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Examining the experiences of DEI practitioners: a look at the racial disparity in policing of black people and the subsequent need for adaptive leadership

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EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCES OF DEI PRACTITIONERS: A LOOK AT THE RACIAL

DISPARITY IN POLICING OF BLACK PEOPLE AND THE SUBSEQUENT NEED FOR

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

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by

LaShawn Taylor

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Stephen Kirnon, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

-James Baldwin

To the Black men who were taken from us. You inspired me to do this for our community.

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, Black people in the U.S. have had to navigate structural and institutional racism. This is especially true for the system of policing, which evolved from pre-emancipation slave patrols. Though law enforcement agencies have made strides in the past 160 years, Black people continue to be targeted and killed by police at a disproportionate rate. Evidence shows that DEI training initiatives within policing often fail to reduce this racial disparity that exists in policing. Yet, improved training outcomes surrounding racial relations continues to be a priority. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of U.S.-based DEI practitioners and consultants that have designed and facilitated DEI training programs for law enforcement. The adaptive leadership model (Heifetz, 1994) is an influential component of this study. This served as the theoretical framework to understand how adaptive leadership influences the work of DEI consultants and practitioners and whether it is an appropriate model for how to support efforts to dismantle institutional racism in policing.

The phenomenological analysis revealed nine themes: (a) Lived experiences with marginalization; (b) Law enforcement background; (c) Increase opportunities for leadership development; (d) Navigating unforeseen challenges; (e) Changes in practice; (f) Listen to Black community members; (g) Expand DEI training in academies; (h) Increase financial support for DEI; and (i) Participant feedback. The study's findings led to the following conclusions: (a) adaptive leadership is a valuable framework for DEI practitioners to utilize when facing difficult challenges in their efforts to help dismantle institutional racism in policing and (b) establishing an internal DEI department allows for more dedicated efforts toward eliminating the racial disparity in policing of Black people. Findings and takeaways from the interviews were incorporated to offer recommendations for further study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Organizations often confront a multitude of challenges that disrupt the way they carry out their missions and meet their objectives. The problems can be customary, technical problems that can be solved relatively easily. However, other problems have complexity and do not have a standard, practical solution. Addressing difficulties can require significant adjustments on behalf of individuals and stakeholders, which makes them challenging to solve (Heifetz et al., 2009). Exemplars of complex issues plaguing organizations include topics such as social justice and inequality.

Across the U.S., law enforcement agencies are facing scrutiny for the overrepresentation of Black people killed during encounters with police. This is a cause for concern as members of law enforcement have an enormous effect on the quality of life of the community members who work and reside within their communities. The formation of today's police departments has been linked to slave patrols of the 18th century and discriminatory legislation through the 20th century that was aimed at monitoring Black people, which represents a complex, systemic issue in policing that has been present for centuries. Given this longstanding problem, intervention solely from law enforcement is not enough to address the complex, systemic problem of the racial disparity in policing. Progress toward meeting this goal requires an intervention method that focuses on utilizing adaptive approaches to problem solving (Heifetz et al., 2009).

The emergence of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training in law enforcement is the result of social movements aimed at addressing police bias and excessive force against Black people and other people of color (Fagan & Campbell, 2020). The goal of DEI training for law enforcement is to provide strategic tools that enhance relations with communities and improve safety outcomes, while avoiding liability. DEI trainings are often facilitated by practitioners

known as DEI consultants. In many cases, they are contracted by law enforcement agencies to serve as the organization's expert in matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. According to a 2015 study on policing in America, training and education are recommended as key components of advancing relations between police officers and historically marginalized communities of color (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

As the racial landscape of the United States continues to shift and the calls for reform in police training continue to grow, it is expected that law enforcement agencies respond to these complex challenges by enacting DEI training that is responsive to the needs of officers and community members. Although many law enforcement agencies have sought to respond to these demands for improved accountability by introducing DEI training, they have struggled to achieve the intended outcomes.

Problem Statement

Since the adoption of Civil Rights Act of 1964, law enforcement agencies have been called upon to dedicate resources to the changing diversity of the communities they serve and how to eliminate discriminatory practices against Black people in America. Although law enforcement has engaged in making these investments, they have yet to meet this objective (Grabiner, 2016). Black people make up approximately 14% of the U.S. population but are nearly three times more likely to be killed by police than non-Hispanic, White people, who represent 60% of the population (G. L. Schwartz & Jahn, 2020). As shown in Table 1, Black people currently outpace all other captured demographics in per capita deaths associated with the police.

Table 1

U.S. Police Shootings by Race and/or Ethnicity from 2016-2022

	Black	Latino	White (non-Latino)	Other
Annual Population	40M	62M	192M	38M
Total Deaths	1,954	1,302	3,707	279
Annual Deaths (Per Million)	5.8	2.5	2.3	0.9

Note. Adapted from "Police Shootings Database," n.d., by *The Washington Post* (https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/). Copyright 2023 by the author.

