THE INFLUENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON SUBORDINATE RESILIENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

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Abstract

Law enforcement professionals experience stressful and traumatic events by nature of their occupation. Stressful and traumatic experiences can induce psychological and physiological disruptions that may interfere with the careers and personal lives of law enforcement professionals. Pre-traumatic stress inoculation is a concept which suggests that increasing resilience through the advancement of the biopsychosocial-spiritual holistic self may provide amelioration of the adverse effects of stress and trauma before experiencing them. The practice of servant leadership behaviors finds alignment with increased resilience. This dissertation in practice study used qualitative research to examine the influence of three specific servant leader behaviors on subordinate resilience in a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency. The results of this study revealed an evidence-based connection between those behaviors and subordinates’ perceptions of increased resilience. The three servant leader behaviors are: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making. This study not only further informs the discussion on the influence of leader behaviors on subordinate resilience, but the research also provides amalgamation between servant leader behaviors and subordinate resilience with application to the law enforcement field. Augmented resilience may save the lives of law enforcement professionals and the lives of those they serve.

Keywords: law enforcement, resilience, servant leadership, stress, trauma
Dedication

This work is dedicated to the military, law enforcement, and other first responder warriors who have made and continue to make tremendous sacrifices for others just because they answered the call to serve. You are my heroes.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Need for Increased Resilience in Law Enforcement

By the very nature of their occupation, law enforcement professionals are subject to stressful and traumatic experiences that may negatively affect their mental and physical health. When individuals experience these types of disruptions, the result may align anywhere along the continuum of dysfunction, equilibrium, and resilient growth outcomes (Grafton, Gillespie, & Henderson, 2010; Richardson, 2002). When negative stress and trauma-related reactions become chronic, the personal lives and professional careers of law enforcement personnel may become compromised (Nugent, 2012). Individuals who fail to develop resilient attributes or growth before and after experiencing stressful and traumatic events may experience chronic stress (Richardson, 2002) or symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The ability to regain homeostasis after disruption characterizes resilience, while resilient growth may occur both before stress or trauma and in the aftermath (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Howell, 2012). Resilient growth may be further defined as positive learning that occurs from coping with, recovering from, or preparing for the influence of stress (Grafton et al., 2010), or experiencing “some insight or growth through disruptions” (Richardson, 2002, p. 312). Resilient growth may be induced by the progressive development of the biopsychosocial-spiritual holistic self (Grafton et al., 2010; Richardson, 2002). Therefore, improving body, mind, relationships with others, and spirit or appropriate control of the expression of emotions can prepare individuals for elevated performance during stressful and traumatic experiences, allowing for the retention of healthy capacities in the aftermath.
(Howell, 2012; Robertson & Cooper, 2013). Additionally, leaders may develop the ability to influence increased resiliency in their followers through the practice of various leader behaviors (Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005). This study sought to investigate whether three specific servant leader behaviors affected resilience in subordinates. The three specific servant leader behaviors were identified as: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making.

Servant leadership is a construct characterized by selflessness. Servant leaders place the needs of their followers before their own (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leaders aid their followers in individual developmental progression (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Being aware, having foresight, listening actively, showing empathy, building community, persuading respectfully, conceptualizing successfully, healing effectively, and focusing on the growth of others through thoughtful stewardship often characterize servant leaders (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Frick & Spears, 1996). Servant leaders connect with their followers on a personal level. This connection or association provides servant leaders with an awareness of their followers’ values, thereby allowing the servant leader to assist the follower in developing the capacity to address his or her needs (Fisher, 2004).

Servant leadership champions collaboration and community development (Sipe & Frick, 2009). The collaborative and pro-autonomous aspects of servant leader behaviors align with resilience-related constructs as both taxonomies encourage environments where individuals find strength in self and community betterment.

In an industry where optimal performance is paramount in life and death situations, law enforcement organizations must rely on strong leadership to positively
develop personnel in a manner suitable to their unique responsibilities (Cacioppo, Reis, & Zautra, 2011). Leaders may induce increased resiliency in their followership by presenting followers with growth opportunities and by the leader’s demonstration of his or her resilient attributes in the face of individual and organizational challenges (Bartone, 2006). With a potential link between servant leadership and increased resilience, law enforcement organizations may benefit from the practice of servant leader behaviors to increase resiliency in law enforcement professionals individually, which may also influence organizational resilience.

Statement of the Problem

Potential exposure to multiple stressful and traumatic events over their careers may harm law enforcement professionals' psychological and physiological well-being (Chopko & Schwartz, 2009; Violanti, 2006). Adverse psychological effects of stress and trauma may include anxiety, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, task or job burnout, memory problems, and PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Chopko & Schwartz, 2009). Physiological stress and trauma-related maladies may include cardiovascular, neurological, gastrointestinal, and audiological symptoms (Chopko & Schwartz, 2009, pp. 363-364). The referenced pathologies can disrupt the careers and personal lives of law enforcement professionals (Nugent, 2012).

The focus of this research was to establish an evidence-based connection between the modalities of servant leadership and resilience with the intent of providing empirical amelioration of stress and trauma-related disruptions in a law enforcement context. Due to law enforcement professionals experiencing an increased rate of negative health outcomes and mortality rates in comparison with other occupations (Mumford, Taylor, &
Kubu, 2015), the results of this research may benefit the law enforcement field through adaptive leadership practices that may increase individual and organizational resilience.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation in practice study was to explore law enforcement professional perceptions regarding the influence of servant leader behaviors on resilience at a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency.

**Research Questions**

Due to the potential need for increased individual and organizational resilience in law enforcement, three research questions follow:

Research Question #1: Does creating collaborative environments influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #2: Does promoting subordinates’ autonomy influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #3: Does leading with ethical and moral decision-making influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

**Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to provide an evidence-based connection between three servant leader behaviors and subordinates’ perceptions of resilience in a law enforcement setting. The three servant leader behaviors are: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making.
Methodology Overview

A qualitative case study methodology was used to collect information for this study. A qualitative approach allowed for focused interviews of individuals who could inform a thick description (Geertz, 1973), or robust narrative, of the effect specific servant leadership behaviors had on resilience in the target population sample. A thick description may be further understood to be a thorough understanding of an organization or culture by context gained principally through the lens of those who exist within it. By utilizing a case study format, the researcher conducted “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units” (Gerring, 2004, p. 342). Therefore, by studying a small sample of the law enforcement population, a greater understanding of the overall population was provided. A qualitative approach was appropriate for the proposed research because it allowed for the collection of a descriptive narrative gained from the intimate knowledge and daily experiences of respondents who resided within the target culture.

Definition of Relevant Terms

The following terms are defined in the context of this study:

**Biopsychosocial-spiritual:** A term developed by Richardson (2002) and refined by Grafton, Gillespie, and Henderson (2010) that encompasses the holistic self as represented by the body, mind, relationships with others, and spirituality or the appropriate control of emotions.

**Homeostatic Growth:** A term developed by the researcher to indicate resilient reintegration (Richardson, 2002) after a disruption or growth beyond what was
considered the normal state of being before experiencing a stressful or traumatic disruption.

**Posttraumatic Growth:** - “Positive personal changes that result from [the] struggle to deal with trauma and its psychological consequences” (Tedeschi & McNally, 2011, p. 19).

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder:** A medically diagnosed stress disorder pronounced in individuals that have experienced a traumatic event and have subsequently experienced trauma-related symptoms from four categories including intrusion, avoidance, negative cognition and mood alterations, and changes in arousal and reactivity. The symptoms must meet a duration of at least one month after the event and must disrupt daily functioning. The cause of the disruption must not be another medical condition or the effects of using a substance (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

**Pre-traumatic Stress Inoculation:** A term developed by the researcher to describe efforts to increase resilience before stressful or traumatic events occur, thereby preventing symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder in the aftermath of such incidents.

**Resilience:** The ability to bounce back or regain homeostasis after a disruption (Grafton et al., 2010; Richardson, 2002).

**Resiliency:** - “The process of coping with adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors” (Richardson, 2002, p. 308).

**Resilient Growth:** A term that indicates growth or insight through disruptions (Richardson, 2002).
**Servant Leadership:** A leadership construct characterized by placing the needs of followers before the leader’s needs (Greenleaf, 1977).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

There were several delimitations identified in this study. A single unit of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency comprised the research sample population. The referenced sample population may be difficult for other researchers to replicate because of the numerous unit configurations within federal law enforcement agencies. Aside from the specific configuration, some units reveal stronger cohesion than others causing cultural differences from unit to unit. Additionally, researcher access to federal law enforcement space and a federal law enforcement research population is extremely limited, with primary access granted only to researchers already affiliated with such organizations.

There were also several limitations associated with this study. The sample population may be considered overly homogenous as a specialized law enforcement unit. The population was also primarily Caucasian male, further revealing an overly amalgamated respondent group. A level of subjectivity may exist when data were collected and analyzed due to the initial responses to open-ended questions that leave some room for interpretation by respondents and the researcher. Additionally, resilience provides limitations in the lack of a universal definition of the construct. Some form of mitigation is found in the effectiveness of the study previously effectuated by Harland et al. (2005). The referenced study also tested a relatively standardized survey population and utilized a proprietary definition of resilience.
Leader’s Role and Responsibility in Relation to the Problem

In a study that collected the opinions of 126 law enforcement managers from 23 U.S. states regarding ideal leadership styles, Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011) found most law enforcement managers aligned with the following servant leadership tenets: being service-oriented, empowering subordinates, helping followers obtain goals and objectives, cultivating positive relationships, and leading from an ethical perspective. These tenets of servant leadership contrasted with the expectation law enforcement leaders would align with the public perception of autocratic or military-style leadership (Vito et al., 2011). Command and control and laissez-faire leadership styles were also negatively associated with ideal law enforcement leadership styles (Vito et al., 2011). Such findings provided further support for exploring servant leadership as a vehicle for increasing resilience within law enforcement communities.

Significance of the Study

Individual and organizational resilience is essential to the success of any organization (Cacioppo et al., 2011; Norman, Luthans, & Luthans, 2005; Wilson, 2013). One may argue both organizational resilience and success are even more important considerations in industries where life and death situations require a greater level of innovative performance. Men and women who are psychologically and physiologically prepared to confront adversity provide value to their industries and communities through their ability to perform well through a challenge and by maintaining or improving their capabilities in the aftermath. Law enforcement professionals who are unable to perform in difficult circumstances may potentially become a liability to themselves, their units, and their communities. Discovering additional methods for the leadership of the law
enforcement industry to increase resiliency in their followership is an important and essential undertaking. Doing so may save the lives of law enforcement professionals and the lives of those they serve.

**Summary**

This study championed qualitative research regarding the effect servant leadership had on subordinate resilience in the law enforcement profession. Law enforcement professionals are subject to stressful and traumatic experiences by nature of their work. Without resilience and the ability to regain homeostasis after disruption, psychological reactions can be detrimental to law enforcement professionals. Resilience inoculation may occur in the individual who participates in activities that improve body, mind, social relationships, and spirit or emotional control. Servant leader behaviors offer a platform to address the referenced holistic self-improvements. Therefore, servant leadership may find alignment with increased subordinate resilience. The intent of this study was to determine whether three specific servant leader behaviors affect subordinate resilience and if so, how servant leader behaviors may be applied in a law enforcement context to strengthen individual and potentially organizational resilience.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The review of the literature provides a more thorough examination of resilience, servant leadership, and the potential relationship between the two topics. The notion of stress inoculation is presented, followed by the introduction of resilience as an overall concept. Resilience is examined more closely through a discussion of why greater resilience is needed, followed by a discourse of how to increase resilience. Servant leadership is reintroduced and linked to resilience through an examination of the intersection of the two topics. Finally, concerning the relevance to law enforcement, the potential connection between resilience and servant leadership is explored. The discussion begins with stress inoculation.

