows the researcher to begin identifying initial patterns that may serve as the basis for categories" (Lochmiller, 2021, p. 2035). The researcher highlighted specific words and phrases that potentially responded to the research questions. The subsequent phase involves the formulation of an initial collection of codes. The researcher incorporated descriptive codes, such as "compensation" and "different units," among other examples. These information codes depict the experiences, opinions, or thoughts expressed by the participants, therefore revealing their most important issues. The search for themes followed.

The last phase concludes with generating themes. The researcher had to ask several questions in developing the themes. Some of the questions included:

- To what degree do many participants' opinions support a theme?
- Which quotations or situations offer the most persuasive evidence supporting a theme?

These questions helped guide in generating the most appropriate themes. Although not exhaustive, these inquiries offer options for analyzing the links that often lead to a thematic element's emergence. In this research, it is customary to include a comprehensive range of categories when presenting themes in the final written dissertation. This approach enables the researcher to effectively convey to the reader the development of the topic and provide light on the analytical choices that influenced the formulation of the thematic conclusion. The results of the qualitative data analysis were framed by the six research questions. In total, eight themes

emerged from the analyzed data. Table 2 presents the themes and their related research question below.”

Table 2.

Research Questions and Corresponding Themes

Research Question	Themes Used to Address the Research Question
RQ 1: What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?	<p>Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers.</p> <p>Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.</p>
RQ 2: What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?	<p>Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers.</p> <p>Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.</p>
RQ 3: In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?	Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County.
RQ 4: In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?	Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County.
RQ 5: What action can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?	Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders.
RQ 6: What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?	Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention.

Research Question One

The first research question was: *What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, two main themes

emerged from the data. These are as follows: (a) **Theme 1:** Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers, and (b) **Theme 2:** Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.

Table 3 illustrates the number of participants who mentioned each theme.

Table 3.

Research Question 1 Themes 1 and 2

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers.	29	20
Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.	29	12

Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers. Five out of 10 participants from Site One considered pay as one of the challenges facing their agency with recruiting officers. Participant F-2 had this to say: “One of the things I would say, perhaps, is the pay scale.” Participant F-2 further stated regarding his agency on improving the recruitment process, “I would say to have a better pay scale.” Participant F-3 stated, “Perhaps money.” Participant F-6 stated, “Recruitment issues facing this agency would be pay, but that would be most departments.” Participant F-6 further mentioned concerning improving the recruitment process: “Definitely like any other agency, money.” Participant F-7 mentioned, “With a smaller department, it’s hard, but pay is always a motivator and incentive for people to apply. When asked about the agency's recruitment issues, participant F-9 stated, “Pay.” Participant F-9 further stated: “The only recommendation I would say is the pay.”

One of the consensuses on the challenges that police agencies face in recruiting police officers in Miami-Dade County from Site Two officers was pay. Four out of ten participants from Site Two participants considered income a challenge in their agency. When asked why police officers were leaving the agency, Participant U-1 stated, “For more money and opportunities.” Participant U-2 is assigned to the recruitment unit. This participant also concurred that pay is a significant issue regarding recruitment and retention, stating, “The pay for sure.” Participant U-2 also reiterated that “pay for sure” concerning improving the recruitment process. Participant U-4 also believed that pay was a recruitment issue.

Many of the participants from Site Three expressed the belief that pay is the predominant factor contributing to the difficulties encountered by law enforcement agencies in the recruitment of officers in Miami-Dade County. Seven out of nine participants considered income a challenge. For example, participant W-1 said, “It’s getting better (pay) in the last few years with the last couple of contracts (union contracts), but yes, it’s always been an issue because I believe you have to stay competitive.” Participant W-3 said, “The recruitment challenges would be pay and other opportunities except patrol.” Participant W-4 had a similar answer “I believe in today’s date and all agencies hiring, and the main factor with this new generation would be the money factor, so pay.” Participant W-5 was not aware of the recruitment issues facing the agency; however, W-5 did mention if asked how to go about improving the recruitment process, W-5 said, “Raise the salary and at the same time try to hire individuals that have somewhat knowledge of the job (police work).”

Participant W-7, a patrol sergeant, said, “The challenges we’ve been facing are due to our size. Since we are a smaller agency, it’s not so attractive for young recruits to come to a smaller agency where they don’t have too much chance to go into specialized units. I guess also, the

main one would be pay.” Participant W-8 is a patrol sergeant. This participant stated the following regarding the agency's recruitment issues:

“I think it would be the quality of officers. In my opinion, it’s hard to get officers that are qualified for this department. They have the mentality of law enforcement, like maybe something they watch on television, and when they come here, they see it’s not as glamorous as they thought, and retaining them also would be difficult because of salaries. A small department does not have all the things the other bigger departments have to offer.”

Participant W-9 is a patrol sergeant assigned to the midnight shift. Participant W-9 described some of the recruitment issues by saying, “Right now, the problem we are having is retention because of money. There are many more agencies that pay a lot more money, so why come here when you can go somewhere else with good patrol areas and make a lot more money.”

Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. This theme suggests agencies can increase recruitment potential while minimizing turnover by allowing officers to join specialized units. This theme was referenced twelve times. When Participant F-3 was asked about some of the issues facing police in the agency, Participant F-3 stated, “Since it’s a small department, there is not the possibility of moving around or getting into a specialized unit.” Participant F-4 responded, “I believe as a small agency, we don’t have many people applying because we don’t have many opportunities within the agency that young recruits would like to do.” Participant F-5 mentioned, “If you can’t make money, I would probably do, get them exposed to part-time in investigations or get them exposed to some of the other specialized units out there.” When asked why police officers were leaving the agency, participant F-6 stated,

"Having a bigger department, it's easier to get into, you know, you have more access to more specialty units."

Regarding some of the issues facing police retention within the agency, participant F-7 stated, "A lack of growth within the department, and it refers to investigative and specialized units." When Participant F-8 was asked why police officers were leaving the agency, F-8 responded, "In my opinion, the officers that are leaving are probably the younger officers because they want to go to a bigger agency, and they want to go to different specialized units." When Participant F-10 was asked to describe the agency's recruitment issues, F-10 responded by stating, "Yes, not enough specialized units." When asked what could be done to improve the recruitment process, F-10 responded, "More specialized units." When asked what could be done to improve the agency's retention issues, F-10 responded, "Specialized units."

Some participants from Site Two also considered specialized units as being a challenge in recruiting police officers. For example, participant U-6 said, "I think that it's a fairly small department, so it doesn't get looked at as bigger departments." Participant U-7 had a similar response, "We are a small agency. Some of the issues are a lack of movement." Participant U-10 said, "This particular agency is unique among law enforcement because it is a very small agency that deals solely on a university campus setting. A new officer, someone that's new to law enforcement, there's not much opportunity for growth or to do much other than patrol."

Participants from Site Three also considered a lack of specialized units in their agency. For instance, Participant W-3 mentioned, "There is a lack of opportunity except patrol. No special units or things like that." Participant W-6 had something similar by saying, "As far as recruitment, we're a small agency. We don't have many other specialized units other than patrol. So, when a candidate looks at our department, they look at where can I go after patrol or

advancement. Right now, as it is, it's very limited." Participant W-7 also mentioned, "Some of the challenges we've been facing are due to our size. Since we're a smaller agency, it's not so attractive for young recruits to come where they have not much of a chance to go into specialized units or things like that as far as growth is concerned."

Research Question Two

The second research question was: *What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, two themes emerged from the data. The following is (a) **Theme 3**: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers, and (b) **Theme 4**: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. Table 4 illustrates the number of participants who mentioned each theme.

Table 4.

Research Question 2 Themes 3 and 4

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers.	29	51
Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.	29	14

Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers. This theme suggests agencies can minimize retention issues by increasing pay to lessen turnover. There were 51 references to this theme by all 29 participants. Site One Participant F-1 said, "First and foremost, the pay. If this agency is not competitive with pay, you will have people leaving, and that will only become more and more painful as time goes on if they don't improve the pay here while all

the other agencies pay more. Participant F-2 had a similar response by saying, “One of the issues is the pay, and the other is the way the department is run. Participant F-3 has been in law enforcement for 9 years. He said, “In compared to other departments, probably money and real police work.” Participant F-3 also added, “The younger officers are leaving for more money.”