Although laws have aided in deterring some instances of discrimination and police brutality, in addition to various organizational policies surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion, the reality of the eradication of systemic racism in policing has not been achieved.

In addition to the moral implications of this issue, there are also financial costs associated with outcomes related to the disparity in which Black people are perceived to be targeted by law enforcement. Matheson and Baade (2004) revealed that Los Angeles lost a projected $4 billion in taxable sales in the 10 years following the civil unrest of 1992 that was a result of four officers being acquitted assaulting Rodney King. For some, the impact of this potential revenue loss does not appear to be felt due to Los Angeles' seemingly thriving economy. However, in looking at the city infrastructure, homeless epidemic, and inadequate education systems, the revenue from those sales could have been used to help local underserved communities. Unfortunately, that is not the only instance of financial burden that has been placed on American cities in the aftermath of police using excessive force. Lumsden (2017) provided a sample of cities within the United States that have disbursed over $50 million in claims of excessive use of force and misconduct by police:

- Chicago: $520 million from 2004-2014

- New York City: $350 million from 2006-2011

- Los Angeles: $100 million from 2002-2011

- Oakland: $75 million from 1990-2014

While the amounts paid by municipalities does not solely represent instances involving Black people, the data speaks to one of many reasons why police reform is a pressing issue and should be examined and addressed in multiple ways, such as training. Though research has indicated that Black people have been racially profiled, arrested, and killed by law enforcement disproportionately, police actions rooted in discrimination were not monitored until the 1960s (Siemaszko, 2012). Since the data has become available, agencies within law enforcement have taken part in various types of DEI training to reduce the effect of bias and discrimination by police officers against communities of color (Davidson, 2016; Schlosser et al., 2015).

Although significant research has been conducted addressing the lack of successful outcomes in diversity training for police (Davidson, 2016; Schlosser et al., 2015; Spencer et al., 2016), limited research has been conducted to study successful outcomes (Spencer et al., 2016). Research has shown that modern-day DEI training centered around racial prejudice has had success in altering mindsets of participants but has not always led to behavioral shifts (Cox, 2023; Kulik et al., 2007). As DEI training continues to be a popular intervention for complex, organizational problems related to human differences, it is prudent for leaders of these programs to develop and provide intervention that will help law enforcement agencies reach their organizational goals. If the intended impact of DEI training is to alter behavior, then the practices and strategies of DEI consultants are important factors in the success of these programs that should be examined.

Purpose of the Study

As law enforcement agencies continue to undergo analysis, improved training continues to be named as a priority objective. DEI training continues to be looked at as an intervention method to reduce disparities in policing. Yet, it has been revealed that many agencies continue to struggle at meeting their desired goals surrounding DEI training practices (Blumberg et al., 2016; McCandless, 2018). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the experiences of U.S.-based DEI consultants and practitioners that have designed and facilitated DEI training programs for members of law enforcement.

Significance of the Study

DEI training that closes the gap between Black people and law enforcement is an elusive reality that many people are eager to experience. Law enforcement, members of academia, and organizational leaders, and DEI practitioners acknowledge the study of DEI training as important, as evidenced by the national media attention, dedicated legislation, and increase in the number of organizations implementing DEI training programs (Lum & Nagin, 2017). Currently, limited research has been conducted to gather a framework of best practices for designing and implementing DEI training for police. This research can add to the gap that exists in academic literature that examines outcomes of DEI training for law enforcement. It is also likely that the outcomes of this study can lead to the creation of DEI training that provides members of law enforcement with resources that decrease the negative disproportionality in which Black communities encounter police.

Significance for Law Enforcement Leaders

Law enforcement leaders will benefit from a better understanding of how the outcomes of DEI training can improve relations with Black people. Particularly, they will have clarity around

their responsibility in developing a work environment that sets expectations and accountability around how law enforcement members perform their duties guided by principles of DEI. This study also provides support that will allow them to make beneficial decisions to invest in their human capital.

Significance for Human Resource Leaders

Human resource (HR) departments are responsible for developing and executing strategic recruiting, retention, and rewarding for employees. Overall, they are charged with managing people as an essential resource within the organization. HR leaders are also often tasked with soliciting external consultants to develop and facilitate trainings for the organization (Bezrukova et al., 2016). To be successful in this function, HR leaders must generate capacity and dedication. The information gathered from the findings of this study can inform their capacity to meet these goals while fostering partnership amongst them, the organization, and law enforcement leaders.