Stress Inoculation

Current literature focused on methods to treat stress-related psychological reactions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), in part from experience and insights gained from the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Melvin, Gross, Hayat, Jennings, & Campbell, 2012; Tsai, Harpaz-Rotem, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2012). In short, proficient developments associated with treating the adverse effects of the aftermath of stressful and traumatic disruptions are prevalent. However, the literature revealed a lack of discussion on pre-traumatic stress inoculation, further defined as preventing the problems associated with the after effects of stressful and traumatic experiences before they emerge (Bonanno, 2005; Farchi & Gidron, 2010). Despite the lack of current literature, a growing body of research reviewed inoculation methods and preventative measures associated with stress and
trauma (Bonanno & Mancini, 2012; Davydov et al., 2010; Howell, 2012). Resilience-related studies were at the innovative forefront of the referenced inquiry. The underlying theme of this modern research is that a trauma and stressor-related disorder, such as PTSD, may be substantially decreased with the proper inoculation before the occurrence of stressful and traumatic events (Davydov et al., 2010; Howell, 2012). However, genetic, environmental, and physiological predisposition factors to trauma and stressor-related disorders that may affect some individuals should be considered (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Stress inoculation is but one strategy that may or may not assist with trauma and stressor-related symptoms. Leadership may play a role in stress inoculation efforts.

Although current literature addressed leader behaviors, only a limited amount of research was associated with the effects of leader behaviors on subordinate resilience (Harland et al., 2005; Wilson, 2013). Harland et al. (2005) found subordinate resilience may be positively influenced by various leader behaviors, including the transformational leader behaviors of attributed charisma, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, and the transactional leadership behavior of contingent reward. However, the effect servant leader behaviors may have on subordinate resilience appeared to be unchartered territory. The connections readily noted between servant leadership and resilience were of interest. As evidenced by the collaborative and self-improvement focused attributes of servant leadership, the construct champions leader behaviors that promote environments conducive to increasing resilience. The literature associated with resilience and servant leadership revealed a potential link to pre-traumatic stress inoculation.
Resilience

Resilience is a concept without an ecumenical definition, although the construct’s applicability appears to be universal. Some researchers have described resilience as the ability to regain homeostasis after some form of life disruption (Grafton et al., 2010; Richardson, 2002; Truffino, 2010). The ability to achieve homeostatic growth in the face of adversity defined resilience for this study. As such, resilient individuals and organizations regain not only equilibrium but also experience advancement in capacities associated with addressing stressful and traumatic events. Such a concept is often referred to as posttraumatic growth (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006), although posttraumatic growth does not necessarily include homeostasis or resilience as prerequisites (Tedeschi & McNally, 2011). Ultimately, the focus of resilience for this study centered on renewed equilibrium and individual or organizational advancements during stress or trauma and in the aftermath of stress or trauma.

The Need for Increased Resilience

As previously stated, law enforcement professionals risk experiencing psychological disruptions or disorders because of the nature of their demanding work, which may include stressful and traumatic occurrences. PTSD symptoms may include intrusive and unwanted thoughts associated with past trauma, such as nightmares and flashbacks; avoidance behaviors, such as emotional numbing and poor relationships with others; and hypervigilance/hyperarousal behaviors, characterized by increased anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A reduction in awareness of surrounding stimuli; reduced capacities to manage anxiety, pain, frustration, and emotions; a reduction in the ability to resolve errors or to perform mental processing; and the increased risk of
mistakes and injuries characterize the performance effects of stress (Asken, Grossman, & Christensen, 2010; Bonanno & Mancini, 2012; Farchi & Gidron, 2010). When the symptoms above become severe or chronic, they can sharply degrade the personal and professional capabilities of those suffering from them (Nugent, 2012). Further, Howell (2012) alluded to the social and financial burden that treating stress and trauma-related maladies may have on organizations and communities.

When discussing combat-related stress among soldiers, Gabriel (1988) stated the risk of becoming a psychiatric casualty of war-related stress and trauma is greater than being killed by the enemy. Anywhere from 11% to 20% of veterans returning from recent conflicts experience combat-related PTSD during a given year (Gradus, 2016). Although law enforcement professionals typically experience finite stressful and traumatic experiences in comparison to the extended combat-related stress and trauma experienced by soldiers, these acute experiences still can translate into psychological and physiological symptoms of stress and trauma-related disorders (Ozer & Weiss, 2004; Peterson, Luethcke, Borah, Borah, & Young-McCaughan, 2011). Law enforcement professionals are exposed to “violence, tragedy, and atrocity” (Newbold, Lohr, & Gist, 2008, p. 1343) as the presence of law enforcement can be found at most traumatic events (Newbold et al., 2008). The prevalence of PTSD symptoms in individuals who observe stress and trauma, such as law enforcement professionals, are higher than in the general population (Newbold et al., 2008). Moreover, most individuals will experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime, with many others experiencing multiple traumatic experiences (Bonanno & Mancini, 2012). Women are more likely to experience sexual
trauma and men are more likely to experience traumas related to physical assaults such as combat (Gradus, 2016).

Recent research revealed preventative actions might improve individual and organizational resilience to the negative effects of stress and trauma (Davydov et al., 2010; Howell, 2012). Supplementary literature mentioned additional preventative measures, such as biomedical approaches overtaking the future diagnoses of stress and trauma-related disorders (Howell, 2012). Additionally, research indicated that many individuals who experience symptoms of stress-related psychological disorders recover through family, friends, and community in place of professional help (Bonanno, 2005; McNally et al., 2003). In fact, the maintenance of baseline levels of psychological functioning or regaining homeostasis was the most common response to trauma (Bonanno & Mancini, 2012).

**Increasing Resilience**

The act of increasing resilience can be learned (Grafton et al., 2010; Melvin et al., 2012; Wilson, 2013). Additionally, stressful and traumatic experiences can bring about growth and positive learning in individuals (Grafton et al., 2010; Haddadi & Besharat, 2010; Wilson, 2013). Further, the Western military has found that resilience-based intervention methods are increasingly more authoritative in addressing stress and trauma-related symptoms, with some researchers believing PTSD symptoms may become significantly decreased with the proper amount of resilience inoculation (Cacioppo et al., 2011; Howell, 2012; Melvin et al., 2012). As previously stated, resilience-based literature indicated resilience might be increased by the progressive development of the biopsychosocial-spiritual holistic self (Grafton et al., 2010; Papazoglou & Andersen,
The literature presented that the proactive improvement of one’s physical, mental, social, and spiritual or emotional capacities aid in resilience inoculation and a subsequent decrease in trauma symptoms connected to future adverse experiences.

**Physical resilience.** The benefits of engaging in physical activity to improve both physical and mental health have been well documented by researchers (Deuster & Silverman, 2013; Pan-Vazquez et al., 2015; VanKim & Nelson, 2013). Additionally, physical activity reduces stress, anxiety, and depression among adults across the lifespan (Haglund, Nestadt, Cooper, & Southwick, 2007; Richards et al., 2015; VanKim & Nelson, 2013). Moreover, engaging in a vigorous physical activity is significantly associated with diminished PTSD symptoms in service members, and is recommended as both a preventative and a treatment protocol for service members suffering from PTSD symptoms (LeardMann et al., 2011).

Papazoglou & Andersen (2014) discussed the mind-body connection, which suggested body and mind integrate with the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual facets of individuals. As such, an individual’s capacity to adequately address stress and trauma is greatly influenced by one’s physical health. Many researchers posited one’s level of physical resilience is related to three categories affecting the body: adequate rest, conforming to a healthy diet, and providing the body with opportunities for exercise (Byrne, et al., 2016; Nägel & Sonnentag, 2013). One may argue that increasing physical resilience will provide individuals with the energy and the capacity to improve the other categories of resilience.
Mental resilience. The mind has a powerful influence on the psychological and physiological state of the rest of the body. Developing a resilient mind provides the individual with the capability to endure aggravated adversities represented by many examples of human struggle, survival, and achievement throughout time. Various researchers provided insight into increasing mental resilience. Wilson (2013) stated individuals elevate motivation and the ability to successfully navigate through different obstacles and difficulties when they are taught to normalize failure and work towards increased optimism. Farchi and Gidron (2010) asserted the cognitive variable of coping provided a means to reduce the adverse effects of distress and increased the awareness of self-efficacy. Further, Howell (2012) presented the management of perceptions, such as working to accept new realities, exhibiting optimism, and challenging negative internal dialogue as solutions to improve mental resiliency. Finally, Tsai et al. (2012) offered a discussion on psychoeducation, which included various therapy modalities aimed at increasing interpersonal communication, altering thought processes, and accepting change thereby mitigating PTSD symptoms through the expansion of social functioning.

Social resilience. Building social resilience provides positive adaptation to adversity for both individuals and collective groups (Cacioppo et al., 2011). Law enforcement professionals rely on each other for strength and support in a myriad of scenarios and situations. Attempting to handle stressful or traumatic situations alone may be considered inefficient at best. Becoming proficient with social resilience allows for increased empathy, stable relationships, improved communication, positive perceptions of others’ regard for oneself, development of prosocial values, gaining an understanding of interdependence in problem solving, the constructive expression of social emotions,
creating reciprocal trust, and embracing tolerance and the incorporation of differences into communal applications (Cacioppo et al., 2011). The referenced proficiencies provide mitigation of the isolation and loneliness that can serve as the catalyst for anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation when individuals are faced with stressful experiences and traumatic losses (Tsai et al., 2012). Cultivating and nourishing relationships with others provides support and strength in times of need. There are stressful and traumatic events that are not just experienced by the individual but by entire communities. Hope is often increased by relationships developed with others. Ultimately, the human experience is illuminated by social connectivity (Cacioppo et al., 2011). Social interaction significantly enhances resilience.

**Spiritual/emotional resilience.** Spirituality and religiosity are two separate concepts that are both capable of providing emotional control or support. Womble, Labbe, and Cochran (2013) defined spirituality as “the feeling of being connected to something greater than one’s self” (p. 707), while Pargament and Sweeney (2011) described the concept as “the continuous journey people take to discover and realize their spirit, that is, their essential selves” (pp. 58-59). Womble et al. (2013) defined religiosity as “devotion to a particular set of religious beliefs or identification with a particular religious orientation” (p. 707). Both spirituality and religiosity manifest in many semantic variances suited to an individual. Some people consider themselves to be both spiritual and religious, while others may only consider themselves to be one or the other. Despite the differences in definitions of spirituality and religiosity, many studies indicated both concepts are positively correlated with increased resilience (Brewer-Smyth & Koenig, 2014; Diaz-Gilbert, 2014; Min et al., 2013).
The common theme across studies suggested individuals cope with stress-related experiences based upon their spiritual beliefs. Further, spirituality encourages better mental and physical health (Womble et al., 2013), and religiosity provides increased physical and psychological amelioration among trauma survivors (Pargament & Sweeney, 2011). Grafton et al. (2010) posited emotional intelligence is the ability to effectively manage one’s emotions through appropriate awareness, perception, use, and understanding. Spirituality and religiosity provide a platform for the introspective journey required for such emotional control. Those who exhibit spiritual or emotional resilience are more proficient at governing their actions and responses to stressful stimuli. Further, proactive spirituality and management of one’s emotions are associated with posttraumatic growth, which enhances one’s ability to understand and frame traumatic events (Chen & Koenig, 2006; Drescher et al., 2004; Kristensen, Weisaeth, & Heir, 2012). Resilience is manifest in the self-aware individual who can control his or her responses to adverse stimuli (Grafton et al., 2010). Nandram and Vos (2010) indicated spirituality is a vehicle that sustains proper withdrawal and reorientation of self, allowing for the effective reallocation of one’s resources. Through such experiences, an individual finds his or her purpose in life. With this understanding, one is better suited to address stressful events.