Participant F-5 is a 12-year veteran police officer who is currently a detective. Regarding retention issues with pay, he said, “Number one, not only this agency but all agencies are money. The cost of living is going up, but our wages are not. The workload is going up and not our salary. Participant F-6 is a 22-year veteran officer assigned to the patrol division who mentioned, “Money is an issue. Fix the step-plan issue (pay plan). Participant F-7 is a K-9 officer with 33 years of law enforcement experience. He believes that pay is a retention issue. He said, “With a smaller department it’s hard but pay is always a motivator and incentive for people to apply. Increasing starting pay and maybe providing more opportunities within the department to grow. Participant F-9 has been a police officer for 26 years. He believes the agency has retention challenges. He mentioned, “Pay is number one and benefits is number two” regarding retention challenges.

Site Two participants considered pay as a challenge in retaining officers. For example, Participant U-1 said, “Officers are leaving because of more money and more opportunities as for getting into specialized units.” Participant U-2 has been in law enforcement for 37 years and is also a retired FBI agent currently working at Site Two conducting background investigations. He had a similar respond by stating:

“Since we hire senior or we hire retired officers, most of them know it’s their time to go and they don’t want to do more than 4 to 5 years; it’s their time to go. So, it’s an age kind of factor. The younger people want to go to a more exciting kind of work such as a bigger

agency that has more opportunities to be able to go into different units. Being that we are such a small agency we don't give them that opportunity here. Pay is definitely a factor as well."

Participant U-8 is a patrol sergeant with 19 years of service and is assigned to the midnight squad. She believes that pay is a retention issue. She stated:

"I think we are not competitive when it comes to pay; we are not competitive with other departments. We used to have a step raise and a merit increase but we don't have those anymore. So, people are coming in at whatever they are making, and they are staying there for years and they see other people that started with them making a lot more. So, some of them are leaving because they are just unhappy with the way they are treated and some are leaving for the money issue and some of them are leaving because it's just not fast paced."

Site Three participants also believe a pay challenge is causing retaining issues in their agency. For example, Participant W-1 is a morning shift patrol sergeant with 10 years of law enforcement experience. He said:

"There are two main reasons: Number one is definitely salary. That's the main retention issue that we have. You have to stay competitive and compare yourself to other agencies that are equal in size. You have to stay competitive because people are going to go where they believe they can make more money or better benefits. My opinion is that they (officers) go to other places (other agencies) that are bigger and pay better. The salary needs to go up and stay competitive county-wise."

Participant W-2 has 3 years of law enforcement experience and is assigned to the morning patrol shift. He felt that his agency's retention issues are a salary issue, which is why officers are leaving and going to other agencies. Further, he believes the salary issue must be addressed to improve retention. Participant W-3 is a patrol officer with 7 years of experience. He is currently assigned to a road patrol unit. He said, "The opportunities are better elsewhere with pay and what you do on a daily basis. Participant W-3 also believes officers are leaving because of the lack of pay and benefits. Participant W-4 is a 10-year law enforcement veteran assigned to the patrol division. He said "pay" is his agency's issue and why officers leave. Participant W-4 has also considered leaving the agency for better pay. Furthermore, he believes that to improve the retention issues of his agency, the pay needs to be increased.

Participant W-5 is a 23-year veteran of law enforcement. He is currently assigned to patrol the streets of his community. Participant W-5 said, "Money. That's the biggest challenge right now." He further stated that officers leave his agency, for the most part, money because other departments officer more. He also believes that salary must be addressed to improve retention. Participant W-6 is a background detective with 18 years of experience. He believes that pay is an issue regarding retention. He said, "Right now, the first would be the salary. We have not caught up with other departments that are similar in size. The starting base salary should be caught up with other cities (municipalities). Participant W-6 further stated that he had considered applying for other departments because of salary.

Participant W-7 has been in law enforcement for 27 years. He is currently assigned to the midnight shift as a patrol sergeant. Participant W-7 said, "The issues are other departments, you know, being bigger and paying more salaries than we are paying. We had recently five leave mainly because of that money." Participant W-8 is a 30-year veteran in law enforcement. She is

also the only female sergeant and is assigned to road patrol. She said, “It always goes back to salary.” She further stated that officers are leaving because of “salary.” The actions that need to be taken to improve the retention issues, Participant W-8 said, “I believe increasing the salary, making us more competitive. Participant W-9 is a sergeant with 10 years of law enforcement experience. He is currently assigned to the midnight shift. As far as retaining officers is concerned, he said, “The starting salary is too low. We need to go up on that and have more steps (salary step plan). We also need to be more competitive like everybody else. Like if you’re in crime scene (crime scene unit), you get a five percent increase. If you’re in FTO (field training officer), you get a five percent increase. Like, you get incentives, and we don’t have that here.” Participant W-9 believes officers are leaving because there is not enough pay and incentives to keep officers from leaving to other better-paying agencies.

Site One entailed an extensive number of 16 themes about employee compensation issues. Site Two encompassed four distinct issues pertaining to the problems associated with employee compensation. Among the three sites examined, Site Three emerged as the most prominent in terms of the frequency of references to the issue of pay, which was referenced a total of 31 times. The consensus among participants from all three sites is that compensation poses a significant difficulty inside their agency, which needs attention and action from their leadership.

Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. This theme suggests that agencies can help retain officers by implementing specialized units, thus lessening the turnover rates. This theme was identified 14 times by 29 participants. Site One Participant F-4 said:

“I believe since we’re a small agency and there are not many units to get into, people are leaving because they want to do something else in their law enforcement career. There are not a lot of opportunities when it comes to growth and lateral movement. There are few units to get into, and I believe that’s why. I believe opening more units and being able to move up in the ranks to make it easier or make it more available by hiring more people so we can have various units that people can get into and decide what they like.”

Participant F-5 has been in law enforcement for 15 years. Currently, he is assigned to the detective bureau. He said, “For the younger officer, the opportunity to grow as an officer, maybe going into a specialized unit, either investigations or a little more proactive unit. Participant F-6 has been serving in law enforcement for 22 years. He is currently assigned to patrol. He mentioned, “Having a bigger department where it is easier to get into, you know, you have more access to getting into a specialty unit. You have more access to move up in rank if that’s what you want.

Participant F-8 is a detective and is involved in the hiring process of applicants by conducting their background checks. He has served for 17 years. He said, “In my opinion, the officers that are leaving are probably the younger officers because they want to go to bigger agencies, and they want to go to different specialized units within other municipalities.”

Participant F-10 has been a law enforcement officer for 5 years and is currently assigned to patrol. He said, “Not enough specialized units, not enough growth. Other than that, command staff like trying to move up the ranks. For me, it’s more like specialized units, which would help a lot. Participant F-10 also considered applying to other agencies due to a lack of growth and specialized units.

A few of Site Two participants also felt a lack of specialized units contributed to retention issues. For example, Participant U-7 is a sergeant assigned to the midnight squat. He has been in law enforcement for 16 years. He mentioned, "I think the movement is sometimes the issue. So, growth or even lateral movement, you can consider that as growth like going into CID (criminal investigative division), specialized units, so that is something that does not come often."

Site Three participants also share their views concerning a lack of specialized units as a retention issue. For instance, Participant W-3 has 7 years of law enforcement experience. He is currently assigned to patrol. He mentioned, "The opportunities are better elsewhere. Pay and what you do on a daily basis. Like if you're on patrol, you are pretty much on patrol. No specialized units. Participant W-5 also had a similar answer: "Other departments offer more and more room to grow. More units to be able to jump from SWAT to detective (specialized units). Regarding retention, Participant W-7 stated:

"Recently, we had five leave, and it was because of that, money and growth and going to specialized units. We just started working on that now, and we are bringing back some specialized units that we had years ago, and they had done away with them. So, that would attract young guys to, like motors, if you are inclined to do traffic, you have the opportunity to go to motors and work Monday through Friday with weekends off."

Site One entailed an extensive number of 10 themes about employee-specialized unit issues. Site Two encompassed four distinct issues pertaining to the problems associated with specialized units. Among the three sites examined, Site Three had four emerging themes related to specialized units.

Research Question Three

The third research question was: *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, one main theme emerged from the data. The following is (a) **Theme 5**: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. Table 5 represents the number of participants contributing to this theme and the number of participants who mentioned this theme.

Table 5.

Research Question 3 Theme 5

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County	29	23

Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County. The fifth theme had to do with whether the murder of George Floyd affected recruitment in Miami-Dade County. Nine out of 10 participants from Site One, five out of 10 participants from Site Two, and all nine participants from Site Three did not believe Floyd’s murder impacted Miami-Dade County recruitment. A total of 23 of 29 participants collectively agreed that the murder of Floyd did not impact police recruitment in Miami-Dade County. When asked if the murder of George Floyd impacted the ability of the agency to recruit candidates for

sworn law enforcement vacancies, Participants F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-6, F-7, F-8, F-9, and F-10 responded, “No.” Participant F-5 responded,

“I think a lot of candidates are afraid to go into this field because they are going to be looked at as not too fondly. People are always going to judge what you do, and I think that will probably hurt the officer more than anything else because, at certain times, you have to act certain ways, and if you don’t act that certain way, it will cost you your life or worse, the life of somebody else.”