Significance for DEI Consultants and Practitioners

Unlike other organizational leaders, DEI practitioners' primary focus is to address issues related to DEI within the organization they've been employed to work with. As organizations, including law enforcement agencies, continue to find methods to improve their workforce in a way that is reflective of societal expectations, DEI practitioners must remain prepared to assess the needs of organizations and implement accordingly. The findings of this study can be utilized as a tool for DEI consultants and practitioners that are seeking to work with law enforcement agencies and support enhancement of their DEI training programs**.**

Significance for Policy Leaders

Training for new recruits is implemented by academies that are funded at local, state, or federal levels, yet for officers holding mid-rank or leadership positions, such as supervisors,

training is often made available on an impromptu or self-elected basis and funded by a

combination of government or private sector funding (Blumberg et al., 2019; Kleygrewe, 2022).

This showcases the opportunities for policy leaders to craft legislation that aids in improving the

standards and outcomes associated with training for law enforcement. The key findings

discussed in this study could significantly aid decision-makers as they continue to propose

measures that seek to improve DEI training for police.

Definition of Key Terms

This section defines key terms and concepts utilized throughout the study that may be

misunderstood or used in a specific context relevant to this research.

- *Adaptive Leadership*: A process of motivating individuals or groups to address

  complex problems and thrive (Heifetz et al., 2009)

- *Best Practices*: Solutions, actions, policies, or procedures considered successful that

  may help other organizations facing similar problems (Macmillen & Stead, 2014)

- *Black People*: An ethnic group of Black people residing in the United States with

  partial or full ancestry from any of the native populations of Sub-Saharan Africa

  (Charles et al., 2005)

- *DEI Consultant/Practitioner*: An expert with knowledge to advise on and/or create

  policies and programs that support diversity, equity, and inclusion (Gassam & Salter,

  2020). These words are used interchangeably throughout the study

- *DEI Training Program*: Programming designed to deliver outcomes that reduce

  prejudice and discrimination amongst historically marginalized groups while

  improving the knowledge, skills, and motivations of people to positively interact with

  individuals from different backgrounds (Pendry et al., 2007)

- *Diversity*: Real or believed physical and/or socio-cultural distinctions ascribed to individuals and the illustration of the distinctions in research, community spaces, and organizations (Arsel et al., 2021)

- *Equity*: An approach that seeks to ensure everyone receives fair treatment yet recognizes that certain populations do not have access to the same starting opportunities, and works to correct those disparities (Jones, 2009)

- *Excessive use of Force*: Force that goes beyond what is considered objectively rational and necessary within the situation for police officer to restrain or subdue a person (Roithmayr, 2016)

- *Holding Environment*: A psychological or physical space that operates as a supportive structure to help people handle the struggles that accompany performing adaptive work, particularly during moments of conflict (Northouse, 2019)

- *Inclusion*: composing an organization of individuals from different backgrounds and mindsets that work effectively to achieve goals based upon principles that value and respect the voices, contributions, and perspectives of employees (Pless & Maak, 2004)

- *Member of Law Enforcement*: A person hired for the purposes of performing law enforcement. Within the context of this research, the term applies to police officers generally employed at local and state agencies

- *Police Reform*: Organizational and/or legislative efforts to change policing practices to be more effective, accountable, and responsive to the needs of all communities (Bell, 2017)

- *Racial Discrimination*: Unequal treatment of a person or group of individuals based upon their racial and/or ethnic background; this is experienced through singular or a pattern of events that prevents one from accessing institutions or opportunities equally (Clair & Dennis, 2015)

- *Racial disparity*: Statistical differences between racial groups regarding an outcome during interactions with law enforcement (Atiba Goff & Barsamian Kahn, 2012)

Theoretical Framework

Research suggests that dynamics that aid in the result of positive and negative outcomes of DEI training programs can be influenced by the leadership qualities that DEI consultants seek to foster from participants (Devine & Ash, 2022). Contemporary leadership models that engage and galvanize stakeholders are believed to be preferred over traditional, authoritative approaches (Head & Alford, 2015). Adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994) is a framework that organizational leaders are adopting to confront some of their most challenging issues (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Head & Alford, 2015). It is the practice of inspiring people to diagnosis and address problems and prosper (Heifetz et al., 2009). The model of adaptive leadership hinges on the premise that individuals who are part of the challenge or participate in a system where an issue exists, should also be part of the solution. It hypothesizes that people can practice leadership, without the need to hold expertise or power and offers an outline for the processes and procedures useful toward advancing progress on difficult, adaptive problems (Northouse, 2019). Heifetz et al. (2009) revealed that organizational leaders should adhere to six behaviors in order to successfully navigate problems in an adaptive manner:

1. "Get on the balcony."
2. Identify the adaptive challenges.

3. Regulate distress.

4. Maintain disciplined attention.

5. Give the work back to the people.

6. Protect leadership voices from below.

The adaptive leadership behaviors are not designed to be experienced in a particular order, yet they are each an important step of the framework. Northouse (2019) proclaims the adaptive leadership framework as a successful model for obscure and challenging issues because its users are pe prepared to take part in all the behaviors in order to help stakeholders succeed.