Biopsychosocial-spiritual inoculation may provide an individual with an increased ability to perform during a stressful or traumatic event and to retain their psychological and physiological health in the aftermath. Ultimately, the inoculated person will not only regain homeostasis but will advance in growth (Cacioppo et al., 2011). Research has established the importance of increasing resilience, and leaders would be wise to consider
how their influence may affect subordinate resilience. Styles of leadership that can influence resilience merit further consideration. Therefore, an examination of servant leadership follows.

**Servant Leadership**

Leaders who place the needs of followers and stakeholders before their needs characterize servant leadership (Spears, 2002). Robert Greenleaf, considered to be the father of the modern servant leadership construct, described servant leadership best in the following two statements:

1. The servant leader manages by first serving others, making sure that their “highest priority needs are being served” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 9).
2. When successful, those served “will grow as persons…becom[ing] healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, [and] more likely themselves to become servants” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 7).

Servant leaders endeavor to induce developmental progression in their followers (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Characteristics of servant leaders may include awareness, foresight, active listening, empathy, community-consciousness, respectful persuasion, effective conceptualization, proactive healing, and thoughtful stewardship evidenced by the growth of others (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2002). The ability to discern followers’ values, thereby providing a connection at a personal level, affords servant leaders the ability to aid followers in developing the capacity to address their needs (Fisher, 2004). Collaboration and community development are mainstays of servant leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2009). Servant leaders focus on the development of their followers to help their followers achieve “their fullest potential in the areas of task
effectiveness, community stewardship, self-motivation, and future leadership capabilities” (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, Henderson, 2008, p. 162). Servant leaders create environments wherein followers are nourished with progressive growth, often causing them to adopt servant leader behaviors themselves. This study focused on the following three servant leader behaviors: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making. The research questions were used to identify the referenced behaviors. The discussion regarding the referenced behaviors commences with the servant leader behavior of creating collaborative environments.

Creating Collaborative Environments

In the wake of various corporate scandals over the past two decades, a leadership construct that emphasizes the needs of followers over leader apotheosis has gained popularity (Hale & Fields, 2007; Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Oke, 2010). Servant leaders assume a non-focal position within their teams and groups, endeavoring to put others’ needs ahead of their own (Black, 2010). The referenced non-focal position establishes a collaborative team environment where all group members’ voices find an audience. Such actions build communities, which Spears (2004) identified as one of ten servant leader characteristics focused on collaboration. Strength in leadership comes from the ability to identify one’s strengths and weaknesses and to collaborate with those who are strong where one is weak (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Improved collaboration may be considered a path to success in any organization.

Non-focal role. The harmony required for growth is present when people choose to complete, rather than to compete with each other (Burton, 2015). By removing the
desire for individualized power from the servant leader’s leadership acumen, an environment of collaboration replaces one of competition (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Collaboration provides opportunities to both work as part of a team and to work as an individual responsible for some aspect of the team’s overall goal. Therefore, collaboration simultaneously promotes teamwork and autonomy. As the servant leader takes a non-focal leadership role, the leader is free to focus on the growth of subordinates in a team project or a subordinate’s autonomous role in the project. Such freedom strengthens all members of the working group, providing enhanced opportunities for growth.

**Community development and sustainment.** Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is an organization behavior concept defined as employees of an organization expanding their contributions to the organization beyond what is required of them formally (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Due to servant leadership’s proclivities towards service-oriented actions as a lifestyle, servant leadership can serve as a catalyst for increased OCB (Liden et al., 2014). When employees of an organization take ownership of their organization, they are likely to be more productive; they are more likely to defend their organization against perceived attacks; and they are more likely to promote the betterment of their organization, from the smallest act of picking up litter on the organizational property, to larger acts such as recruiting others to join the organization. Those who practice OCB are responsible for greater participation in community development outside their institution as well. Progression of community development leads to consideration of stakeholders, which leads to increased community sustainment. These actions strengthen the individual, the organization, and the community.
Strengths and weaknesses. Collaboration in the servant leader environment is constituted by honoring individual contributions and restructuring them into solutions and processes that are harmonious and beneficial to the greater good (Sipe & Frick, 2009). One way that servant leaders can accomplish this is to surround themselves with others who reveal strengths where they, the leaders, are weak (Covey, n.d.; Rath & Conchie, 2008), and by sharing power among the group (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011). Servant leaders create integrated environments where the humility to learn from others exists alongside the desire to mentor others (Garber, Madigan, Click, & Fitzpatrick, 2009). The resulting synergy creates team effectiveness (Hu & Liden, 2011) and enhanced performance (Liden et al., 2014). Therefore, aside from team accomplishment, strength is gained by servant leaders who routinely perceive that they receive more benefit for serving others than whatever the benefit is they are giving to others (Rodriguez, 2014). Further, weaknesses become strengths as servant leaders focus on followers’ growth. The referenced collaboration develops autonomy in group participants.

Promoting Subordinates’ Autonomy

The leader whose principal focus is an innate desire to help others demonstrates strong leadership (Spears, 2004). Emphasizing subordinates’ needs enhances employee commitment to organizations (Hu & Liden, 2011). Servant leaders can intensify their followers’ well-being (Parris & Peachey, 2013) through proactive efforts to develop followers’ self-progression and followers’ servant leader capacities. The advantages of such behavior are evident through greater team efficacy (Hu & Liden, 2011), greater trust in the leader (Schaubroeck et al., 2011), increased commitment to organizational goals
and objectives (Hu & Liden, 2011), elevated stewardship of resources through foresight (Black, 2010), and improved communication and collaboration (Garber, et al., 2009).

Modern organizations have experienced systemic problems with leaders who are considered bullies, leaders who abuse their power, leaders who employ unethical practices, leaders who cultivate toxic emotions, leaders who create alienation and social isolation, and leaders who negatively affect followers’ well-being (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). Servant leadership may counteract the adverse leadership practices by championing employee progression through subordinate autonomy. Indeed, empowering behaviors are considered a prominent servant leadership value (Hu & Liden, 2011). Servant leaders replace opportunistic behaviors with behaviors that prioritize followers’ personal growth through both career development and aligning work objectives with followers’ needs (Hu & Liden, 2011). By focusing on followers’ needs, servant leaders in effect create a “self-regulatory focus” (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008, p. 1220) in employees, thus providing a greater sense of organizational mission ownership. Increasing organizational ownership perceptions may also influence ethical and moral decision-making.

**Well-being.** There has been an increase in research over the past three decades on the well-being of followers (Yang, Zhang, Kwan, & Chen, 2015). Well-being is also a precise focus of the servant leader. Subordinates who labor under a leader who is supportive and considerate are more satisfied with their jobs and report lower levels of job-related stress (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009). Servant leaders endeavor to induce well-being and progression in their followership by knowing their followers on a personal level, including gaining an understanding of their emotional
needs and supporting them through growth opportunities (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012; Spears, 2004). Such actions create a positive work environment wherein employee well-being is further strengthened (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

**Self-progression.** A leader enhances followers’ capabilities through the practice of service when the leader genuinely puts followers first (Whetstone, 2002). The servant leader demonstrates self-awareness to the follower, who in turn develops his or her self-awareness (Whetstone, 2002). Further, the servant leader imbues the follower with a focus on nurturing and achieving through recognizing the unique talents of the follower (Liden et al., 2008; Neubert et al., 2008). The servant leader fosters an environment of empowerment through both modeling self-progressive behaviors and by encouraging the self-progression of his or her followers (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). The proactive and self-confident attributes these fosters provides followers with a sense of personal power (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Additionally, the followers strengthen their commitment to the organization (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

**Increased organizational commitment.** As previously noted, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) provides increased organizational commitment and can associate with servant leadership. Increased organizational commitment also comes from the types of close relationships developed between the servant leader and follower (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). As servant leaders pattern an efficacious work ethic, demonstrate high levels of motivation, and reveal an example of community stewardship, followers adopt these practices for themselves, which leads to a stronger commitment to organizational values (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leaders strengthen follower stewardship, thereby imbuing followers with a heightened desire to perform their services
for a common good outside their self-interests (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). More, servant leadership is a source of significant reduction in employee burnout, providing an enhanced atmosphere for retention (Babakus & Ashill, 2011).

**Leading with Ethical and Moral Decision-Making**

Servant leadership, as a leadership construct, is defined by a connection to ethics, virtues, and morality (Parris & Peachey, 2013), and is embodied with moral safeguards that protect a follower from a leader’s pursuit of selfish gains (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Servant leadership is a way of life one progresses through with lifelong practice (Greenleaf, 1977; Parris & Peachey, 2013), thus providing for a unique construct. Where other leadership theories are typically defined by a focus on what the leader does, servant leadership is defined by the leader’s character and service to, for, and with others (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Therefore, servant leaders act from a place of personal and professional authenticity. A leader would find difficulty making ethical or moral decisions without the guidance of an intrinsic ethical or moral compass. Decisions that are rooted in what is best for the organization and its members individually typify the principal advantage of leading with an ethical and moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Such leadership cultivates follower trust in leadership and stakeholder confidence in the organization, which further enhances teamwork and collaboration positively affecting individual and organizational effectiveness (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

**Ethics and morals provide separation from other leadership styles.** Moral integrity is a mainstay of servant leadership (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012) and strong ethics distinguishes it from other leadership styles (Hu & Liden, 2011; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Although some leaders operate from innate moral or ethical characteristics, other leaders
learn such behaviors through routines and practice in leadership roles (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010). After a servant leader determines morals and ethics, he or she effectuates decisions from the same ethical and moral base both at work and away from work, which makes servant leadership both a leadership style and a way of life (Hu & Liden, 2011). Servant leader behavior is embodied by the characteristics of “honesty, integrity, fairness, and justice” (Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1244). These characteristics provide the servant leader with a widened perspective of the world and aid in the servant leader’s self-awareness of ethics, morals, and values (Black, 2010). Leading with ethics, morals, and values provide the servant leader with greater persuasion over his or her followers (Black, 2010), which cultivates increased follower trust in the leader (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012).

**Cultivates follower trust.** Servant leaders can empathize with followers in ways that nurture interpersonal acceptance and trust (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leaders listen to their followers by accepting followers’ recommendations, which also inspires trust (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Further, by forgiving mistakes and cultivating an environment where followers are free to fail, without the fear of rejection, servant leaders can draw out their followers’ best attributes and performance, thereby elucidating follower potential (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Such actions ingratiate the follower with the servant leader, further enhancing the referenced foundation of trust (Walumbwa et al., 2010). The authentic way in which servant leaders lead fosters additional trust.

**Authenticity.** Servant leaders lead as they live by expressing themselves with words and deeds consistent with their inner thoughts and feelings (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leaders display authenticity and subscribe to values-based
leadership practices (Hamilton & Bean, 2005) like those identified by Sendjaya et al. (2008) as humility, integrity, accountability, security, and vulnerability. Sendjaya et al. further described the authenticity of a servant leader as leadership that “flows out of being” (p. 407), emphasizing the behavioral constancy of the servant leader. This contrasts with inconsistent or biased leadership practices that negatively influence employees’ perceptions of their value to the leader and the organization (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Authenticity provides the servant leader with the requisite credibility to create close enough relationships with subordinates to influence their progression, further enhancing subordinates' resilience positively. The above-mentioned salient points regarding the servant leadership construct have been presented to inform the following discussion on the potential connection between servant leadership tenets and resilience.

**Linking Servant Leadership and Resilience**

Multiple researchers posited studying the relationship between leadership and resilience has been largely ignored even though it may be vital to leadership development (Harland et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Wilson, 2013). Harland et al. (2005) further suggested leadership constructs which focus on the inducement of follower advancements might positively associate with subordinate resiliency. Leaders who practice servant leadership tenets may provide their followership with modeled behaviors of optimism, selflessness, foresight, and a collaborative approach to problem-solving. These factors find an association with resilience-related growth. One may identify creative problem solving as an important skill for law enforcement professionals.