The fifth common theme viewed among officers at Site Two concerning whether the murder of George Floyd affected the recruitment in Miami-Dade County was the following: Participants U-1 and U-10 were unsure, Participants U-2, U-5, U-6, U-8, and U-9 did not feel the murder of Floyd affected police recruitment in Miami-Dade, County. Participant U-2 expressed skepticism over the efficacy of the intervention. Participant U-5 asserts that there was a lack of impact on the recruitment of prospects. Participant U-6 believes there was a lack of discernible effect on the recruitment process.

All ten participants interviewed at Site Three indicated that the murder of George Floyd did not have a discernable impact on the recruitment of officers within their agency. Most of the opinion amongst participants (23 of 29) from Sites One, Two, and Three was that the recruitment difficulties faced by the agency were not directly associated with the George Floyd incident.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question was: *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, one theme emerged from

the data. **Theme 6:** Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County.

Table 6 represents the contributing participants and the number of references to this theme.

Table 6.

Research Question 4 Theme 6

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County.	29	28

Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade

County. The sixth theme had to do with whether the murder of George Floyd affected retention in Miami-Dade County. Ten out of 10 participants from Site One, nine out of 10 participants from Site Two, and nine out of 9 participants from Site Three did not believe Floyd’s murder affected retention in Miami-Dade County. For instance, when asked to describe the retention in his agency post-George Floyd, Participant F-1 responded, “I think that retention from this current agency, probably I think the rate of people leaving is about the same. Participant F-1 was inferring that the retention rate after Floyd’s death did not impact the agency. Participant F-2 had a similar response, saying, “I going to say no.” Participant F-3 said, “As far as this agency, I don’t think it affected us too much.” Participant F-4 inferred, “I don’t believe so.”

Participant F-5 had a similar response, “It’s not as bad as other agencies; we’ve had a few retirements, a few have gone on to bigger departments, but all in all, it’s not a mass exodus.”

Participant F-6 said, “I think retention has been the same” (pre- or post-Floyd’s murder).

Participant F-7 asserted, “I don’t think it made a difference.” Participant F-8 also said, “It’s been pretty good. No issues. No abundance of officers leaving.” Participant F-9 mentioned, “It’s the same. The retention factor is the same thing again: pay, benefits, and a lot of agencies have take-home vehicles. They have a little bit more perks than our agency.” Participant F-10 also said, “I don’t think anything has been affected as far as retention.”

Site Two participants were also asked if they believed the murder of Floyd had an impact on police retention in Miami-Dade County. Participant U-1 responded, “It’s like a revolving door. We spend so much time and money trying to get good candidates, and they come for a couple of years, and they move on.” Participant U-2 said, “None whatsoever.” Participant U-3 asserted, “I think morale has gone down. So, I think some people (officers) that had retirement, just left earlier. Not just because of everything that was going on” (referring to Floyd’s incident). Participant U-4 also said, “As far as I can see, I really don’t see a difference.”

Participant U-5 also mentioned that it had “No effect.” Participant U-6 asserted, “I haven’t seen an issue with it.” Participant U-7 responded, “I have not seen a significant issue as far as retention with that specific incident.” Participant U-8 asserted, “I don’t think it has changed much. We haven’t done anything to change retention how we try to retain people.” Participant U-9 stated: “Same” (no impact due to Floyd’s incident). Participant U-10 responded, “I wasn’t here prior to George Floyd, so it’s hard to say how George Floyd’s death had affected retention in this particular agency, being that I wasn’t here before.”

Site Three participants were also interviewed if they thought the murder of Floyd had an effect on police retention in Miami-Dade County. Participant W-1 stated:

“I don’t think it affected the department. I think, actually, it improved a little bit. Because during that period, law enforcement agencies all of them they went through rough times dealing with people that don’t like the police, and they wanted to take the money from the department. So, that, we did not suffer that in this department.”

Participant W-2 said, “I would say the same” (not impacted). Participant W-3 asserted, “Basically, it’s a revolving door. Every time, contractually, we lose a good portion from the department for better opportunities” (not impacted directly by Floyd’s incident). Participant W-4 responded, “I don’t think it made a difference here. People (officers) were either retiring because their time was up or left to another agency. I don’t think it had to do with the incident” (Floyd’s incident). Participant W-5 commented, “That has never been an issue here.” Participant W-6 asserted, “As far as retention, I think people come here very young and use this department as a stepping stone to move to other departments.” Participant W-7 responded, “I don’t think that affected us in any way; for retention, there have been other issues as far as monetary and things like that. We had no George Floyd issues.” Participant W-8 also relayed, “The only thing, the retention, it has nothing to do with George Floyd, it’s the salaries. It always will be the salaries. It’s the name of the game.” Participant W-9 responded, “I don’t think it affected the department.”

According to the responses provided by the participants interviewed at Sites One, Two, and Three, it was found that the occurrence of George Floyd's murder did not exhibit any noticeable influence on the retention of officers within their respective agencies. The majority of participants (28 out of 29) from all three sites expressed the view that the retention issues encountered by the agency were not directly linked to the George Floyd incident.

Research Question Five

The fifth research question was: *What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?* Upon analyzing the data, a predominant theme surfaced regarding the given topic. **Theme 7:** Police managers need to become better leaders. Table 7, shown below, visually represents the number of participants and the number of references mentioning the theme.

Table 7.

Research Question 5, Theme 7

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders	29	29

Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders. The seventh theme was on leadership at various levels. For example, when asked how police managers could improve hiring police officers for the agency. Participant F-1 responded, “Most agencies recruit on social media now. A lot of people are on social media. I’ve never seen a post from this agency online advertising that they are open for recruitment or hiring. Participant F-2 believes that police managers should be fair and hire candidates based on their abilities to perform police duty and their level of education. Participant F-2 further said, “I would recommend them to just be fair with the overall candidates and hire them based on their abilities or education.” Participant F-3 had a different view on how police managers could improve hiring police officers for the agency. Participant F-3 mentioned, “Perhaps more money, more than anything.” Participant F-4 also had

a different view: "I would create an app that would make it easier for applicants to communicate with the managers for hiring; to make it easier for the asking of paperwork or for applicants to ask questions."

Participant F-5 mentioned, "Learn different management styles that will help them improve their skill sets, which makes the department more appealing to applicants." Participant F-6 had some interesting thoughts: "The short of it would be go and do some job fairs, something like that. Maybe we could get some better candidates." Participant F-7 mentioned, "I think pay is probably the biggest motivator when people are looking for employment, whether it would be in policing or otherwise."

Participant F-8 had a different view by saying, "I believe that, in my personal opinion, one should have an opportunity to be in my position (background detective). Participant F-9 had a negative view of leadership within the agency. Participant F-9 said, "Try to hire officers (real potential candidates) instead of family and friends (favoritism). Participant F-10 mentioned, "Maybe going over to the academy; recruiting at the academy."

Site Two officers had mixed views. For example, participant U-1 stated:

"I think that I mean, in a perfect world, would be to focus on people that have been officers for a long time and that are no longer in the place of like that, you know, running and gunning and how, we, you know, how we call it full of p*** and vinegar because this is a different environment and this is really not the place for that. And so, I think they come in here thinking that it's like a normal police department, and it's not until they end up leaving because they want to do everything they were taught in the academy. And this is not a place where you're going to see all those things."

Participant U-2 had another view and believed that ‘pay’ would be on how to improve recruitment. Participant U-3 mentioned hiring managers should be “more selective” in improving police recruitment. Participant U-4 had another view and believed that hiring managers should implement brochures with a description of the job benefits. Participant U-5 believes the hiring managers should be more ‘forthcoming’ with applicants concerning the job description. Participant U-6 stated, “Maybe shorten the background investigation a little bit. I think it was a little too extensive. Felt like I was applying for the FBI.” Participant U-7 stated:

“But I think we probably need to be a little bit more out there. As far as social media, I think that’s one of the big things the other agencies are using. And it’s a challenge because I know some agencies have people solely dedicated to social media. But I think that’s something that can reach out to some folks that are out there looking for something and might find a good fit here.”