Organizational leaders that have identified the problems and assumed responsibility for stewarding the adaptive change process are responsible for ensuring the proper environment exists for all involved parties to go through the process (Seibel et al., 2023). In the event the identified problem requires the intervention of an outside expert, such as a consultant, leaders are responsible for ensuring that the consultants have access to the resources, knowledge, space, and necessary stakeholders to facilitate their problem-solving method in alignment with the values, mission and stated purposes of the organization.

Technical challenges are issues within an organization that have been identified with solutions that can be applied through previously recognized organizational problems and are typically resolved by people who utilize standard operating procedures (Bailey et al., 2012). They can be found often in technology-based professions and even resolved internally. However, complex challenges like institutional racism, are embedded in our systems and rooted in ideologies (Banaji et al., 2021). As such, employing the expertise of outside stakeholders, like consultants, has been a strategy of organizations that look to solve challenging, non-prescriptive, issues. Adaptive leadership is still new in certain areas of the public sector, such as law

enforcement. Creating an adaptive law enforcement agency requires fostering a culture of learning, innovation and collaboration (Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016). It requires leaders with expertise in the field, but also practitioners who can guide teams through a change process.

As noted previously, traditional leadership approaches are becoming less desirable amongst organizational settings, particularly when looking to tackle complex challenges. This is exhibited by past use of adaptive leadership professional development programs across different sectors. Since its emergence nearly 30 years ago (Heifetz, 1994), adaptive leadership has been highlighted in training curricula in corporate settings (Khandekar, 2019; Nelson & Squires, 2017; Reams, 2017), education settings (Khan, 2017; Sims et al., 2023), and nonprofit organizations (Green & Fabris McBride, 2015). Given the previously mentioned ways that adaptive leadership approach can be applied to organizations across sectors, law enforcement has an opportunity to examine its current philosophy on leadership. Adaptive leadership for law enforcement involves a change from traditional leadership centered around control and command toward more flexible, responsive and stakeholder-centered approaches. Though, what makes law enforcement agencies distinctive is that they can be motivated by unique goals due to the inherent dangers that their members face as part of their roles. Yet, they are still capable of establishing strategic goals and achieving successful organizational change like other workplaces. As consultants and practitioners create DEI training programs with the goal of soliciting behavioral change, targeting the leadership style of law enforcement could potentially improve training outcomes that give members of law enforcement the tools to reduce the disparity in which Black communities are policed.

Research Questions

As part of this qualitative phenomenology research study, explicit constraints for data collection were established before conducting this research study. The formation of a central research question and sub questions were a crucial component of the process, as they provided strict guidelines for the researcher. This study centered on the primary research questions regarding indicators of successful DEI training programs for law enforcement.

The following research question (RQ) and sub questions were addressed in this study:

1. From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black people?

   o How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?

   o What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that interfere with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for adaptive work?

   o What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge is improving or resolved?

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of a research study are weaknesses that the researcher must acknowledge. This study utilized a phenomenological design that has been noted to have several limitations (Creswell, 2013). The researcher was sure to take note of any biases and values within the study. The author held several biases that had bearing of the research, including her identity as a Black woman, holding previous responsibility as a leader in DEI, and as the daughter of a retired

member of law enforcement. A second limitation of phenomenology is that the respondents must be able to articulate their thoughts related to the experience that is being researched. This can be a challenge if respondents are not in the right position to express themselves due to personality factors such as shyness or communication barriers with the English-language. A third limitation linked to phenomenological studies is the concentration on lived experiences and the impact on credibility and reliability of the research study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). As this study was limited to small-scale sample of research subjects, and thus the lived experiences of few, the findings associated with this research study cannot be broadly generalized to the field of DEI.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations are boundaries established by the researcher indicating what information should be included, excluded, and how these decisions were made. For this study, the commonality between the research subjects was their employment in the field of DEI and experiences working with law enforcement agencies. Supported by literature that reveals which strategies appear to be most prevalent amongst DEI practitioners, it is accepted that the outcomes of this research could be generally applied to DEI programs for law enforcement throughout the United States. Another delimitation was that this research study solely focused on outcomes related to relations with Black people. Future research is needed to explore the overall impact of DEI training programs for law enforcement on interactions with other racial and ethnic minority groups.

Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions in research are crucial to the foundation of the study as they are ideas that the researcher assumes readers will accept as plausible. Ensuring that the research study

concentrated on indicators of best practices for law enforcement DEI programs, the following

assumptions were made:

- The DEI consultants and practitioners held prior knowledge of the disparity in
  policing of Black people, particularly as it related to deaths. This assumption was
  important and appropriate given the focus of the study because policies and
  legislation have been created to address this disparity through reformed police
  training.

- The DEI consultants and practitioners held the belief that eliminating the racial
  disparity in policing will lead to improved relations with the Black community.