In both servant leadership and resilience, the importance of cultivating relationships throughout one’s community cannot be understated. Relationships with
others strengthen resilience, in particular with those who understand what one is experiencing (Wilson & Ferch, 2005). The caring and collaborative relationships championed by servant leaders provide a platform for resilience cultivation in subordinates (Wilson & Ferch, 2005). Norman, Luthans, and Luthans (2005) found a leader’s level of hope is contagious to followers, and the referenced relationship reveals greater resiliency in both employees and the organization as a whole. Additionally, Cacioppo et al. (2011) defined social resilience as the ability to draw strength from positive relationships while transforming adversity into “personal, relational, and collective growth” (p. 44). Moreover, lower job-related stress is reported by those who work for considerate leaders (Jaramillo et al., 2009).

Further servant leadership and resilience-related connections were identified through the cultivation of what Cacioppo et al. (2011) referred to as the nine personal resources that foster social resilience: (a) an accurate and empathetic understanding of others promotes closer relationships which provide a platform for coordinated activities, (b) working to establish well-balanced relationships provides well-being to self and others, (c) the communication of concern and respect for others may generate responsiveness within them, (d) the identification of others’ self-regard allows for the opportunity to connect better with those individuals, (e) the cultivation of values that promote welfare associated with self and others provides additional self-confidence, (f) appreciation of the interdependence of situations allows for the development of greater teamwork, (g) enhancing the capacity of constructive adaptation to the reaction to and the expression of emotions increases resilient navigation through challenges, (h) learning to develop situationally contingent trust also creates a better problem-solving apparatus, and
an openness to differences and embracing diversity in viewpoints and thought processes create an atmosphere conducive to increased resiliency. One can argue each of the nine aforementioned personal resources (Cacioppo et al., 2011) reveal relatedness to tenets espoused by servant leadership theory. Indeed, servant leaders endeavor to understand their followers better to further their progression as individuals. Servant leaders establish collaborative teams to find solutions to problems creatively. Servant leaders value the opinions of others and work to develop the type of group cohesion that promotes resilience.

Relevance to Law Enforcement Organizations

Resilient individuals make resilient organizations, which, in turn, can positively adapt to adverse situations, growing stronger for experiencing them (Cacioppo et al., 2011; Norman et al., 2005). In a fast-paced and often stressful career field, law enforcement leaders benefit from resilient subordinates that can maintain steady levels of performance during challenging events, subsequently retaining their focus and drive afterward (Norman et al., 2005). As noted, Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011) found law enforcement managers aligned with the following servant leadership tenets: (a) being service-oriented, (b) empowering subordinates, (c) helping followers obtain goals and objectives, (d) cultivating positive relationships, and (e) leading from an ethical perspective. The practice of servant leadership tenets allows leaders to recognize and enhance followers’ talents (Liden et al., 2008) and teaches them to set aside personal agendas for the betterment of the whole organization (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010). By so doing, a collaborative culture is created that allows for the development of increased personal and organizational resiliency (Norman et al., 2005).
As law enforcement professionals and organizations face challenges specific to their industries, including shooting incidents, suicides, and traumatic injuries affecting psychological and physiological responses, one can argue levels of resilience may determine future organizational and individual functionality. Therefore, the theme of increased resilience is foremost to the proposed study. Resilience provides the platform to overcome and grow from challenging experiences. The practice of servant leadership tenets may induce increased resilience in followership just as other leadership tenets have done (Harland et al., 2005). The practice of servant leadership tenets not only create environments suitable for increased resilience, but they also create additional leaders who lead from a servant leader perspective, enhancing the pro-resilience atmosphere. Thus, servant leadership tenets provide utility to the study as force multipliers in the battle for increased law enforcement professional resilience.

**Summary**

Based on the review of the literature, resilience reveals strength in its universal applicability to all individuals and organizations but reveals weakness in its lack of an ecumenical definition. Servant leadership reveals strength in the outcomes related to positive leader behaviors but shows weakness in the lack of literature associating the construct with resilience. The two subjects reveal connections wherein servant leadership induces environments disposed to building resilience in both self and others. The referenced relationships and the lack of current related literature bolstered this study.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation in practice study was to explore law enforcement professional perceptions regarding the influence of servant leader behaviors on resilience at a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency. The aim of the study was to provide an evidence-based connection between three servant leader behaviors and subordinates’ perceptions of resilience in a law enforcement setting. The three servant leader behaviors are: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making.

Research Questions

The following research questions aligned with the aim of the study:

Research Question #1: Does creating collaborative environments influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #2: Does promoting subordinates’ autonomy influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #3: Does leading with ethical and moral decision-making influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Design

A qualitative approach allowed for focused interviews of individuals who could inform a thick description (Geertz, 1973), or robust narrative, of the effect servant leadership had on resilience within the target population sample. A thick description may be further understood to be a thorough understanding of an organization or culture.
through context gained primarily through the lens of those who exist within it. By utilizing a case study format, “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units” (Gerring, 2004, p. 342) was achieved. Specifically, the researcher gained a greater understanding of law enforcement professionals through studying a small sample of the referenced population. A qualitative approach was appropriate for the study because it allowed for the collection of a descriptive narrative acquired from the intimate knowledge and daily experiences of respondents who existed within the target culture.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected from face-to-face semi-structured interviews with law enforcement professionals employed in a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency. The interviews were digitally audio-recorded for producing interview transcriptions. The audio recordings were simultaneously captured on a Sony® IC Recorder, and the Voice Recorder application on a Samsung Galaxy Note 5 cellular telephone. The audio recordings were erased after the interview transcriptions were produced. The transcriptions were produced through TranscriptionPuppy.com, an online transcription service. The recordings and transcriptions were stored in a locked cabinet in a secured office located within a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency.

In general, qualitative interviews are conducted by researchers with participants either face-to-face, telephonically, or in group settings by using open-ended questions to elicit responses that contain the participants’ views and opinions (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interview process face-to-face.
The interview questions were designed to elicit descriptive responses regarding both servant leader behaviors and the influence those behaviors had or did not have on resilience. Appropriate follow on questions were posed to clarify confusion and to explore the participants’ experiences further. The responses gained helped inform the thick description narrative by gaining personal insights into the culture of the law enforcement organization from those who experienced it firsthand.

**Participants**

Participants were recruited for the study by email invitation (see Appendix A) sent to the entire sample population of 19 individuals employed at the study site. The email invitation provided details regarding the study and an informed consent letter (see Appendix B) was attached to the email. Fifteen employees and their supervisor agreed to participate in the study by responding to the email or by verbally responding to the researcher. The email responses from participants were deleted shortly after being received. Sworn law enforcement officers and professional support personnel represented the 15 employees and their supervisor. Sworn law enforcement officers were defined as those who carried a badge, firearm, and had arrest authority. The sworn law enforcement officers of the organization minimally held bachelor’s degrees, with some holding master’s degrees and other professional certifications. Professional support employees were those who supported the overall mission of the organization through various job roles such as operational support technicians, intelligence analysts, and staff operations specialists. Most professional support employees held bachelor’s degrees, and all had received specialized training associated with specific job roles. Both sworn law enforcement officers and professional support employees held varying degrees of crisis
training or experience. Collateral duties, such as participation in tactical teams, crisis negotiations, or evidence response teams, dictated much of the varied experience. Each of the referenced employees was important to the study because they existed within a sample of the overall law enforcement culture. Their specific experience with a leader who demonstrated servant leadership tenets, as identified through observations by the researcher and further defined by matching observed behaviors with servant leader literature, provided them with the ability to discuss their levels of resilience in relation to those behaviors within the specific law enforcement culture or organization.

The researcher made appointments for interviews in person. The first interview took place on June 28, 2016, and the final interview was completed on August 2, 2016. Each interview was approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length. Each interview began with the researcher building rapport with the participant and ensuring the participant understood the informed consent letter. The researcher built rapport by asking the participant how he or she was doing, thanking the participant for volunteering, and answering questions. The researcher read over the informed consent letter with the participant and obtained a verbal confirmation that the participant understood his or her rights and obligations as outlined in the informed consent letter. Next, the researcher provided the following definitions of terms to the participant and ensured each participant understood them by obtaining verbal confirmation from the participant:

1. Work-related Stress: Stress that is experienced as a direct result of a work-related experience (i.e., a project deadline; a stressful tactical experience such as an arrest, search warrant, or shooting incident).

2. Collaboration: Working with others as a team to achieve a common goal.
3. Autonomy: The ability to govern oneself in work-related decision-making.

4. Independence: The ability to work and make decisions with little or no supervision.

Upon confirmation from the participant that he or she understood the terms above, the researcher offered to answer any additional questions before asking the participant if he or she was ready to begin. The participants posed no additional questions. The recording devices were then turned on, and the interview commenced. Questions followed the semi-structured interview question outline (see Appendices C and D) with logical clarifications and promptings added when necessary. Clarifications included restating the question in a manner better understood by the participant. Prompts included asking the participant for further detail related to an answer. At the conclusion of the interview, the recorders were turned off, and the researcher answered any additional questions from the participant before thanking him or her for participating in the study. Additional questions from the participants centered on when the researcher would complete the research.

Creswell (2012) suggested typical qualitative research studies examine a few individuals to accurately portray the complexity of the study site or information received from the participants. Additionally, Creswell (2013) stressed the importance of not only studying a few individuals for accuracy but also recommended collecting extensive detail regarding the site, and the individuals studied. More, Creswell (2014) stated saturation occurs “when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties” (p. 189). Per the referenced direction from Creswell, 16 interviews were conducted and saturation was reached.
Data Collection Tools

Interview responses provided the data for the study. The data were hand coded to separate evidentiary data from data that had no bearing on identified themes (Creswell, 2012). Common themes were aggregated to reveal what influence the three specific servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making had on resilience. The researcher organized an objective interpretation of the responses as a case study to inform future recommendations. In simple terms, a case study may be defined as a “bounded phenomenon” (Gerring, 2004, p. 342), further defined by Gerring as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of units” (p. 342). Creswell (2014) stated case studies are in-depth analyses of “a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (p. 14), which are enclosed in the boundaries of time and type of activity. The case study approach fit the study well due to the researcher’s intent to develop a robust narrative associated with a single phenomenon bounded by time and place.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations associated with the study were adopted from those previously identified by Creswell (2012). The researcher informed participants of the particulars of the study through an informed consent letter, the researcher refrained from being knowingly deceptive to the participants, the research site was respected, and the researcher protected the confidentiality of participants. Additionally, the integrity and objectivity of interpreted data were maintained. Moreover, the researcher obtained voluntary consent from the participants and interview responses were kept anonymous.
The digital recordings of the interviews were erased upon transcription of the recordings. No personal identifying information was collected, further protecting the anonymity of the participants.

The researcher remained sensitive to the research population, law enforcement professionals, who were asked to recollect potentially stress-inducing or stress-filled past experiences. As such, the researcher continually recognized the existence of the possibility a participant could have experienced adverse symptoms of anxiety regarding a past stressful experience. The researcher relied on specialized Employee Assistance Program training to listen for concerns, assess for negative stress-related behaviors, and to be prepared to refer a participant that experienced disruption to the appropriate agency representative or program.

**Summary**

The methodology applied within this study was used to explore law enforcement professional perceptions regarding the influence of the three specific servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making on subordinate resilience. A qualitative design allowed for a robust narrative of the perceptions of law enforcement professionals to be captured. Moreover, the case study format provided a template to examine a section of the law enforcement population with potential applicability to the broader field. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were hand coded in support of evidentiary responses to themes. Participants were recruited through an email invitation, and volunteers were contacted in person to set up face-to-face interviews. The participant pool was comprised of both sworn law
enforcement officers and professional support employees. Standard and study specific ethical considerations were addressed. The chosen methodology provided a favorable platform for the objectives of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND THE EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTION

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation in practice study was to explore the perceptions of law enforcement professionals regarding the influence of servant leader behaviors on resilience at a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency through the following research questions:

Research Question #1: Does creating collaborative environments influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #2: Does promoting subordinates’ autonomy influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

Research Question #3: Does leading with ethical and moral decision-making influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient?