Participant U-8 believed that hiring managers should recruit from the police academy. Participant U-9 stated:

“Number one, they need to stop lying to people. An example of that is one of the selling points that **PD background investigators do is they tell you a selling point you can go to school here, and you can pursue your degree since we work at a university. The problem is the constant shift changes, which you have absolutely no control over because there is no seniority here. Even if you come here, you aren’t going to necessarily be able to go to school.”

Participant U-10 believes that in improving recruitment, hiring managers should provide a better benefits package that would include a better pension. Participants

provided mixed views on recommendations for their agency to improve the recruitment process.

Site Three participants were also interviewed regarding what actions managers in Miami-Dade County can take to improve employee recruitment. For example, Participant W-1 stated: “They (agency) need to get more money, increase the budget and get grants.” Participant W-2 had the same response, “Salary and specialized units.” Participant W-3 responded by saying, “Going digital, like social media.” Participant W-4 mentioned, “This agency, I believe the only factor that is left to fix is the pay.” Participant W-5 had a different response other than salary. He said, “Do a more thorough background” (on candidates and making sure the agency is a good fit). Participant W-6 stated:

“It’s about the advertisement and being proactive. As the main background guy, I don’t think we are reaching out and being proactive as far as recruiting. It’s either a referral or something on the website. We really haven’t been putting it out, especially through social media. Our social media is improving because of the new city manager and our communications department. This is going to improve in the very near future.”

Participant W-7 mentioned that managers can improve hiring new officers by “Coming forward with a better package to attract more candidates. That being said, like raising the salary, starting pay, and specialized units to attract more people. You know, present a better package to attract and retain.” Participant W-8 responded by saying, “Making us more competitive with the larger departments financially and growth.” Participant W-9 had a similar response in comparison to the other participants. He said, “They need to get more money.”

According to the responses provided by the participants interviewed at Sites One, Two, and Three, there was a mixture of responses as it relates to police managers being better leaders by improving employee recruitment. There were 29 out of 29 participants who felt police managers could do better in improving employee recruitment in their respective agencies.

Research Question Six

The sixth research question was: *What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?* After thoroughly analyzing the data, a prominent theme emerged regarding the given topic. The following data is **Theme 8**: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention. Table 6, shown below, visually represents the number of participants and references regarding the theme.

Table 6.

Research Question 6 Theme 8

Theme	n of participants contributing to this theme (N=29)	n of references to this theme in the data
Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention.	29	19

Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention. This theme posits that there is a

consensus among officers that police management should prioritize salary as a means to improve police retention. Participant F-1 said:

“Definitely a step plan to give better pay to tenured officers. You have to reward people here for coming and staying. I think, similarly, there are certain things that a lot of departments allow in today’s day and age to their officers, like letting their officers have beards. As mundane as that sounds, to a lot of people, that is a big deal. A lot of other agencies offer it, and we don’t.

Participant F-2 had a similar response by saying, “The pay and changing some of their (command staff) methods on how they treat their officers here.” Participant F-4 mentioned, “I believe we can get a higher starting pay and opening up more specialized units.” Participant F-7 mentioned, “I think the main key factor would be pay.” Participant F-8 had a different opinion by saying, “Cashing out sick time or holidays.” Participant F-9 stated, “Bring the salary up.” Lastly, Participant F-10 mentioned, “Improve the salary and create specialized units.”

Participant W-1 stated, “With this agency, to improve retention is salary, one hundred percent.” Participant W-2 also mentioned that “salary” is the best factor in improving police retention. Participant W-4 said that “the pay raises and adding steps” (contractual step raises). Participant W-5 is a seasoned officer with 23 years of law enforcement experience. Participant W-5 stated, “Creating more room for advancement and salary” would improve police retention. Participant W-6 is a seasoned detective with 18 years of law enforcement experience.

Participant W-6 mentioned: “As far as getting to implement, I mean no one is leaving because of the moral. This theme posits that there is an overall consensus among officers that police management should prioritize salary as a means to improve police retention. is

bad, or anything like that. People want to grow, especially young officers. They want to get into specialized units. It's tough right now at this moment. They (young officers) look into bigger departments where they have dozens of specialized units, and salary is one big factor.”

Participant W-7 is a seasoned patrol sergeant with 25 years of law enforcement experience. Participant W-7 said, “Bringing the starting salary up, specialized units and annexing would bring growth.” Participant W-8 is a seasoned patrol sergeant with 30 years of law enforcement experience. Participant W-8 mentioned, “Making us more competitive with other departments in growth and financially.” The consensus among the participants of Sites One and Three, with the exception of Site Two participants, was that prioritizing salary is necessary for managers to enhance employee retention.

Discussion of Study Findings

The first research question was: *What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?* Two main themes emerged from the data. **Theme 1:** Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers. There were 20 participants that contributed to this theme. **Theme 2:** Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. There were 14 participants that contributed to this theme.

The second research question was: *What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this research question, two themes emerged from the data. **Theme 3:** Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers. There were 51 references that were produced from the research question. **Theme 4:** Officers felt a lack

of specialized units created issues. There were 14 references that were produced from this research question as well.

The third research question was: *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, only one theme emerged from the data. **Theme 5:** Officers felt Floyd's murder did not affect recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County. This research question produced 23 references.

The fourth research question was: *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?* In response to this question, one theme emerged from the data. **Theme 6:** Officers felt Floyd's murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County. This research question produced 28 references.

The fifth research question was: *What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?* Upon analyzing the data, a predominant theme surfaced regarding the given topic. **Theme 7:** Police managers need to become better leaders. This research question produced 29 references from all 29 participants.

The sixth research question was: *What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?* After thoroughly analyzing the data, a prominent theme emerged regarding the given topic. **Theme 8:** According to the participants, they believe that management should prioritize compensation to improve police retention. There were 19 references produced from this research question.

Evaluation of Findings

The following research questions and themes driving this study are:

Table 7.*Research Questions and Corresponding Themes*

Research Question	Themes Used to Address the Research Question
RQ 1: What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?	<p>Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers.</p> <p>Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.</p>
RQ 2: What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?	<p>Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers.</p> <p>Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.</p>
RQ 3: In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?	Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County.
RQ 4: In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?	Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County.
RQ 5: What action can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?	Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders.
RQ 6: What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?	Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention.

The theoretical framework guiding this study was Herzberg’s two-factor motivation-hygiene theory and Transformational Leadership. Skaggs et al. (2022) assert that the examination of hygiene factors by police officers involves an assessment of several job-related elements, including compensation, benefits, organizational regulations, and interpersonal dynamics within the workplace. This concept is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory. In addition, it is also worth mentioning that participants from Sites One, Two, and Three

all had comments related to their agency's leadership as it pertained to salary/pay, specialized units, and other related matters. It is worth mentioning that not all agency participants were pleased with their agency's leadership.

Transformational leadership strives to motivate and inspire their subordinates as leaders. Transformational leadership is defined as leader behavior influencing both the values and aspirations of followers by activating higher-order needs and arousing followers to transcend self-interest for the organization's benefit (Russel, 2014). Let's consider that transformational leadership is founded on the principle of motivating people to reach their perceived capabilities. As indicated by their respective participants, the leaders of all three agencies have not fully met some parts of this leadership style. The variables pertaining to salary/pay, specialized units, growth prospects, and other related aspects are not attributable to the subordinates but to the respective agencies' leaders.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the factors influencing police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County, Florida, within the post-Floyd era. The research questions presented in Chapter 1 served as a foundation for developing the interview questions included in Appendix B. The research questions asked:

(RQ1) What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ2) What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ3) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ4) In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?

(RQ5) What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?

(RQ6) What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?

The researcher conducted audio-recorded, face-to-face interviews with a total of 29 law enforcement participants who were affiliated with three distinct police agencies. The participants were non-administrative officers who had served in law enforcement for a minimum of three years. The replies were subsequently subjected to manual analysis. Upon doing this analysis, several themes were identified within the dataset. The identified themes effectively addressed the study question and offered valuable insights into the agencies' replies. The untimely loss of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, at the hands of Officer Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department, undoubtedly constituted a distressing event. However, the issue of recruiting and retaining police officers in Miami-Dade County, Florida, following the incident did not appear to impact recruitment and retention across the three research sites within Miami-Dade County, Florida. The results demonstrate that police recruitment and retention may be positively affected by increasing wages and providing opportunities for officers to join specialized units. The research questions created for this research helped form the interview questions for the volunteer participants from all three sites, which produced the themes for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The primary purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research was to attain a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining police officers in Miami-Dade County following the murder of Floyd. Additionally, the study sought to establish a strategy to address this issue. This pragmatic approach employed a qualitative research methodology. For this study, three law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County participated. The three participating agencies exhibit differences in their respective sizes, geographical locations, and physical compositions. The methodology employed in this study used semi-structured interviews to gather data. There were 10 participants randomly selected from Site One by using an online randomization program known as “Wheel Random” to mitigate any biases. A total of 10 participants were purposively selected from the Site Two Chief of Police’s designee and nine participants from the Site Three Chief of Police’s designee. The participants for Site One were chosen by utilizing an online randomization tool called "Wheel random" to minimize the potential influence of biases. The individuals involved in this study are law enforcement officers and non-administrative police sergeants.