- The DEI consultants and practitioners held prior experience with leadership studies
  and/or training.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is structured to reveal information across five chapters. Chapter 1

informed readers of the study's background and problem surrounding policing of Black people in

the U.S. To emphasize the problem, data was provided to showcase the severity of the problem.

Moreover, the chapter gave an overview of the theoretical framework, discussed education and

training as an intervention in police reform meant to address these disparities, particularly

through DEI training programs led by consultants.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature germane to the topic. This review will

illustrate the disparity in policing of Black people by examining from a historical and current

lens. Chapter 2 will also provide context on the history of DEI training in the workplace. The

theoretical framework is reviewed in detail. Chapter 3 features the study's methodology and

design, in addition to the process for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 will showcase key

research findings and the fifth chapter will end the study with recommendations regarding DEI

programs for law enforcement agencies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

An examination of related academic writing offers groundwork for the information that is available on a research topic and gives insight into how the study advances, improves, or amends the existing body of knowledge what is already known (Leite et al., 2019). The first section of the literature review gives information about the format of the Chapter, reintroduces the disparity in policing of Black people and the role of DEI in addressing the problem. The second section gives insight into the adaptive leadership framework and its incorporation into DEI training programs. The third section provides historical context and background information regarding the evolution of policing and its effect on the Black community, history of DEI training in the workplace, as well as an overview of how training for police has shifted. The fourth section integrates a review of the academic works on successes and challenges in DEI training for law enforcement. Finally, the chapter closes by revealing gaps in the literature on practices related to DEI training for law enforcement.

Background

The rise in tension between police and Black people in the United States pre-dates the modern-day law enforcement structure. Gillham and Marx (2018) noted that in the mid-20th century, acts of police violence, were the most notable catalysts for Black people and other racial/ethnic minorities to protest; once dispatched, police responses were a key contributor to the level of violence that ensued between parties. By the late 1960s, police responses were described as excessive, unnecessary, or ineffective (Stone & Travis, 2011). The 1967 Detroit uprisings served as one of the key milestones in police brutality against Black people that left dozens dead while fighting for an end to segregation, unfair housing practices, and mistreatment by law enforcement (Darden, 2013; Jeffries & Beckham, 2021).

Since then, the advancement of technology in the 21st century has amplified the strenuous relationship between Black people and police that has existed for many years (Morin et al., 2017; Walsh & O'Connor, 2019). In 2014, Michael Brown was shot and killed by an officer in Fergusion, Missouri. His death as well as other shootings of Black people across the country, has incited extensive condemnation of how police use force. When the Department of Justice released its "Ferguson Report" (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2015) after Michael Brown's death, the report revealed a gross pattern of racial bias against Black people by the department and local court system (Patton et al., 2017). The report also revealed that Black people accounted for 90% of citations, 93% of arrests, and 85% of traffic stops (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2015). Patton et al. (2017) suggested there is a higher likelihood that police officers will use all the available resources of force options against Black people than during encounters with White people.

Controversy surrounding many of the shootings involving Black people and law enforcement have had a significant effect on officers and community members. Studies have indicated that members of law enforcement feel less inclined to remain in the profession, believe their job has increased danger, and are less enthusiastic about working with local community members to solve problems (Hansson & Markström, 2014; Nix et al., 2018). Other research proposes that some parts of the population do not hold a favorable view of law enforcement and are less inclined to cooperate with police or report crime (Cobbina et al., 2016; Desmond et al., 2016; Gagnon & Fox, 2021). The "Ferguson Report" (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2015) also revealed a need for policing strategies that support community members with building trust with police to repair relationships with racial and ethnic minorities. Though done with the intention of seeking resolve, calls for improved reforms in police training are

clouded by the reality that there is little evidence of successful practices in police training that focuses on eliminating barriers such as bias and prejudice (Braga et al., 2019; Machado & Lugo, 2021). The last decade has seen a recharged spirit regarding social justice related to race, particularly in the workplace. Cox (2023) notes that as more people realize the importance of addressing forms of injustice that exists within organizations, there has been a massive uptake in proposals for DEI trainings and interventions. Experts have been employed by organizations, including law enforcement agencies, to provide leadership in stewarding progress toward developing organizational culture and practices that are reflective of the components of DEI. As the racial landscape of the U.S. continues to change and the calls for reform in police training continue to grow, it is expected that police respond to these changes with a commitment toward altering their perceptions of historically marginalized segments of the populations.