The results of the associated face-to-face semi-structured interviews ensue along with the organization, coding, and theming procedures utilized to extract evidentiary data. The findings are analyzed and synthesized.

Presentation of Findings

The data of this study were acquired through hand coding the interview transcripts. Saldaña (2016) recommended selecting appropriate coding methods for a study through an assessment of the research questions. The research questions of this study queried participants’ perceptions of themselves as resilient and were, therefore, epistemological in nature. Saldaña (2016) championed the development of themes for the elucidation of epistemologies. As such, the first cycle coding methods used in this study began with the development of themes through holistic coding. Holistic coding is a
method to accumulate broad data into general categorizations before more detailed coding (Saldaña, 2016).

First Cycle Coding

The researcher developed five overarching themes from the interview transcripts and the research questions identified as: (a) leadership, (b) stress, (c) collaboration, (d) autonomy, and (e) ethical/moral decision-making. The researcher read each transcript line by line, and each participant statement that fit under the five main themes was extracted and grouped together under the corresponding category. This process provided a broad overview of the data, but subsequent categorization was needed. Consequently, the researcher reevaluated the data under each theme for commonalities worthy of further designation. Accordingly, within the five main themes, subcoding was used to organize the data into additional sub-categories.

Under leadership, the researcher created the sub-categories of: (a) subordinate identified leader’s behaviors, (b) subordinate identified leader’s influence, and (c) leader’s self-identified behaviors and influence. Within the theme of stress, the researcher generated the sub-categories of: (a) in-the-moment stress relief, (b) at-work stress relief, (c) outside-of-work stress relief, (d) stress reactions, and (e) stress outcomes. The researcher subdivided the collaboration theme into: (a) the give-and-take relationship found in collaboration and (b) the necessity of collaboration. The researcher further examined the autonomy theme through the sub-categories of: (a) clearly defined role, and (b) confidence and increased performance. A closer examination of the ethical/moral decision-making theme resulted in the sub-categories of: (a) confidence in leaders and (b)
reduced stress. By the above-mentioned process, the researcher prepared the data for second cycle coding.

**Second Cycle Coding**

With the themes and sub-categories intact, the data were then aggregated through the second cycle coding method of axial coding to reduce redundancy of statements and terms in participants’ responses. Axial coding is used by researchers to identify and eliminate synonyms and redundant codes for selecting the best codes (Saldaña, 2016). In Vivo coding was used to capture the language of the respondents to inform the thick description (Geertz, 1973) or robust narrative. In Vivo coding is used by researchers to capture the culture of a group through their words (Saldaña, 2016). A presentation of the coded data follows with the leadership theme presented first.

**Leadership**

Participants defined leadership as being willing to give guidance, to make decisions, and to hold subordinates accountable. Leaders also recognize they do not know everything and they are still learning. Additionally, they ensure the accomplishment of the team’s goals. Leaders inspire, influence, support, and motivate subordinates. Where managers are task-oriented, leaders are people-oriented. They focus on growth development and mission accomplishment. Leaders lead by example and are not afraid to work side by side with their subordinates. More, they communicate, persuade, and earn the respect of their subordinates. Further, leaders facilitate their subordinates’ growth. The researcher more closely evaluated the data on leadership through the subcategories of: (a) the subordinate identified leader’s behaviors, (b) the
subordinate identified leader’s influence, and (c) the leader’s self-identified behaviors and influence.

**Subordinate-identified leader’s behaviors.** Participants described their leader as capable of making tough decisions without purporting to know everything. Respondents also described their leader as not overbearing or micromanaging but capable of providing direction when needed. Additionally, their leader revealed leadership through example and by placing great emphasis on caring for the team and morale. More, the participants characterized their leader as relatable and approachable. Their leader was also a skilled communicator. Further, their leader built and nurtured relationships both within the organization and outside of the organizational confines. The participants lauded their leader as a mentor and someone who followed policy and procedure.

**Subordinate-identified leader’s influence.** The participants described their leader’s influence in the following ways: Their leader allowed subordinates’ voices to be heard and provided autonomy to make decisions, which provided a feeling of empowerment. The feeling of empowerment invigorated a desire in subordinates to work harder for the leader. Their leader cared for followers by showing a personal interest in them, which induced respect for the leader. Moreover, their leader influenced subordinates to grow by encouragement, mentorship, and providing opportunity, which motivated subordinates to view the big picture and consider present and future organizational roles. Additionally, their leader increased morale by organizing squad events and by resolving conflicts in the group. Based on their leader’s example, subordinates desired to become leaders themselves. Their leader’s example also caused
subordinates to alter some of their behaviors and perceptions towards others. Participants felt their leader sincerely cared for them, which taught them to also care for one another. Their leader was skilled in creating relationships with others, which became a behavior subordinates wished to emulate. Additionally, their leader trusted subordinates to do the right thing which imbued confidence in the subordinates and radiated throughout the entire team. Trust made subordinates perform better for their leader. Their leader supported and encouraged collaboration among employees which eliminated the stress of an individual employee feeling entirely responsible for a project. Subordinates felt they were part of something bigger than themselves due to their leader’s support. Based on their leader’s example of consistently doing the right thing, the subordinates adopted the same policy. Their leader united subordinates through expectations of excellence in both appearance and manner. Moreover, their leader impressed subordinates with the ability to multitask. Further, their leader garnered respect for not asking subordinates to do things their leader would not do, and for being present during significant operations.

**Leader’s self-identified behaviors and influence.** The leader described personal leadership behaviors as listening to others, being concerned for others, remaining open-minded and objective, being a sounding board for others’ ideas, and walking alongside subordinates as they progressed professionally in their careers and personally as individuals. The leader refrained from being too intrusive or micromanaging but also ensured subordinates had the resources needed to be successful. The leader influenced subordinates by teaching them to view situations from different perspectives and by teaching them to support each member of the team.
Stress

As law enforcement professionals, the participants’ stress-related experiences were on a broad spectrum, from office work projects to officer-involved shootings. One participant captured the uniqueness of the range of stressful experiences law enforcement professionals face with the statement, “It’s just our reality, it’s not a normal person’s reality, that’s our reality.” The researcher categorized the participants’ responses as stress coping methods, stress reactions, and stress outcomes. The researcher further refined the data associated with stress coping methods as: (a) in-the-moment stress relief, (b) at-work stress relief, and (c) outside-of-work stress relief. Responses revealed participants coped with stress in various ways.

**In-the-moment stress relief.** Participants coped with stress in-the-moment by conducting deep-breathing exercises and injecting levity into stressful situations through humor and laughter. They also coped with stress by placing confidence in a work team’s ability to perform through trusting the members’ actions and relying on comradery. Moreover, participants depended on and placed confidence in their leader and more experienced employees to aid in the reduction of their stress. Further, participants relied on their training and muscle memory of tasks, such as arrest protocols, as a stress reduction method. Participants also relieved stress by taking a break from the stressor and later revisiting the task. Connecting with spiritual and faith-based beliefs were also reported to reduce participants’ stress.

**At-work stress relief.** Participants mitigated stress at work through the organization of tasks and schedules including making to do lists and prioritizing tasks. Participants also divided larger tasks into groups of smaller tasks and then focused on one
task at a time instead of considering pending tasks. Additionally, one participant described a method of switching between difficult tasks and easier tasks, wherein the accomplishment of the easier tasks provided a sense of accomplishment and the confidence to tackle the more complex ones. Finishing work projects before deadlines was another method that reduced stress. Participants also relied on the knowledge that no stressful situation lasted forever and therefore just waited for the experience to end. Moreover, participants relied on experience gained from past occurrences under similar circumstances or employed consistency and methodical practices in task management. Another participant delegated tasks to others to relieve stress while another just hunkered down and completed the stressful task sooner rather than later.

**Outside-of-work stress relief.** Participants spent time enjoying nature or went camping to decrease stress levels outside of work. They also disengaged from technology and spent time with family members. Family members were further engaged as a sounding board to talk things over. Friends and work-related peers were also sought out for conversations as an outlet to reduce stress. Additionally, participants relieved stress through leisure activities such as exercising, engaging in hobbies, or taking vacations. Further, leaving work at the office and not taking paperwork home reduced stress.

**Stress Reactions.** The researcher divided the participants’ reactions to stressful experiences into the categories of feelings and reactions to feelings. Stress caused participants to feel inadequate or inexperienced. They also felt upset, angry, irritated, frustrated, and overwhelmed. More, participants felt as though others were second-
guessing their competence, which caused participants to feel betrayed. Others felt lonely and wanted to extricate themselves from the stressful situation.

Participants’ reactions to stress-induced feelings included angry outbursts. They became surprised and disappointed. Some experienced insomnia while humiliation affected others. Additionally, participants developed feelings of generalized anxiety or performance-based anxiety leading to the inability to unwind. More, participants experienced an atmosphere of self-induced or others-induced pressure. One participant relied on professional training for mitigation and resolution of the stress-induced feelings and reactions.

**Stress Outcomes.** Participants identified multifaceted outcomes to their stress reactions. Some participants found it difficult to integrate into work units while others found difficulty in attempting to learn new tasks. Some experienced personality conflicts and were less likely to communicate with others or to ask for assistance. These tensions expanded into relationships with partners and spouses. Additionally, some participants reported re-experiencing frightening circumstances. This stress outcome, combined with the others, led to mentally and physically shutting down. Participants identified absenteeism as an additional stress outcome.

**Collaboration**

One participant captured the sentiment of all the respondents regarding collaboration in the statement, “This job can’t be done without each other.” Regarding the law enforcement profession, another stated, “It takes a team, it takes a united effort.” Fourteen subordinate participants and the leader participant perceived collaboration to reduce stress while one subordinate participant felt collaboration neither induced or
reduced stress. Collaboration categorical themes were identified as (a) the give and take relationship produced through collaboration and (b) the necessity of collaboration in the law enforcement professional setting.

**Give-and-take relationship.** Multiple participants discussed the give-and-take relationship of collaboration by describing their desire to perform well for someone else to secure that person’s assistance in future endeavors. Some respondents felt that an increased number of participants assigned to a project yielded a better result regarding delegation of duties and task-based organization. Others discussed the collaborative outcome of getting to know people better, learning from them, and building advantageous relationships that could help advance future obligations. Learning from others included looking at problems and solutions from different angles and vantage points through the perceptions of others. Gaining new perspectives was described as humbling, especially when someone else’s idea was more favorable. One participant stated, “Sometimes you need to surrender your will or your desires for somebody else’s.” Others spoke of advancing more rapidly in their professional acumen based on learning through the collaborative process.

**Necessity.** All respondents emphasized the necessity of collaboration in the law enforcement profession. Participants felt collaboration provided more resources to accomplish a task. Collaboration also instilled respondent confidence as team members could accomplish tasks together. Further, collaboration reduced stress because respondents felt they did not have to go through challenges alone. One respondent described collaboration as “positively overwhelming to feel that others are there for you.”
The leader respondent stated, “it doesn’t matter what happens, we come together as a unit to get things done and to accomplish the mission.”

**Autonomy**

Like collaboration, being provided with autonomy was not unanimously perceived to reduce stress. Twelve participants perceived being provided with autonomy reduced stress. Two respondents perceived their stress increased when being provided with autonomy. Two additional respondents perceived being provided with autonomy as both stress-inducing and stress-reducing based upon autonomous roles being clearly defined, and by the breadth of the project. However, both referenced respondents favored autonomy to micromanagement. The leader respondent felt whether being provided with autonomy was stress-inducing or stress-reducing depended on the employee and that employee’s level of experience. The professional environment of the respondents often demanded autonomous action. Categories that emerged in the data associated with autonomy were identified as: (a) the need for a clearly defined role when being provided with autonomy and (b) the confidence autonomy generates in the practitioner who, in turn, increases performance.