A formal request was submitted to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for authorization to conduct interviews with human participants. Following the granting of consent, letters of invitation were emailed to three law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Invite letters were dispatched to potential interviewees after obtaining consent from the three sites. The researcher arranged for face-to-face interviews to be conducted with the volunteer participants. The designated time was adhered to for the commencement of the interviews, during which questions outlined in Appendix B were posed, and the interviews were recorded.

A pilot study was conducted to help in the development of the questionnaire. After conducting a pilot test and analyzing the resulting data, the researcher solicited comments from three persons with extensive law enforcement knowledge and experience. These individuals were not included in the study as participants but were consulted to give valuable information and constructive criticism on the questionnaire. After a thorough evaluation carried out by individuals who were not directly engaged in the research, several modifications were made to different questions on the questionnaire.

A sample of twenty-nine law enforcement professionals participated in face-to-face interviews, following which the audio recordings of such interviews were transcribed utilizing Otter.ai software. The transcriptions underwent manual review thereafter to guarantee a thorough assessment. After the audio was uploaded, a thorough analysis was conducted to discern patterns in the words and phrases indicated by the participants. Unique words were discerned for each individual involved in the study, which might possibly yield useful insights and practical implications for other law enforcement agencies. By employing a manual analytic technique, the researcher successfully identified discernible themes among the sample of individuals who underwent interviews. Applying a thematic analysis technique enabled the identification and exploration of appropriate themes in this study's findings. This chapter will go into great detail about these findings.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to get a comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with the recruitment and retention of police officers in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The primary objective of this exploratory qualitative study was to provide an in-depth exploration by conducting interviews with law enforcement officers who expressed their

willingness to participate. The interviews' primary emphasis revolved around recruiting and retention issues after the tragic event of George Floyd's death and the potential impact this occurrence may have had on the recruitment and retention of police personnel. The 29 participants produced eight themes:

Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers.

Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.

Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers.

Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.

Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd's murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County.

Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd's murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County.

Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders.

Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention.

Discussion

Recently, law enforcement organizations nationwide have seen rising attrition rates and challenges in recruiting law enforcement personnel. The issue is further exacerbated by the impending retirement of seasoned officers, who have long served as their respective agencies' backbone. Some organizations are encountering a shortage of experienced officers to fill their positions. If governmental institutions fail to tackle this matter effectively, a significant disparity will arise among agencies regarding the ratio between seasoned and newly appointed officers. This study's primary objective was to fully comprehend the difficulties linked to the recruitment

and retention of law enforcement personnel in Miami-Dade County, Florida. This qualitative exploration aimed to interview law enforcement officers who expressed their desire to participate in the area of study. The central focus of the interviews was on the recruitment and retention challenges following the tragic incident of George Floyd's death and the potential consequences it may have had on the recruitment and retention of police personnel. Eight themes were identified by the 29 participants from the six research questions.

Research Question 1. *What specific challenges do police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County?* The aim of this research question was for seasoned officers to describe their belief on the challenge of recruitment facing their agency. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a series of questions pertaining to the matter. The results from this research question consisted of two themes. Those themes were: (1) Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers, and (2) Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues.

Theme 1: Officers felt pay was challenging in recruiting officers. This theme described the participants' perception of the challenges police agencies face in recruiting officers in Miami-Dade County. For example, some of the more elaborate statements from Participants W-7 and W-9 were quite interesting. Participant W-7, a patrol sergeant, said, "The challenges we've been facing are due to our size. Since we are a smaller agency, it's not so attractive for young recruits to come to a smaller agency where they don't have too much chance to go into specialized units. I guess also, the main one would be pay." Participant W-8 is also a patrol sergeant and stated:

"I think it would be the quality of officers. In my opinion, it's hard to get officers that are qualified for this department. They have the mentality of law enforcement, like maybe something they watch on television, and when they come here, they see it's not as

glamorous as they thought, and retaining them also would be difficult because of salaries. A small department does not have all the things the other bigger departments have to offer.”

“Compensation includes not only salary and benefits but also viable career ladders, adequate training and equipment, and perceptions by officers that a policing career will afford a good life” (Wilson et al., 2010, p. 36). Participants in all three sites indicated that the issue of compensation emerged as an important barrier in the recruitment and retention of police officers, as indicated by the data gathered. Based on the data obtained from Sites One, Two, and Three, it was observed that a significant majority of 20 out of 29 participants placed considerable importance on the factor of pay/salary in relation to the recruitment of police personnel to research question one.

Theme 2: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. Theme two suggests agencies can increase recruitment potential while minimizing turnover by allowing officers to join specialized units. This theme was referred to 12 times. A significant number of participants expressed the perception that their respective agencies exhibited a deficiency in terms of growth opportunities. Consequently, this perceived lack of growth has deterred their leaders from establishing specialized units. The individuals expressed a sentiment that their lack of prospects for joining a specialist unit hindered their personal and professional development as law enforcement officers. The participants expressed a sense of disillusionment as they perceived patrol duties as the sole prospect awaiting them upon commencing their work, triggering feelings of discouragement. For example, several participants strongly resonated with the feedback about the absence of specialized units. For example, when Participant F-3 was asked about some of the issues facing police in the agency, Participant F-3 stated, “Since it’s a small department,

there is not the possibility of moving around or getting into a specialized unit.” When asked why police officers were leaving the agency, participant F-6 stated, "Having a bigger department, it's easier to get into, you know, you have more access to more specialty units.”

In relation to some challenges encountered in the context of police retention in the agency, participant F-7 stated, “A lack of growth within the department, and it refers to investigative and specialized units.” When Participant F-8 was asked why police officers were leaving the agency, F-8 responded, “In my opinion, the officers that are leaving are probably the younger officers because they want to go to a bigger agency, and they want to go to different specialized units.” When Participant F-10 was asked to describe the agency's recruitment issues, F-10 responded by stating, “Yes, not enough specialized units.” When asked what could be done to improve the recruitment process, F-10 responded, “More specialized units.” When asked what could be done to improve the agency's retention issues, F-10 responded, “Specialized units.”

Certain participants from Site Two also identified specialized units as a recruitment problem for police personnel. For example, participant U-7 responded similarly, “We are a small agency. Some of the issues are a lack of movement.” Participant U-10 said, “This particular agency is unique among law enforcement because it is a very small agency that deals solely on a university campus setting. A new officer, someone that's new to law enforcement, there's not much opportunity for growth or to do much other than patrol.”

Participants from Site Three also considered a lack of specialized units in their agency. For instance, Participant W-3 mentioned, “There is a lack of opportunity except patrol. No special units or things like that.” Participant W-6 had something similar by saying, “As far as recruitment, we're a small agency. We don't have many other specialized units other than patrol. So, when a candidate looks at our department, they look at where can I go after patrol or

advancement. Right now, as it is, it's very limited." Participant W-7 also mentioned, "Some of the challenges we've been facing are due to our size. Since we're a smaller agency, it's not so attractive for young recruits to come where they have not much of a chance to go into specialized units or things like that as far as growth is concerned."

One of the key considerations in the process of recruiting prospective candidates is the evaluation of job circumstances. Prospective police applicants seek compelling aspects that would influence their decision to pursue employment with a specific law enforcement agency. According to the findings of this research, a lack of growth has been a contributing cause to the issue of retention. One often observed factor leading to officers' departure from their existing agency is the perceived scarcity of career growth or advancement prospects. Over an extended period, larger agencies have effectively capitalized on the increased possibilities of attracting highly skilled officers from smaller departments (Orrick, 2018). Aside from growth as it pertains to specialized units, compensation is still ranked as the number one challenge.

Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory focused on the psychological needs of the employees as it relates to organizational policies, pay, working conditions, interoffice relationship, benefits, and job security (Bhatt et al., 2022). Herzberg's two-factor motivational theory provides support for this research question. This second theme aligns with research question one as a significant challenge in recruiting applicants into their agencies due to a lack of specialized units.