Adaptive Leadership Framework

Given the complexities of today's globalized world, traditional leadership approaches built upon on hierarchical patterns are declining in success (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017; Billinger & Workiewicz, 2019; Lichtenstein et al., 2006). The principles of the adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994) can be recognized in historical and modern social movements, and, moreover, can be applied to current advancements for social change due to its prescriptive nature (Northouse, 2019). Conventional leadership models rely on having one or a few people as decision-makers. These key people might consult with others, but ultimately conventional approaches are built on authority and hierarchy (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

The model of adaptive leadership offers a theoretical and applied approach to comprehending and tackling complex issues in communities and organizations while distinguishing between technical and adaptive problems. Technical problems within

organizations can typically be resolved without delay and without the need for authority or

advanced subject-matter knowledge. However, complex issues that are incapable of being

resolved with existing measures are classified as adaptive challenges, and thus require a unique

approach to solve the problem (Heifetz, 2006). While academia has characterized adaptive

leadership as a theoretical concept, Heifetz's (2006) views on the leadership theory have

blossomed over the years through several works and has been adapted by other scholars.

Northouse (2019) offered a synthesis of Heifetz's work on adaptive leadership into a visual

model. Figure 1 illustrates Northouse's version of the framework adaptive based upon the efforts

of Heifetz.

Figure 1

Adaptive Leadership Model
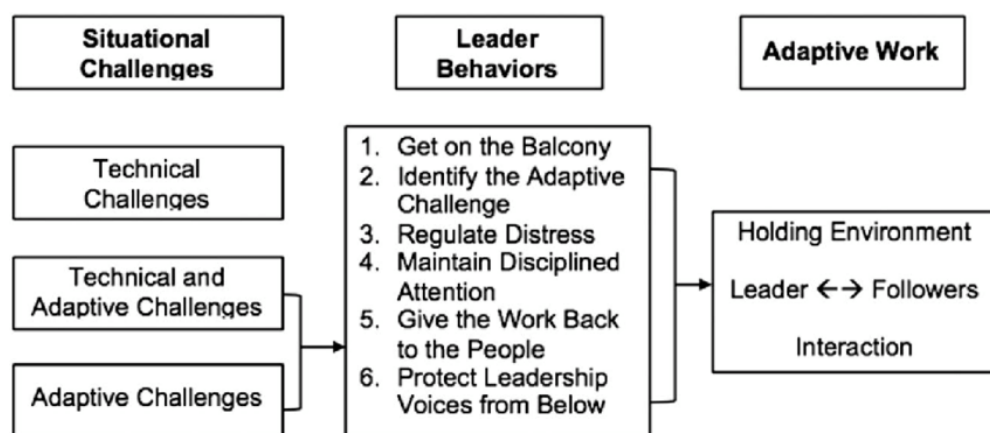
Note. Reprinted from *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.), p. 261, by P. Northouse, 2019, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2019 by the author. Reprinted with permission (Appendix A).

Leaders are tasked with identifying challenges and deciding whether problems require

resolutions solely from the leader or jointly from the group, community, or organization (Doyle,

2017; Northouse, 2019). After assessing a problem area, leaders utilize the six behaviors

referenced in Figure 1 that facilitate the mobilization of the group, cultivating space where

leaders and followers interact to carry out the adaptive work. Bagwell (2020) notes that adaptive work calls for deciding what must be addressed immediately while reconsidering how organizations will adapt and succeed in a new reality. This work represents the challenging of beliefs in order to effectively address and potentially resolve social problems.

Distinguishing Between Adaptive and Technical Challenges

A critical component of utilizing adaptive leadership is the classification of what constitutes a technical problem versus a complex adaptive problem. Heifetz et al. (2009) argued that many instances of leadership failure stemmed from treating adaptive challenges with technical solutions. The adaptive leadership model identifies three kinds of occurrences: adaptive problems, technical problems, and circumstances encompassing both (Heifetz et al., 2009; Northouse, 2019). Generally, technical problems can be identified and solved easily since they can be fixed by utilizing existing knowledge or expertise. Adaptive challenges, however, are not capable of being solved by using technical approaches, existing skills, or solely on one's position within an organization. They require unique approaches that strive to make strategic advances toward success. They also demand knowledge and investigation in order identify the problem and work toward resolutions, and the responsibility rests upon the individuals that are part of the organization (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Northouse, 2019).

Correctly analyzing an issue for technical and adaptive components is vital toward reaching a sustainable solution (Northouse, 2019). Adaptive challenges are hard to tackle because they operate on a systemic level that requires the attention of various stakeholders (Corazzini et al., 2013; Head & Alford, 2015). Adaptive challenges call to the forefront all of individuals within a system, making it challenging to identify a particular person or cause as the source of the problem.

Adaptive Leadership Behaviors

The framework for adaptive leadership reveals several behaviors that guide people toward meeting adaptive challenges and how to maintain their progress toward solving the problems. Once the issue has been identified as an adaptive challenge, the adaptive practitioner is primed to move through the adaptive process. Northouse (2019) adapted the numerous processes entrenched in Heifetz's works (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009) into six tactics that prescribe the types of behaviors adaptive leaders should embody to meet their goals. Kincaid (2010) offers that by applying each of these principles, leaders become adaptive when they strive to advance an organization's capacity to succeed.