**Clearly defined role.** Respondents felt autonomy was most advantageous when coupled with a clearly defined responsibility. One respondent felt a clearly defined leadership role in a work team, with the ability to make autonomous decisions, led to smoother project outcomes. More, a clearly defined role alleviated conflict. Another respondent lauded the supervisor for allowing subject matter experts to have a voice and commended the supervisor for listening to that voice when making decisions. Having a clearly defined autonomous role allowed the practitioner to become more aware of his or
her individual responsibilities which resulted in increased output. One respondent stated, “It allowed me to get a lot more accomplished than if I would have had someone choose what tasks I should have done versus the alternative.”

Although being provided with a clearly defined autonomous role was perceived to be advantageous by most respondents, some felt being laden with the ownership of a work project could increase stress. Despite the stress project ownership could cause, micromanagement was deemed to be a more stressful alternative by most participants. Notwithstanding the referenced pejorative connotation of stress, the leader respondent felt providing autonomy to subordinates created ownership of work projects which ultimately resulted in growth. One respondent said performance increased because ownership meant more was at stake.

**Confidence and increased performance.** Multiple respondents spoke of the increased confidence they developed when their supervisor provided them with autonomy to conduct self-designed work-related projects. One respondent stated, “There is nothing better than to feel like you have control and to feel like you are trusted.” They spoke of the desire to perform at a higher capacity for their supervisor due to their perception their supervisor trusted them. One respondent referred to feelings of empowerment associated with being allowed to make numerous decisions during a work-related project and stated those feelings drove a higher level of performance. Another respondent discussed finding joy in projects where an autonomous direction was encouraged and also mentioned the desire for exceptional performance. Learning one could handle a work project on one’s own caused an individual to inquire how his or her performance might match up to even greater responsibilities. Taking on more significant duties was valued
as leading to increased professional development. One respondent summed up by stating, “Confidence from your supervisors eventually leads to confidence in yourself.”

Regarding increased stress associated with being provided with autonomy, a final respondent stated, “Having the confidence and the ability sets all that stress and fear aside.”

**Ethical/Moral Decision-Making**

All 15 subordinate respondents and the leader respondent agreed when a leader made decisions perceived to be ethical or moral, work-related stress was reduced. The following mélange of participants’ quotes captured the respondents’ definitions of ethics and morals:

> Ethics is our job, plain and simple; [ethics and morals are] the backbone of who we are as law enforcement; it’s doing the right thing when nobody’s looking; making decisions for the right reason regardless of the outcome; it’s a way of life, it’s how you live your life, it’s the rules that you abide by; being consistent with who you are across all situations, and doing the right thing for the right reasons always.

Major themes associated with ethical/moral decision-making by leaders were: (a) confidence in those leaders, and (b) reduced stress among followers.

**Confidence in leaders.** When respondents observed perceived ethical or moral decision-making by a supervisor, their confidence in the supervisor and respect for the supervisor increased. One participant stated, “I would prefer to work for someone that I perceive to be doing the right thing versus doing the wrong thing,” while another stated, “It would make me think highly of [my supervisor] if they did the right thing.”
Respondents also discussed understanding a supervisor’s true nature based on small conversations and observations of the supervisor’s actions. Supervisors were role models and held to a higher standard. When a supervisor made an ethical or moral decision, subordinates felt more confident and supported. This support was evidenced by the supervisor being a person of integrity and one who considered subordinates with foresight. One respondent stated, “My respect for that supervisor would increase because sometimes the ethical and moral thing is not the easiest solution.” Further, when a subordinate felt a supervisor was looking out for him or her, the subordinate became more supportive of the supervisor, thus a better follower. Additionally, a respondent mentioned one could value the opinion and recommendation of a supervisor who is perceived to be ethical or moral. Another respondent experienced an increase in organizational pride.

**Reduced stress.** When a leader made decisions perceived to be ethically or morally sound, respondents agreed their confidence in that leader increased, and their levels of stress decreased. Respondents found comfort that their leader was perceived to be an ethical/moral person. One respondent stated, “It puts my mind at ease.” More, subordinates did not question whether a leader’s directive would violate organizational policies or the law. One respondent stated, “I’d respect the ethical leader’s decisions even if they were something I didn’t really want to do.” A final respondent commented, “A person that abides by morals and ethics in the face of a stressful situation would be somebody that I would want to emulate.”
Analysis and Synthesis of Findings

Selflessness permeates servant leadership. Core characteristics of servant leaders include awareness, foresight, active listening, empathy, community-consciousness, respectful persuasion, effective conceptualization, proactive healing, and thoughtful stewardship evidenced by the growth of others (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2002). The data of this study revealed all the participants defined leadership by a rubric aligned with at least some of these servant leadership characteristics. The data also indicated the subordinate participants recognized servant leader behaviors in their leader. Additionally, the leader participant’s self-identified leader behaviors aligned with servant leadership. Notably, the leader self-identified the following characteristics: listening to others, being concerned for others, remaining open-minded and objective, being a sounding board for others’ ideas, and walking alongside subordinates as they progress in their careers and as individuals. The leader also endeavored to limit intrusiveness or to micromanage but balanced the autonomy provided to subordinates with ensuring that they had the necessary resources to complete a given task. The leader placed a great emphasis on teamwork and supporting each member of the workgroup. More, the leader’s influence on the subordinates aligned with traditional servant leader expectations of empowering and developing others (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012), building community (Parris & Peachey, 2013), and increasing stewardship (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). One respondent summarized the sentiments held by many of the study participants regarding the leader participant:

I’ve got a lot of admiration for that [leader]. [That leader] is genuinely a good [person]. [That leader] cares about people and as a result of that, when [that
leader] is giving me advice on a personal level about how to handle things on a professional level, I sincerely know that [that leader] means it.

Based on the review of respondents’ comments, one can conclude that the participants in this study included a servant leader and that leader’s followers.

Despite the variance in stress-related experiences, from office related projects to officer-involved shootings, participants’ stress reactions were similar. Such a finding suggests the law enforcement setting produces similar stress reactions in employees regardless of job description or function. Additionally, leader influence was similarly reported among participants, lending credence to the idea that as all experienced similar stress reactions and outcomes so did all experience similar leadership influence. An analysis of the data in relation to this study’s research questions follows beginning with collaboration.

**Collaboration**

The first research question asks: Does creating collaborative environments influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient? Collaboration and community development are prominent tenets of servant leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2009), and social resilience is defined by the ability to draw strength from positive relationships while transforming adversity into growth (Cacioppo et al., 2011). Collaboration was also strongly associated with stress reduction in this study. Fifteen of the 16 respondents perceived participation in collaboration was stress-reducing and performance-increasing. Further, collaboration was considered a requisite characteristic of law enforcement work. Therefore, creating collaborative environments aligned strongly with influencing subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient.
Autonomy

The second research question inquires: Does promoting subordinates’ autonomy influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient? The empowering behavior of providing subordinates with autonomy is considered a prominent servant leadership value (Hu & Liden, 2011). Subordinates operating with autonomy demonstrate increased job satisfaction and lower levels of stress (Jaramillo et al., 2009). The findings of this study also revealed that autonomy was associated with stress reduction. Twelve of the 16 respondents perceived being provided with autonomy was stress-reducing and performance-enhancing. Two respondents perceived autonomy was both stress-reducing and stress-inducing depending on the circumstances, while two other respondents perceived autonomy to increase stress and decrease performance. Ultimately, a greater percentage of respondents perceived autonomy to reduce stress and increase performance. As such, autonomy aligned with influencing subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient, but not as strongly as collaboration.

Ethical/Moral Decision-Making

The third research question queries: Does leading with ethical and moral decision-making influence subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient? Servant leadership stands apart from other leadership disciplines by its connection to ethics, virtues, and morality which protect followers from stress related to leader apotheosis (Hu & Liden, 2011; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Ethical/moral leadership cultivates both follower trust and organizational trust, which positively affects individual and organizational effectiveness (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Leading with ethical and moral decision-making was directly and completely aligned with stress
reduction and performance increase in respondents of this study. All 16 respondents perceived their stress was reduced and their performance was increased when their leader made decisions the respondents perceived to be ethical/moral. Based upon the referenced data, leading with ethical/moral decision-making very strongly aligned with influencing subordinates’ perceptions of themselves as resilient. An analysis of the data in relation to the concept of pre-traumatic stress inoculation follows.

**Pre-traumatic Stress Inoculation**

Findings of this study also supported the concept of pre-traumatic stress inoculation by increasing resilience through advancements of the biopsychosocial-spiritual holistic self. Respondents stated that physical exercise reduced their stress which aligned with multiple researchers (Haglund, Nestadt, Cooper, & Southwick, 2007; Richards et al., 2015; VanKim & Nelson, 2013). Respondents both reduced stress and expanded their knowledge base by their experience or learning from and relying on senior colleagues. Howell (2012) suggested the management of perceptions improves mental resilience. Comments regarding relying on relationships with colleagues and family members as a stress reduction method were prominent among participants. As mentioned, building social resilience provides positive adaptation to adversity for both individuals and collective groups (Cacioppo et al., 2011). Participants reported that spiritual and faith-based exercises aided in their stress reduction. This finding aligned with previous research that concluded that spirituality and religiosity were positively correlated with increased resilience (Brewer-Smyth & Koenig, 2014; Diaz-Gilbert, 2014; Min et al., 2013) and that spirituality improves mental and physical health (Womble et al., 2013). As discussed, body and mind integrate with the physical, emotional, social,
and spiritual facets of individuals, and the progressive development of body, mind, relationships with others, and spirituality or the appropriate control of emotions increases resilience (Grafton et al., 2010; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Richardson, 2002). The findings of this study are aligned. A discussion of additional theories that emerged from the data of this study follows.

**Emergent Theories**

By utilizing second cycle theoretical coding in conjunction with post coding (Saldaña, 2016), two theoretical extrapolations emerged from the data. First, subordinates wanted to feel safe in their work relationships, and servant leadership provided a conducive environment for such security. Second, autonomy must be tailored to the autonomous individual’s knowledge base and capacities, and servant leadership’s emphasis on follower development provided the requisite praxis.

The following data supported the first theory under the leadership theme: Leaders are willing to give guidance, support subordinates, work side by side with subordinates, and facilitate subordinate growth. Leaders are people-oriented. Participants described their supervisor’s leadership behavior as caring for the team as well as the team’s morale. More, respondents described their leader as relatable and approachable and as one who built and nurtured relationships. The leader also cared for subordinates by showing a personal interest in their personal and professional development. Additionally, the leader engaged in team building through organizing squad events. The leader reduced follower stress through championing collaboration. The leader did not ask subordinates to perform duties the leader would not perform. The leader described walking alongside
subordinates and taught them to support each member of the team. Each security-aligned datum presented also aligns with servant leadership characteristics.

The stress theme also contained data that aligned with security. Respondents reduced stress and gained security through placing confidence in a work team’s ability to perform. They felt more secure when they relied on comradery. The servant leadership tenet of collaboration produces teams and comradery.

The collaboration theme further emphasized a connection to the security theory through previously discussed data. Collaboration instilled confidence in respondents; they felt a team could effectively accomplish tasks. More, collaboration reduced stress because respondents felt they did not have to go through challenges alone. Collaboration was described by one respondent as “positively overwhelming to feel that others are there for you.” The referenced data supports the previously discussed theory that subordinates wanted to feel safe in their work relationships and the servant leadership tenet of collaboration provided a conducive environment for such security.