Research Question 2. *What specific challenges do police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County?* The objective of the research question was to gather perspectives from experienced law enforcement officers regarding their perceptions of the

difficulties associated with officer retention within their agency. This specific theme elicited 51 references, as stated by the 29 participants.

Theme 3: Officers felt pay was challenging in retaining officers. This theme suggests agencies can minimize retention issues by increasing pay to lessen turnover. This theme was identified fifty-one times by all 29 participants. This theme produced many responses from the participants. The issue of compensation has predominantly been one of the top issues in the law enforcement career. Participants from all three Sites believe that pay/salary is a top priority for officers. Many have stated they have lost good officers to better-paying agencies, which is why their agency is sometimes thought of as a revolving door. When asked to describe the challenges of pay associated with police retention, many of the participants had much to say. Some of the more elaborate statements came from some of the participants which felt strongly about this research question. One example is Participant U-2, who possesses 37 years of experience in law enforcement and currently serves as a retired FBI agent at Site Two, where his duties include performing background investigations. He expressed a comparable response by expressing:

“Since we hire senior or we hire retired officers, most of them know it’s their time to go and they don’t want to do more than 4 to 5 years; it’s their time to go. So, it’s an age kind of factor. The younger people want to go to a more exciting kind of work such as a bigger agency that has more opportunities to be able to go into different units. Being that we are such a small agency we don’t give them that opportunity here. Pay is definitely a factor as well.”

Participant U-8, a patrol sergeant with a tenure of 19 years, is currently assigned to the midnight squad. This participant has the belief that compensation serves as a crucial factor in employee retention. The individual expressed:

“I think we are not competitive when it comes to pay; we are not competitive with other departments. We used to have a step raise and a merit increase but we don’t have those anymore. So, people are coming in at whatever they are making, and they are staying there for years and they see other people that started with them making a lot more. So, some of them are leaving because they are just unhappy with the way they are treated and some are leaving for the money issue and some of them are leaving because it’s just not fast paced.”

Participants from Site Three likewise hold the belief that a compensation-related challenge is contributing to the problem of employee retention inside their agency. For example, Participant W-1 can be identified as a patrol sergeant assigned to the morning shift, possessing a decade of experience in law enforcement. According to Participant W-1, He stated:

“There are two main reasons: Number one is definitely salary. That’s the main retention issue that we have. You have to stay competitive and compare yourself to other agencies that are equal in size. You have to stay competitive because people are going to go where they believe they can make more money or better benefits. My opinion is that they (officers) go to other places (other agencies) that are bigger and pay better. The salary needs to go up and stay competitive county-wise.”

Compensation continues being a contributing factor in retaining police officers. In support of this research question and theme three, Skaggs et al., (2022), police officers investigate hygiene factors encompassing job conditions such as pay, benefits, policies, and work relationship. Research question two, in conjunction with the third theme, examines the factors contributing to the departure of competent officers from one agency to another.

Theme 4: Officers felt a lack of specialized units created issues. This theme suggests that agencies can help retain officers by implementing specialized units, thus lessening the turnover rates. There were 14 references made by 29 participants. According to the participants, many of their officers who have become employed had expectations of getting into a specialized unit other than patrol. This has been one of the challenges in retaining officers. For instance, Site One Participant F-4 said:

“I believe since we’re a small agency and there are not many units to get into, people are leaving because they want to do something else in their law enforcement career. There are not a lot of opportunities when it comes to growth and lateral movement. There are few units to get into, and I believe that’s why. I believe opening more units and being able to move up in the ranks to make it easier or make it more available by hiring more people so we can have various units that people can get into and decide what they like.”

In relation to the topic of retention, Participant W-7 also elaborated on the lack of specialized units and expressed the following viewpoint:

“Recently, we had five leave, and it was because of that, money and growth and going to specialized units. We just started working on that now, and we are bringing back some specialized units that we had years ago, and they had done away with them. So, that would attract young guys to, like motors, if you are inclined to do traffic, you have the opportunity to go to motors and work Monday through Friday with weekends off.”

In their study, Bodziany et al. (2020) identified hygiene factors within the institutional context, encompassing policies, regulatory systems, interpersonal connections, working environments, and compensation. If these factors fail to align with the anticipated standards of

individuals who have acquired substantial experience in the field, namely recruits or officers, in such instances, this scenario may result in unfavorable consequences, such as the voluntary departure of law enforcement personnel from the agency. Consequently, it engenders a range of adverse consequences for the productivity and financial outlays of police agencies. Furthermore, apart from the explicit expenses associated with the departure of an officer, the agency frequently encounters implicit costs, including the expenditure of time and financial resources necessary for the training and education of new officers. The fourth theme is consistent with the second research question, in conjunction with theme three which explores what specific challenges police agencies face in retaining officers in Miami-Dade County.

According to the participants, compensation and specialized units remain an issue. During this research study, it became evident that a significant number of participants expressed the view that compensation and specialized units were the primary concerns about the retention of police officers, and it is something that police managers should address in keeping the turnover rate minimal.

Research Question 3. *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police recruitment in Miami-Dade County?* The main objective of this study question was to gather perspectives from experienced law enforcement personnel regarding their perceptions of the influence of George Floyd's murder on the retention of police officers in Miami-Dade County. Among the total of 29 law enforcement officers who participated throughout the three sites, a total of 23 references were identified. Results from this research question produced one theme. The theme was: (1) Officers felt Floyd's murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County.

Theme 5: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect recruitment in Miami-Dade County. The fifth theme had to do with whether the murder of George Floyd affected recruitment in Miami-Dade County. Nine out of 10 participants from Site One, five out of 10 participants from Site Two, and nine out of 9 participants from Site Three did not believe Floyd’s murder impacted Miami-Dade County recruitment. A total of 23 of 29 participants collectively agreed that the murder of Floyd did not impact police recruitment in Miami-Dade County.

The participants from all three sites showed a lack of worry regarding the impact of the Floyd incident on their respective communities. The prevailing sentiment among the participants indicated a belief that the impact of the Floyd incident was more widespread across the United States. A significant number of police officers in the United States have submitted their resignations as a result of insufficient backing from the general public, including certain members of the political sphere. As an illustration, it has been reported that a significant number of officers, over 100, have departed from the Minneapolis Police Department. Additionally, the cities of Portland and San Francisco have witnessed a notable surge in resignations. Furthermore, the Chicago Police Department has observed a 15 percent rise in retirements throughout the year 2022 in comparison to the corresponding period in 2019 (Mourtgos et al., 2022). The most significant instances of organizational failure in the aftermath of the Floyd incident pertain to the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Seattle Police Department. According to Mourtgos et al. (2022), the number of NYPD officers leaving the department monthly was around twice as high as in 2019, leading to the department's lowest staffing levels in the past ten years. This fifth theme aligns with research question three, in conjunction with theme five

regarding what ways the murder of George Floyd affected police recruitment in Miami-Dade County.

Research question 4. *In what ways did the murder of George Floyd affect police retention in Miami-Dade County?* The primary aim of this research question was to obtain the perspective of the participants on the ways the murder of George Floyd affected police retention in Miami-Dade County. There were 28 references produced from this research question.

Theme 6: Officers felt Floyd’s murder did not affect retention in Miami-Dade County. The sixth theme had to do with whether the murder of George Floyd affected retention in Miami-Dade County. Ten out of 10 participants from Site One, nine out of 10 participants from Site Two, and nine out of 9 participants from Site Three did not believe Floyd’s murder affected retention in Miami-Dade County. The issues focused on compensation rather than Floyd’s incident. Participants claimed the retention issues had less to do with George Floyd’s murder and more with the lack of compensation and upward mobility. For example, Participant W-1 from Site Three elaborated by saying:

“I don’t think it affected the department (Floyd’s murder). I think, actually, it improved a little bit. Because during that period, law enforcement agencies all of them went through rough times dealing with people that don’t like the police, and they wanted to take the money from the department. So, that, we did not suffer that (Floyd’s murder) in this department.”

While the participants did not identify retention in Miami-Dade County, Florida, as a direct consequence of Floyd's murder, it is worth noting that protests and rallies in other parts of the United States have probably had an impact on police recruiting. Scholars believe that more

than 20 million people participated in rallies against this homicide and other police misconduct in the U.S., making these the most significant social demonstrations in American history (Freilich & Chermak, 2022). This theme generated 28 references from 29 participants. This research question, in conjunction with theme six, revealed that the consensus is that the murder of George Floyd did not affect police retention in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Research question 5. *What actions can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee recruitment?* The primary aim of this study question was to collect viewpoints from seasoned law enforcement officers from all three sites regarding the measures that police management in Miami-Dade County may undertake to enhance police recruitment. One theme emerged in response to the study question. The theme was: (1) Police managers need to become better leaders. Twenty-nine out of 29 participants agreed that police managers should do more to improve employee recruitment.