Getting on the Balcony. As the first behavior identified in the framework, *getting on the balcony* encompasses the image of stepping back to establish a better view of the challenge (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009; Northouse, 2019). When leaders are unable to place themselves in the right position during an organizational issue, they fail to see an issue in its entirety (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017; Harter, 2012). A person can develop a more broad and objective view of what is occurring within an organization by taking a step back from the problem. DEI consultants are in a unique position to perform this early step of the adaptive leadership process because of the objectivity that comes with being an external party (Gassam & Salter, 2020; Gentle-Gennity et al., 2021). Adaptive leadership practitioners, using inquiry, can help a group develop broader insight into the problem they are navigating. This form of level-setting can support the group's effort in establishing better insight into the workings of the organization and examine more suitable options to solve to the problem (Gentle-Gennity et al., 2021; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

Identifying the Adaptive Challenges. Northouse (2019) indicated that to differentiate adaptive issues from technical problems, the adaptive leadership facilitator identifies the adaptive components of situations. This second step of the adaptive leadership practice that is meant to support in diagnosing and tackling multifaceted problems involves a revolving sequence of witnessing what occurs in an organization, analyzing the observations, pinpointing the specific adaptive challenge, and establishing methods to resolve the issue (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). The interpretation process is crucial as it directly correlates to the design phase of the intervention method (A. I. Fernandez et al., 2022). Performing an environmental scan of an organization allows for the collection of data that can help DEI consultants confirm an organization's ideas of an adaptive challenge or present an alternative diagnosis (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2021). Misinterpretation of the problem could lead to the implementation of interventions that exacerbate the problem versus solving it (Aust et al., 2010; Watson et al., 2018). As such, DEI consultants should be given the time and resources to access company information that is pertinent to properly identifying the challenge (Linovski, 2021). Since adaptive challenges rely on knowledge to accurately diagnose and resolve the problem, the iterative process of observation, interpretation, and intervention works to support the development of knowledge and provides stakeholders with space and resources to try a variety of interventions to reach success.

Regulating Distress. The third component of the adaptive leadership process consists of controlling the amount of distress that exists. Workplace progress and productivity are disrupted when an organization is functioning in complacency, or contrariwise, when it is operating under too much hardship. Finding and regulating a productive level of stability allows people to carry out adaptive work (Heifetz et al., 2009). Furthermore, leaders must manage conflict throughout the regulation process. Conflict is a crucial and inescapable facet of navigating adaptive

challenges in the workplace, and is often directly connected to instability (Vaheed, 2021). An example of a demonstration of conflict involves the rising of rival segments that exist in an organization. These segments hold differing, and occasionally competing, principles and beliefs. While performing adaptive work, groups should be guided toward naming opposing parties that exists, recognizing the values and allegiances each group holds, and ultimately identifying strategies toward working efficiently across differences (Heifetz et al., 2009; Kuluski et al., 2021).

Establishing a holding environment is a crucial step in addressing adaptive challenges that can help with the management of distress and opposition (Ellis, 2017). Within the framework, a holding environment is regarded as a space that either physical or psychological mental space; it operates as a supportive structure to help people handle the struggles that accompany performing adaptive work, particularly during moments of conflict (Northouse, 2019). Arthur-Mensah and Zimmerman (2017) described it as the place where people should feel comfortable to express their opinions devoid of the fear of judgement or retaliation. Establishing a safe space for stakeholders during the adaptive process can result in the formation of innovate thoughts and solutions that function as a catalyst for change (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Research has shown that DEI training, particularly those centered around race relations, can foster an environment that makes some people of the majority demographic feel isolated, which can lead to a distrust of the practitioner and the change process (Anand & Winters, 2008; Dover et al., 2016). To stimulate a holding environment, adaptive leadership practitioners can support groups with establishing shared values, norms, and confidence throughout the process, which will set expectations for how stakeholders should be accountable for their actions.

Maintaining Disciplined Attention. It is often espoused that people are unreceptive to change. It is argued that change is not the true source of people's discontent; instead, it is navigating the real or sensed defeats they experience due to change (Heifetz, 2009; Rehman et al., 2021). Tackling adaptive challenges requires organizations and stakeholders to alter the way they perform to evolve into to new reality. This sometimes calls for people to change beliefs and behaviors that are important to them yet are simultaneously hindering advancement toward resolving on the adaptive issues (Heifetz et al., 2009; Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021).

The Impact of Threats. As previously addressed, members of historically dominant groups, such as White people, have expressed discomfort with racially focused DEI training and has resulted in a distrust of the process. Iyer (2022) highlights how an advantaged members' resistance to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices is influenced by the perception that their affinity group will potentially experience three kinds of threat to groups' interests: ingroup morality threat, resource threat, and symbolic threat. The concept of morality threat amongst groups reveals a concern over establishing or reinforcing injustice (Hoover et al., 2021). These feelings may parallel with antiracist beliefs and behavior, but they may also elicit defensiveness and withdrawal, which can negatively impact the progress of DEI training as an intervention method for solving an adaptive challenge (Grzanka et al., 2020).