Data previously discussed under the autonomy theme aligned with the theory that autonomy must be tailored to the autonomous individual’s knowledge base and capacities, and servant leadership’s emphasis on follower development provides the requisite praxis. The leader respondent felt experience dictated whether being provided with autonomy was stress-inducing or stress-reducing. Two of the subordinate respondents supported the leader’s statement with their assertion that whether autonomy was stress-inducing or stress-reducing depended on the breadth of the work project and the definition and clarification of work roles. Autonomy was perceived as positive when subordinates had the wherewithal to accomplish a work project. Under a clearly defined
job role and with the requisite job knowledge, the leader respondent and subordinates lauded autonomy as a growth mechanism. Sixty-eight percent of respondents championed the confidence gained from being provided with autonomy. Many also felt empowered and wanted to take on greater responsibilities. Such progressive language finds alignment with the servant leader characteristic of follower development. Consequently, the referenced autonomy theory is supported by the data. A discussion of how the findings of this study may be linked to existing law enforcement research follows.

**Findings Linked to Law Enforcement Research**

In addition to the presented theories, the data under the leadership theme supported findings by Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011) regarding the preferred leadership characteristics of law enforcement leadership. Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011) identified the servant leader characteristics of being service-oriented, empowering subordinates, helping followers obtain goals and objectives, cultivating positive relationships, and leading from an ethical perspective as leadership characteristics extolled by law enforcement. Values coding was used to capture the leadership characteristics participants provided in their definitions of leadership and description of their leader. The data was then attached to like characteristics reported by Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011). Consequently, the data supported the referenced research and further informed the discussion of servant leadership’s influence on subordinates in a law enforcement setting.

The following data aligned with the servant leader characteristic of being service-oriented (Whetstone, 2002): Leaders support followers, are people-oriented, and work
side-by-side with subordinates. The participants’ leader walked alongside subordinates and ensured they had the resources they needed to succeed.

The ensuing data aligned with the servant leader characteristic of empowering subordinates: Leaders inspire and influence followers. They focus on growth development and facilitate subordinates’ growth. The respondents’ leader provided autonomy to make decisions, which provided a feeling of empowerment. The leader trusted subordinates to do the right thing which imbued confidence in them.

The succeeding data aligned with the servant leader characteristic of helping followers obtain goals and objectives: Leaders hold subordinates accountable, ensure teams accomplish goals, motivate subordinates, and focus on mission accomplishment. The respondents’ leader encouraged collaboration, which led to decreased stress and mission accomplishment.

The pursuing data aligned with the servant leader characteristic of cultivating positive relationships: Leaders are people-oriented, they lead by example, communicate, persuade, and earn the respect of subordinates. The respondents’ leader took a personal interest in subordinates. The leader increased morale by organizing squad events and resolving conflicts. Participants felt their leader sincerely cared for them. The leader was skilled in creating relationships with others.

The successive data aligned with the servant leader characteristic of leading from an ethical perspective: Leaders recognize they do not know everything and they are still learning. The participants’ leader respected subject matter experts. The respondents lauded the leader for following policy and procedure. The participants acknowledged the leader for consistently doing the right thing.
Upon further examination of the servant leader characteristics acclaimed by law enforcement as applied to the servant leader behaviors focused on in this study, domain and taxonomic coding were used to determine whether there was a semantic relationship between the identified behaviors. Under the servant leader behavior of collaboration (the domain), being service-oriented, helping followers obtain goals and objectives, and cultivating positive relationships were categorized as taxonomies. Additionally, under the servant leader behavior of autonomy (the domain), empowering subordinates was designated as a taxonomy. Further, leading from an ethical perspective was classified as a taxonomy of this study’s servant leader behavior of leading with ethical and moral decision-making (the domain). The referenced process also revealed the pronounced association of this study’s three specific servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making to law enforcement application. The noted servant leader behaviors influenced subordinates positively and increased their perceptions of themselves as resilient. A renewed examination of the purpose and aim of this study in relation to the data ensues.

**Purpose and Aim**

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation in practice study was to explore law enforcement professional perceptions regarding the influence of servant leader behaviors on resilience at a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency. The aim of this study was to provide an evidence-based connection between three servant leader behaviors and subordinates’ perceptions of resilience in a law enforcement setting. The three servant leader behaviors are: (a) creating
collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making. Both the purpose and aim of this study were met.

Summary

The findings of this dissertation in practice study suggest the creation of collaborative environments, the promotion of subordinates’ autonomy, and leading with ethical and moral decision-making align with law enforcement professionals’ self-perceptions of reduced stress and increased resilience. Due to the potential exposure to multiple stressful and traumatic events throughout their careers, law enforcement professionals may benefit from leaders who lead in harmony with the servant leader behaviors of creating collaborative environments, providing their subordinates with autonomy, and leading by ethical and moral decision-making. A proposed solution to mitigate the adverse effects of stress and trauma-related occurrences experienced by law enforcement professionals follows.
FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The final chapter of this dissertation in practice study restates the purpose and aim, and proposes a solution to the previously identified problem of the influence stress and trauma may have on law enforcement professionals. A discussion of the implications for the implementation of the proposed solution and future research follows. Final conclusions will provide the reader with information and data regarding the importance of this dissertation in practice study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation in practice study was to explore law enforcement professional perceptions regarding the influence of servant leader behaviors on resilience at a resident office of a Central Californian division of a federal law enforcement agency.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide an evidence-based connection between the servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making, and subordinates’ perceptions of resilience in a law enforcement setting.

Proposed Solution

Law enforcement professionals experience stressful and traumatic experiences that may result in adverse psychological or physiological outcomes. Leaders may influence pre-traumatic stress inoculation and subordinate resilience through the leader behaviors they espouse and exude. Subordinates’ perceptions of reduced stress and
increased resilience were in alignment with the servant leader behaviors of: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making. The proposed solution is a leadership training seminar focused on developing servant leader behaviors. A more detailed account of the leadership training seminar, including its framework, purpose, and timeline follows in the Implementation of the Proposed Solution section. First, a discussion of support for the solution ensues.

**Support for the Solution**

Leadership training empirically improves leadership behaviors (Jain, Chatterjee, & Jain, 2016; Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012; Stiehl, Felfe, Elprana, & Gatzka, 2015). Additionally, a combination of training pedagogy significantly influences leader performance (Seidle, Perry, & Fernandez, 2016). Improving leader effectiveness occurs by modifying leader behaviors (Hart & Donde, 2014). Leaders alter their behaviors through gaining self-awareness regarding their beliefs, values, feelings, and ways of thinking (Hart & Donde, 2014). For example, helping a leader explore his or her ethical base through agency mandated ethics training may allow the leader to make more decisions from that platform. In turn, the established relationship and exchanges between a leader and a follower affect training transfer from the leader to the follower (Scaduto, Lindsay, & Chiaburu, 2008), helping to create the next generation of leaders.

As noted, the practice of servant leadership generates environments conducive to mentorship and the development of future leaders (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Therefore, drawing on the established servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative
environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making, all of which are characteristics servant leaders model, the proposed solution is an extension of servant leadership. Providing servant leadership training, focused on the characteristics as mentioned above, to current and future organizational leaders may develop those leaders into servant leaders themselves, which may, in turn, influence their followers.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Solution

The proposed leadership training is applicable across multiple venues. The law enforcement field division of the research site examined in this study provides a monthly two-hour block of leadership instruction to both current organizational leaders and aspiring leaders. Additionally, the headquarters field division maintains an annual conference for all employees. At this conference, presenters provide blocks of instruction on various topics including leadership. The agency headquarters houses a leadership development unit that trains a broad range of students from around the world including recruits, new supervisors, and law enforcement executives. As leadership training is a priority initiative of the law enforcement agency head, all identified venues are appropriate for the proposed solution, the infrastructure and resources are already in place, and such an insertion imposes nominal policy, fiduciary, or legal ramifications.

Implementation of the Proposed Solution

The leadership training seminar will first be implemented in the localized leadership training series in the law enforcement field division before broader organizational disbursement. The researcher accepted an invitation to become a member of the planning committee for the localized leadership training series and attended group
planning meetings and individual meetings with division leadership. The researcher later accepted the role as architect of the leadership training series and was asked to lead the development of the series’ framework. The mission of the leadership training series is to develop leaders in place and for future leadership roles. The mission aligns with the servant leadership behavior of developing others through service (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). The vision of the leadership training series is to produce a flagship leadership program, adaptable to the entire organization, which develops leaders in place who in turn develop others. Developing others often provides a return on investment wherein those who receive service choose to serve others (Greenleaf, 1970).

The researcher outlined a six-part leadership training series that will be offered twice per year. The series focuses on leadership principles gained from previous leadership coursework and current requirements of the law enforcement field division. The first part of the series will focus on strategic management principles, such as creating mission and vision statements. The second part of the series will address leadership styles with an intense focus on the specific servant leadership tenets in this research: (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making. The researcher will align these tenets with pre-traumatic stress inoculation based on the findings of this study, thereby providing attendees with a tool that may increase resilience and decrease PTSD symptoms in subordinates. The third part of the series will introduce reflective practices to improve leadership, followed by a presentation on effective interpersonal and organizational communication in the fourth part of the series. The fifth part of the series will cover change theory principles, such as affecting policy change, while the sixth part
of the series will provide instruction on motivational theory. The researcher agreed to present research data from this study in the series, as noted above, and plans to affect change in the organization by the data. The development of the training is presently underway with the first part of the series scheduled for presentation in March 2017.

In the training series, the researcher will demonstrate and model the servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making to attendees. The researcher will accomplish this through exercises embedded in the training, and by challenging attendees to apply the referenced behaviors in their leadership practice. By way of example, the researcher will encourage collaboration among attendees to identify what they perceive to be ideal leader traits. The researcher will then group those traits under the servant leader umbrellas of collaboration, autonomy, and ethics as appropriate. This will provide an opportunity for further discussion regarding the three servant leader behaviors focused on in this study. The attendees will then be challenged (and provided with the autonomy) to focus on creating collaborative environments, promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and leading with ethical and moral decision-making in their assigned work groups. By imbuing law enforcement leaders with servant leader behaviors, they may, in turn, influence their subordinates’ resilience as concluded by the data of this study and the previously associated literature.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Implementation of the Solution

The law enforcement field division's leadership, the training coordinators connected to the localized leadership training series, and the training attendees comprise the stakeholders related to the implementation of the proposed training seminar. The
field division head will grant approval for the implementation of the proposed solution. The training coordinators will be integral to scheduling the training and ensuring the proper venue and resources are available to put on the training. The researcher will be responsible for organizing the training in an appropriate manner for the audience and for fulfilling the intent of the training.

**Evaluation and Timeline for Implementation and Assessment**

The researcher will implement the proposed solution in the second seminar of the localized leadership training series as outlined above. The researcher will assess the solution by examining subordinates’ perceptions of their resilience in association with behaviors exhibited by those leaders that have received the training. Inherent liabilities are akin to those associated with this study, and the researcher will mitigate them through an agency Institutional Review Board as appropriate. The measurement tool will be a semi-structured interview with the researcher similar to the interviews conducted in this study, designed specifically to extract respondents’ perceptions (see Appendix E). The researcher will measure effectiveness by respondents’ perceptions of themselves as resilient being equal or greater to the results of this study (i.e., collaboration 94%, autonomy 68%, ethics 100%). Additionally, the researcher will seek feedback from the attendees and the field division executive management regarding the implementation of the training in their respective units. The researcher will accomplish this through roundtable discussions during field division management meetings. If leaders deem the training as worthwhile and effective in their work groups, the leadership seminar may be expanded to the greater field division through the annual all-employee conference, and to the broader law enforcement agency’s leadership development program.
**Implications**

The implications of this study may have a positive influence on the professional law enforcement field. Additional industries, including business, healthcare, and education, may be positively affected by the implications of this study. Increased resilience may be considered beneficial to those organizations. The practical implications, the implications for future research, and the applications related to leadership theory and practice comprise a more thorough discussion of the results of this study. An examination of the practical implications of this study follows first.