Theme 7: Police managers need to become better leaders. The seventh theme was on leadership at various levels. “Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people; it is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals” (Northouse, 2019, p. 163). Police officers regard leadership as vital in establishing long-term objectives. When a law enforcement officer submits an application for a certain agency, there are multiple elements that influence their decision. These criteria encompass various aspects such as compensation, retirement benefits, work schedule, shift differential pay, provision of a police take-home vehicle, uniform allowance, health benefits, and opportunities for participation in specialized units, among others. The participants in this current research study provided recommendations to their respective hiring supervisors regarding the recruitment of potential applicants. The proposed strategies for improvement include (a) enhancing compensation

packages, (b) using social media platforms for recruitment purposes, (c) establishing specialized units within the police force, and (d) adopting a more transparent approach towards the communication of police duties and responsibilities. There were some strong opinions from several participants. For example, Participant U-1 from Site Two stated:

“I think that I mean, in a perfect world, would be to focus on people that have been officers for a long time and that are no longer in the place of like that, you know, running and gunning and how, we, you know, how we call it full of p*** and vinegar because this is a different environment and this is really not the place for that. And so, I think they come in here thinking that it’s like a normal police department, and it’s not until they end up leaving because they want to do everything they were taught in the academy. And this is not a place where you’re going to see all those things.”

Participant U-7 stated:

“But I think we probably need to be a little bit more out there. As far as social media, I think that’s one of the big things the other agencies are using. And it’s a challenge because I know some agencies have people solely dedicated to social media. But I think that’s something that can reach out to some folks that are out there looking for something and might find a good fit here.”

Participant U-9 stated:

“Number one, they need to stop lying to people. An example of that is one of the selling points that **PD background investigators do is they tell you a selling point you can go to school here, and you can pursue your degree since we work at a university. The problem is the constant shift changes, which you have absolutely no control over because

there is no seniority here. Even if you come here, you aren't going to necessarily be able to go to school.”

Participant W-6 stated:

“It's about the advertisement and being proactive. As the main background guy, I don't think we are reaching out and being proactive as far as recruiting. It's either a referral or something on the website. We really haven't been putting it out, especially through social media. Our social media is improving because of the new city manager and our communications department. This is going to improve in the very near future.”

The responses concerning improving employee recruitment start from a leadership role. The World Wide Web is useful for agencies to promote job openings and engage with prospective police candidates. The service is always accessible to prospective candidates, 24 hours a day. This approach offers cost-effectiveness and enhanced customization capabilities compared to several alternative recruiting methods. The World Wide Web enables agencies to broaden the reach of their brand message effectively. As a result of this phenomenon, it is a regular practice for agencies to utilize the World Wide Web and social media to advertise job openings.

To promote organizational success, it is imperative for leaders to possess the ability to inspire and motivate individuals. Transformational leaders can bring about significant changes in their subordinates by effectively achieving targeted goals. The concept of transformational leadership is increasingly being embraced by leaders in the field of law enforcement. Pyle and Cangemi (2019) assert that municipal managers place significant importance on several key leadership and performance measures, namely delegation, trustworthiness, sensitivity, and

teamwork. Each of these characteristics is suggestive of the concept of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership, when practiced, can bring positive results to agencies such as Sites One, Two, and Three. This research question produced 29 themes from all 29 participants. This seventh theme aligns with research question five regarding the action(s) police managers need to take to improve employee retention.

Research question 6. *What steps can police managers in Miami-Dade County take to improve employee retention?* Retention continues to be an issue in policing. It is common for employees who wish to maintain positive relationships with their employers to inform their superiors that they have secured more advantageous pay in their forthcoming job. Furthermore, if an officer sees an increase in income in their new role, it may be readily asserted that their departure was motivated by the prospect of a greater wage. The main objective of this research question was to gather perspectives from experienced law enforcement personnel at all three sites discussing the strategies that police management in Miami-Dade County may implement to improve police retention. A singular theme surfaced about the inquiry posed. The central theme explored in the discourse was: (1) The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention.

Theme 8: The opinion of law enforcement officers is that management should prioritize compensation to enhance police retention. This theme posits that officers' consensus is that police management should prioritize compensation to improve police retention. It is no secret that police officers are underpaid for their daily job performance. Police officers put their lives on the line every day they put on that uniform to serve their community. According to the participants, they believe that management should prioritize compensation to improve police retention. There were 19 themes produced from this research question. The eighth theme aligns

with research question five regarding the kind of steps police managers should take to improve police retention. There were some perspectives shared by some of the participants which were elaborate. For example, Participant F-1 said:

“Definitely a step plan to give better pay to tenured officers. You have to reward people here for coming and staying. I think, similarly, there are certain things that a lot of departments allow in today’s day and age to their officers, like letting their officers have beards. As mundane as that sounds, to a lot of people, that is a big deal. A lot of other agencies offer it, and we don’t.

Participant W-6 mentioned: “

As far as getting to implement, I mean no one is leaving because of the moral. This theme posits that there is an overall consensus among officers that police management should prioritize salary as a means to improve police retention. is bad, or anything like that. People want to grow, especially young officers. They want to get into specialized units. It’s tough right now at this moment. They (young officers) look into bigger departments where they have dozens of specialized units, and salary is one big factor.”

The function of leadership within a police agency is of considerable importance and has the potential to influence turnover rates. “Managers view salary and benefits as the biggest element of compensation affecting turnover” (Wilson et al., 2010, p. 36). To effectively recruit and retain highly qualified candidates, it is imperative for agencies to offer competitive salaries that are commensurate with or beyond the prevailing industry norm. However, compensation encompasses more than just salary. Compensation packages encompass a range of remuneration

elements beyond monetary compensation, such as health insurance, retirement plans, leave policies and work schedules.

Inadequate leadership has the potential to result in adverse consequences for subordinates, including burnout, diminished performance, and a sense of discontentment towards the agency. Hence, transformational leaders must acknowledge their influence on subordinates using effective leadership strategies that foster positive relationships and cultivate a conducive work atmosphere. According to Pyle & Cangemi (2019), delegation, trustworthiness, sensitivity, and collaboration are among the central leadership and performance metrics that managers value. The consensus among the participants of Sites One and Three, except for Site Two participants, was that prioritizing salary is necessary for managers to enhance employee retention. There were 19 references produced from the 29 participants.

Application to Theoretical Framework

There are theories that provide insights into the social phenomenon of leadership and job conditions within the law enforcement career. Some of these theories tie into the issues of recruitment and retention, as they are based on the fundamental notion of relationship. This study's theoretical framework entailed Transformational Leadership Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory. The researcher found these two theories tie in nicely for this study. For example, the theory behind transformational leadership is a credible theory built on the foundation of relational leadership. Transformational leadership is defined as leader conduct impacting both the ideals and aspirations of followers by activating higher-order needs and inspiring followers to transcend self-interest for the organization's benefit (Russel, 2014). It is worth noting that some of the participants showed a preference for their leaders, while others expressed a preference for a diminished pseudo-transformational leadership style and sought a

greater emphasis on a relational approach. Nevertheless, what the researcher found of much interest was that the participants expressed a desire for their leaders to advocate for their interests in securing enhanced compensation and opportunities for growth in their careers. The theory behind transformational leadership helped shape this research study.

Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene theory was a good fit for this study and suited well. For instance, this theory postulates the existence of employee discontentment and contentment. Herzberg's two-factor motivation-hygiene factors focused on the psychological needs of the employees as they relate to organizational policies, pay, working conditions, interoffice relationships, benefits, and job security (Bhatt et al., 2022). Some of the participants postulated discontentment when it came to compensation, leadership, and growth opportunities. The Herzberg theory was deemed applicable and appropriate for the present research, as it provided a logical framework within which to conduct the research.

Implications

The study results of this research indicate that the participants understand the necessity for implementing changes in their respective agencies' recruiting and retention practices. The recruitment and retention approaches in Miami-Dade County necessitate a novel strategy. It is imperative for law enforcement leadership to prioritize the exploration of alternative recruitment avenues, including educational institutions such as high schools, colleges, and universities, as well as digital platforms like the Internet and social media, alongside traditional recruitment events like job fairs. The two biggest factors revealed in this study have been compensation and the lack of specialized units.

Despite several studies on police recruitment and retention, the specific context of Miami-Dade County has not been subject to any study in this area. Consequently, there is a lack

of comparative studies available for analysis. There is a sense of optimism that addressing the recruiting and retention challenges in Miami-Dade County, as shown by the data, holds the potential to yield long-term benefits for the community and law enforcement.

Limitations

Limitations refer to factors that constrained the study process, either due to circumstances beyond one's control or only discernible in retrospect (Glesne, 2016). The present research study was subject to some limitations; however, not on the study's outcome. For instance, two of the three original Sites did not partake in the research study, contrary to the initial statements made by the agency's top managers, causing the researcher to search for two Sites that were willing to participate in this research study. Therefore, the researcher sought to address this concern by engaging two more sites with the expectation of their participation in the study. Consequently, these two additional Sites consented and participated in the research study.

A different limitation gave rise to challenges as well. The research study initially had a total of 30 participants, with the intention of including 10 participants from each agency. Nevertheless, the outcome was not as anticipated. Site Three was able to furnish a total of nine participants, as opposed to the intended ten, owing to the presence of police officers who did not meet the stipulated requirement of possessing a minimum of three years of experience in the field of law enforcement. Despite those limitations, the research study was able to progress.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that researchers investigate the correlation between ride-along programs and law enforcement recruitment. Additionally, a study could be conducted exploring the correlation between retention and officer participation in pre-employment ride-along programs. "Ride-along programs can impact the way individuals understand police because ride-

a-longs provide opportunities for one-on-one, face-to-face interaction between citizens and the police, allowing for meaningful conversations; moreover, these programs allow for experiential learning and expose citizens to the occupational and social realities of policing” (Mathna & Koen, 2023, p. 288). The ride-along program is a highly recommended practice as it offers an immersive experience in the field of law enforcement, enabling individuals to gain firsthand exposure to the realities of police work. Additionally, this program serves as a valuable tool for applicants to assess the compatibility between their interests and the specific agency they are considering for employment while reducing the possibilities of future turnovers.

“Managers view salary and benefits as the biggest element of compensation affecting turnover” (Wilson et al., 2010, p.36). To effectively recruit and retain highly qualified candidates, agencies must offer competitive salaries that are commensurate with or beyond the prevailing industry norm. However, compensation encompasses more than just salary. Compensation packages encompass a range of remuneration elements beyond monetary compensation, such as health insurance, retirement plans, leave policies, and work schedules. Further research is recommended to explore whether a causal relationship exists between increased salary and retention.

The researcher would also recommend further research into the correlation between leadership, police recruitment, and retention. While conducting this research study, many participants expressed a desire for improved performance from their agency’s leadership in various areas, including recruiting highly qualified candidates, enhancing salaries and benefits, and creating specialized units. These measures are crucial for fostering an environment conducive to professional development, reducing the likelihood of current officers seeking employment opportunities in larger agencies. “Leaders may need to learn to frame

transformational leadership practices as a tool to better achieve organizational goals: (Pyle & Cangemi, 2019, p. 86). These issues all come down to leadership within the corresponding agency in the effectiveness of recruitment and retirement.

Growth is essential in any police agency. An effective way of recruiting and retaining officers within an agency is by expanding specialized units. There is little room for specialization in small agencies, and recruits must wait their turn for higher-level assignments (Wilson, et al., 2010). As officers usually begin their law enforcement careers as patrol officers, the desire for growth into specialized units, such as homicide, robbery, S.W.A.T., and motorcycle units, are just some examples that would help prevent officers from seeking other specialized interests in other agencies. A study recommendation for potential researchers would be to encourage leaders of smaller agencies to implement policies for specialized units, thus creating growth opportunities and lessening the turnover rates of those agencies.

The researcher examined police recruitment and retention after George Floyd's death. This study revealed that Floyd's murder did not cause police recruitment and retention issues. Jackson et al. (2023) found that 66% of liberals and 7% of conservatives supported police defunding. With 78% of extremely liberal people agreeing or strongly agreeing that the police should be defunded and 92% of extremely conservative people disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, the ideological extremes were even more stark. A consensus of the participants felt that Floyd's murder particularly affected blue states controlled by liberal politicians, not affecting Miami-Dade County, Florida, which is considered a red state under Governor Ron DeSantis.

Summary

The main objective of this qualitative phenomenology study was to fully comprehend the elements contributing to the difficulties encountered in recruiting and retaining police officers in Miami-Dade County after the murder of Floyd. Furthermore, the research aimed to formulate a suggested approach for addressing this matter. The research methodology utilized in this study was qualitative, applying a pragmatic approach. This study involved the participation of three law enforcement departments located in Miami-Dade County. The three agencies involved demonstrate variations in terms of their sizes, geographical distributions, and physical structures. The research approach utilized in this study involved using semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection from the 29 participants.

The researcher intended to identify whether police recruitment and retention was an issue following the murder of George Floyd. As a result of this study, it was revealed that the issues of police recruitment and retention were not related to Floyd's murder but had to do with other circumstances that have been around before and post-Floyd's incident. The issues of compensation, specialized units, and leadership continue to be challenging in policing. Each police agency administers the budget differently according to the needs of their community. It is imperative to acknowledge that police chiefs and other organizational leaders while managing their agency's financial resources, should prioritize the well-being of law enforcement personnel by investing a significant amount of the annual budget for officer compensation. It is noteworthy as a reminder that law enforcement officers are responsible for safeguarding their communities, often at the risk of their own lives. Consequently, it is imperative that they get appropriate compensation commensurate with their duties.

Issues with specialized units are common in most police agencies. Police officers want opportunities to grow by having the availability of getting into a specialized unit as part of their career growth. Police leaders of smaller agencies, such as the ones researched in this study, should also consider expanding the opportunities for growth by creating specialized units that will only benefit them and their community. Although this is the only research study conducted in Miami-Dade County concerning police recruitment and retention, the researcher would welcome more research in the future concerning this issue of police recruitment and retention not only in Miami-Dade County, Florida but around the nation.

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Appendix A
Informed Consent
Consent

Title of the Project: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN THE POST-FLOYD ERA: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Principal Investigator: Carlos Alberto Vesco, Doctoral Candidate at Helms School of Government, Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a sworn law enforcement officer with three years of experience or more and be assigned to the patrol division. 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?

In today's day and age, recruiting top-tier law enforcement professionals amidst a shrinking pool of qualified candidates poses a major hurdle for law enforcement agencies.

The purpose of the study is to determine the problem(s) of police recruitment and retention in Miami-Dade County, post George Floyd's murder.

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:

Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded interview that will take no more than 1 hour.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

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

The benefit to law enforcement and literature is that there is no current study of the impact George Floyd's murder has had on recruitment and retention efforts in Miami-Dade County.

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.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous and 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 in a locked file cabinet. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for seven years. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

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

Participants will **NOT** be compensated for participating in this study.

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 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 Carlos Alberto Vesco. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at [REDACTED].

You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Matthew Lamade, 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 will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact me 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 B
Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Demographic Data

What is your current title or position?

What is your race?

What is your age?

Gender?

What is your highest level of education?

Participant Data

Why did you become a law enforcement officer?

How many years have you been a law enforcement officer?

How many years have you been with the agency you currently work for?

What prompted you to join this agency?

Recruitment Challenges

Can you describe the recruitment issues facing this agency?

Can you tell me about your recruitment process with your current agency?

What would you recommend to your agency to improve the recruitment process?

Retention Challenges

What are the retention issues facing this agency?

In your opinion, why are police officers leaving this agency?

What can be done to improve the retention issues facing this agency?

How would you describe your command staff leadership in your agency?

What issues at your agency have caused you to consider applying for a different agency?

George Floyd Affect

Has the murder of George Floyd impacted the ability of this agency to recruit candidates for sworn law enforcement vacancies?

How would you describe police recruitment in your agency prior to George Floyd's murder?

How would you describe police recruitment in your agency post-George Floyd's murder?

How would you describe retention in your agency post-George Floyd's murder?

How many police officers have resigned or retired following the George Floyd murder?

Has the murder of George Floyd impacted your decision to remain in law enforcement?

Can you describe the relationship between this agency and the community following the murder of George Floyd?

Improving Recruitment

What prompted you to apply for this agency?

What are some of the methods your agency uses in recruiting candidates?

What are some of the ways police managers could improve hiring police officers for this agency?

Improving Retention

What are some of the issues facing police retention in this agency?

What are some key factors that can be implemented in retaining current police officers?

Can you describe some of the conflicts between police managers and police officers?

What are the biggest stress factors among police officers and police managers?

What are some of the leadership issues facing your agency?