**Practical Implications**

Law enforcement professionals experience PTSD symptoms at a higher rate than the general population due to frequent encounters with stressful and traumatic events (Newbold et al., 2008). Preventative actions might improve individual and organizational resilience to the negative effects of stress and trauma (Davydov et al., 2010; Howell, 2012). The results of this study provide an evidence-based connection between the servant leaders’ behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making, and subordinates’ perceptions of increased resilience in a law enforcement setting. Law enforcement agencies could benefit from this study by applying this knowledge to their respective leadership training programs. Leaders who increase subordinate resilience may improve the capabilities of their teams and organizations, especially in the face of stressful and traumatic events often associated with the law enforcement field.
Implications for Future Research

The results of this study suggested the servant leader behaviors of creating collaborative environments, promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and leading with ethical and moral decision-making positively influenced subordinates’ perceptions of their resilience. The referenced results augmented research conducted by Harland et al. (2005) who found subordinate resilience may be positively influenced by various leader behaviors, including the transformational leader behaviors of attributed charisma, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, and the transactional leadership behavior of contingent reward. This study also augmented research conducted by Vito, Suresh, and Richards (2011) who concluded law enforcement leaders preferred servant leadership tenets to other leadership styles. Those tenets were identified as being service-oriented, empowering subordinates, helping followers obtain goals and objectives, cultivating positive relationships, and leading from an ethical perspective. The referenced servant leadership tenets align with those focused on in this study.

This study revealed the need for further research regarding the relationship between leader behaviors and subordinate resilience in a law enforcement setting. Further research could examine the servant leader behavior of providing autonomy to subordinates. Research into the perceptions of subordinates’ resilience associated with being provided autonomy could take into consideration the individual’s level of experience related to a given task. Such research may reveal the reasoning for this study’s disparity of answers associated with autonomy. Additional research targeting other servant leader behaviors and characteristics, such as trust, service, modeling,
appreciation of others, empowerment, communication, and stewardship (Parris & Peachey, 2013), could also be considered to inform the study of the influence of servant leadership on subordinate resilience. Varied law enforcement agencies, divisions, and units could also be studied to potentially provide validation for this study’s findings, which may lead to a greater application across the law enforcement field. Researchers could also consider the applicability of the influence of servant leadership on subordinate resilience outside of the law enforcement setting.

**Implications for Leadership Theory and Practice**

Multiple researchers posited that studying the relationship between leadership and resilience has been largely ignored, but it may be considered vital to leadership development (Harland et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Wilson, 2013). This study further informs leadership theory and practice by revealing how specific servant leader behaviors influence subordinate resilience in a law enforcement setting. Law enforcement leadership may benefit from the application of servant leader behaviors in the law enforcement professional field. The application of servant leadership behaviors may induce increased resilience in both law enforcement personnel and law enforcement organizations. Increased resilience in the law enforcement field may aid performance during a stressful or traumatic event and in the aftermath, potentially saving lives.

**Summary of the Study**

Law enforcement professionals face stressful and traumatic events by the very nature of their occupation. These disruptions can cause psychological and physiological maladies that can damage the careers and personal lives of law enforcement professionals. Pre-traumatic stress inoculation may increase resilience before incidents
of stress and trauma, aid individuals in performing successfully through disruptions, and help them grow in the aftermath. Improving one’s biopsychosocial-spiritual holistic self may increase resilience. Servant leadership is a leadership style that aligns with resilience precepts. This dissertation in practice study examined the influence of three specific servant leader behaviors on subordinate resilience in a law enforcement context. The results of this study revealed an evidence-based connection between the servant leader behaviors of (a) creating collaborative environments, (b) promoting subordinates’ autonomy, and (c) leading with ethical and moral decision-making, and subordinates’ perceptions of increased resilience in a law enforcement setting. The researcher proposed a leadership training seminar designed to equip leaders with the knowledge of how the referenced servant leader behaviors may increase resilience in their subordinates as a solution to the problem. The researcher will first instruct the training seminar in the localized field division's leadership training series with potential follow-on instruction provided at the annual all-employee conference and through the agency-wide leadership development unit. A questionnaire designed to elicit subordinates’ perceptions of their resilience will be used to evaluate the training along with discussions with management. This study informs the discussion on the effect of leader behaviors on subordinate resilience. The research also provides amalgamation between servant leader behaviors and subordinate resilience with application to the law enforcement field. Increasing resilience may save the lives of law enforcement professionals and the lives of those they serve.
References


Appendix A

Participant Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Doctoral Study
Attachments: Informed Consent Letter.docx

Esteemed Colleague,

You are cordially invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation research study which investigates the influence leader behaviors have on resilience in a law enforcement setting. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be anonymous and kept confidential. There will be no adverse actions brought against you if you do not participate. If you choose to participate, you will be interviewed and asked questions related to the aforementioned topic. The interview will last approximately one hour. Your voluntary participation is most appreciated. The results of this study will be used to provide recommendations to inter-agency leadership development programs. Please indicate your willingness to participate by responding to this email message with your preferred contact information. You will be contacted in return to set up an interview appointment convenient to you. An informed consent letter is attached to this email to provide further information regarding confidentiality, risks, and your rights regarding this study. Questions regarding this study may be directed to the researcher below.

Respectfully,

Justin K. Badger
Doctoral Candidate
Creighton University
Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter

Dear Sir or Ma’am,

Introduction

You are invited to voluntarily participate in a research study that aims to provide an evidence-based connection between specific servant leader behaviors and subordinate resilience in a law enforcement context.

What is my role as a volunteer participant?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by a researcher regarding your perceptions of your leader’s influence on your personal resiliency. The face-to-face interview will last approximately one hour and will be recorded and transcribed. The recording will be immediately destroyed upon transcription.

Will my participation in this study be confidential?

Your participation and interview results will be held in strict confidentiality. The data associated with your interview responses will be reported anonymously. No personal identifiers will be collected or reported.

What are the risks associated with this study?

You will be asked to recall past work-related stressful experiences, which may cause discomfort. Risks associated with this study are minimal, although there may be risks that cannot be currently predicted. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions or concerns before you choose to participate in this study.

What are the benefits associated with participation in this study?

Empirical evidence gained from this study may aid the law enforcement field.

What are my rights associated with this study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate or to terminate your participation at any time without requital. The information collected in this study will not be used for criminal, civil or policy enforcement purposes. Results from this study will be shared with agency leadership and law enforcement training groups, but with no others outside of the Principal Researcher’s chain of command absent additional agency Institutional Review Board Approval.
Appendix C

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Subordinates

1. What does leadership mean to you?
   a. In what ways does your direct supervisor show leadership?
   b. Have you been influenced by your direct supervisor’s leadership?
   c. Can you provide an example?
   d. Based upon the example you provided, what ideas, thoughts, feelings, or changes did you experience at the time?

2. Thinking of work-related stress only, how do you cope with individual stress induced experiences?
   a. Tell me about a stressful work-related situation that occurred three to five years ago, and describe your reactions, thoughts, and behaviors during that time?
   b. Consider a more recent stressful work-related situation, within the last year, and describe your reactions, thoughts, and behaviors during that experience?
   c. What do you perceive to be the differences in your reactions, thoughts, and behaviors between the two experiences?
   d. When you consider the differences, what do you think the cause of the differences could be?
   e. Does the behavior of your current supervisor affect some of these differences?
   f. If so, in what ways?
   g. If you experienced a stressful work-related experience today, how would you address it?

3. Thinking about a stressful situation at work within the last year, was collaboration with other personnel employed?
   a. If yes, in what ways did the collaboration affect the outcome, either positively or negatively? If no, how do you feel collaboration could have affected the outcome, either positively or negatively?
   b. If yes, in what ways were you influenced, either positively or negatively, for having participated in the collaborative experience? If no, how do you feel you would be influenced, either positively or negatively, for participating in a collaborative experience?
   c. If yes, how did you perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you imagine you would perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation?

4. Were you provided with autonomy or independence to address a stressful situation at work within the last year?
   a. If yes, how did being provided with autonomy or independence affect your performance during the situation? If no, how do you feel being provided with autonomy or independence would affect your performance during a work-related stressful situation?
b. If yes, how did you perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you feel your perception would be of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during such a situation?

5. What does ethics and morals mean to you?
   a. Within the last year, can you recall a stressful situation at work that your supervisor addressed by making decisions that you perceived to be ethical or moral?
   b. If yes, what ideas, thoughts, feelings, or changes did you experience at that time? If no, what ideas, thoughts, feelings, or changes do you believe you might experience?
   c. If yes, in what ways did your supervisor’s decisions affect your perception of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively? If no, in what ways do you believe your supervisor’s decisions might affect your perception of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively?
Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for the Leader

1. What does leadership mean to you?
   a. In what ways do you show leadership?
   b. Do you feel you have influenced others through your leadership?
   c. If so, can you provide an example?

2. How do your subordinates cope with work-related stress?
   a. Do you feel that your leadership behaviors affect your subordinates’ ability to cope with work-related stress?
   b. If so what behaviors do you perceive to influence your subordinates’ ability to cope with work-related stress?

3. Thinking about a work-related experience that you perceived to be stressful to your subordinates within the last year, did you encourage collaboration amongst those involved?
   a. If yes, in what ways did the collaboration affect the outcome, either positively or negatively? If no, how do you feel collaboration could have affected the outcome, either positively or negatively?
   b. If yes, in what ways were your subordinates influenced, either positively or negatively, for having participated in the collaborative experience? If no, how do you feel they would be influenced, either positively or negatively, for participating in a collaborative experience?
   c. If yes, how did you perceive the ability of your subordinates to manage their stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you imagine your subordinates would perceive their ability to manage their stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation?

4. Did you provide your subordinates autonomy or independence to address a stressful situation at work within the last year?
   a. If yes, how did being provided with autonomy or independence affect your subordinates’ performance during the situation? If no, how do you feel being provided with autonomy or independence would affect your subordinates’ performance during a work-related stressful situation?
   b. If yes, how did you perceive your subordinates’ ability to manage their stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you feel your subordinates’ perception would be of their ability to manage their stress, either positively or negatively, during such a situation?

5. What does ethics and morals mean to you?
   a. Within the last year, can you recall a stressful situation at work, that also affected your subordinates, which you addressed by making decisions that you perceived to be ethical or moral?
b. If yes, in what ways do you feel your decisions affected your subordinates’ perceptions of their ability to manage their stress, either positively or negatively? If no, in what ways do you believe your decisions might affect your subordinates’ perceptions of their ability to manage their stress, either positively or negatively?
Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Assessment of Leadership Training

1. Thinking about a stressful situation at work within the last year, was collaboration with other personnel employed?
   a. If yes, in what ways did the collaboration affect the outcome, either positively or negatively? If no, how do you feel collaboration could have affected the outcome, either positively or negatively?
   b. If yes, in what ways were you influenced, either positively or negatively, for having participated in the collaborative experience? If no, how do you feel you would be influenced, either positively or negatively, for participating in a collaborative experience?
   c. If yes, how did you perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you imagine you would perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation?

2. Were you provided with autonomy or independence to address a stressful situation at work within the last year?
   a. If yes, how did being provided with autonomy or independence affect your performance during the situation? If no, how do you feel being provided with autonomy or independence would affect your performance during a work-related stressful situation?
   b. If yes, how did you perceive your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during that situation? If no, how do you feel your perception would be of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively, during such a situation?

3. What does ethics and morals mean to you?
   a. Within the last year, can you recall a stressful situation at work that your supervisor addressed by making decisions that you perceived to be ethical or moral?
   b. If yes, what ideas, thoughts, feelings, or changes did you experience at that time? If no, what ideas, thoughts, feelings, or changes do you believe you might experience?
   c. If yes, in what ways did your supervisor’s decisions affect your perception of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively? If no, in what ways do you believe your supervisor’s decisions might affect your perception of your ability to manage your stress, either positively or negatively?