A resource threat is the concern of losing access to opportunities (Rios et al., 2018). It is derived from Blumer's (1958) philosophy on prejudice, which hypothesizes that historically advantaged groups feel beholden to access and privilege. A key aspect of DEI education is to instill the importance of the representation of marginalized groups that members of an organization may encounter. If the training is successful, access to resources is ultimately redistributed to members of disadvantaged groups, which takes away the overwhelming access

from historically dominant groups. Lastly, a symbolic threat is centered around the worry

regarding the insertion of new policies and expectations in an organization, particularly

regarding meritocracy and organizational culture (Iyer, 2022). Efird et al. (2023) notes that when

the representation of power and status in an environment is challenged, dominant groups tend to

pushback on acceptance of new policies. Challenging power and status on the basis of race or

socioeconomic status is central to many DEI practices, and thus threatens to alter the experience

of historically dominant groups. Adaptive leadership experts can recognize and address the

defeats that they or members of the group may experience (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). Yet, it is

crucial to acknowledge that the loss of an individual belief or behavior can have a positive

benefit for the collective group and change process. Ultimately, throughout the adaptive change

process, it is the responsibility of the adaptive leadership practitioner to remind the group of the

importance of maintaining focus on the agreed upon intention (Heifetz, 1994).

      Giving the Work Back to the People. In the face of a complex challenge, the ownership

of navigating a problem is not exclusively held by individuals with power or expertise (Addy &

Dubé, 2018; Hagemann & Kluge, 2017). As referenced in the opening chapter, the adaptive

leadership framework espouses that the individuals who are involved in the issue, or who operate

within an organization where a challenge exists, must take part in the solution. Ackerman et al.

(2018) contend that relevant groups must be involved in performing the adaptive work that is

needed to meet goals. Wolfe et al. (2020) and G. Wood et al. (2020) suggest that social

interaction with community members is a key component in reducing the chance that force is

used during police encounters. This idea is predicated upon the notion that familiarity with

community members and settings allows officers to make more informed decisions. Cox (2023)

asserts that in the field of DEI, targeting bias is a primary goal for altering the beliefs people hold

regarding others and is often achieved when all impacted parties take part in the training. A component of returning the work back to individuals is dedicating time to learning and investigation (Northouse, 2019). Fostering this sense of ownership, responsibility, and inclusion toward the adaptive process can empower stakeholders to carry the work to its completion.

Protecting Leadership Voices from Below. Crucial to the adaptive leadership process is safeguarding voices of individuals in the organization or community that are potentially at risk. This may encompass people with limited authority or expertise, individuals that represent historically marginalized groups, or people whose beliefs or perspectives differ from the societal norm (Cote, 2022; Northouse, 2019). Power dynamics are present in organizational hierarchies (Bolman & Deal, 2008) and oftentimes are exacerbated between dominant and marginalized groups (Alm & Guttormsen, 2023). Those holding power in organizations have the choice to utilize their privilege to elevate and support others or wield it in pursuit of their own welfare and marginalize those with less authority (Northouse, 2019). The same principles apply to law enforcement and community members, where the power dynamics overwhelmingly favor police due to authority that is predicated on status as a police officer, in conjunction with possession of deadly weaponry (Churchill, 2007; McLean et al., 2022). Without the support of leadership, individuals that sit on the bottom of the organizational or societal hierarchy are not as likely to engage in the adaptive work of dealing with conflict and collaborating across ideologies (Heifetz et al., 2009; Keshtiban et al., 2023). Elevating the voices of those with the least amount of opportunity to be heard is crucial to revealing broader and more accurate insight into the challenges facing organizations.

Adaptive Leadership in DEI Consulting

Usage of the adaptive leadership framework by DEI consultants and practitioners has not been extensively researched. While it has been referenced in the general field of consultancy, particularly as it relates to consultants serving as experts, or adaptive practitioners, in diagnosing and addressing a myriad of organizational problems (Andenoro et al., 2017; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010), the academic studies on adaptive leadership in the DEI sector is sparse. The limited amount of literature that is available falls outside the scope of academia and mostly details uses of the framework in professional development for organizational leaders. Instead, the bulk of the academic literature on adaptive leadership practice centers on change management strategies for organizations that are led by internal stakeholders, as opposed to an external expert like a DEI consultant. Azevedo and Jugdev (2022) link cultural intelligence with the use of the adaptive leadership practices by adding to a current practice of adaptive leadership centered around developing adaptive capacity. Cultural intelligence is viewed as a foundational component of DEI, and as such, offers insight into the ways DEI skills and adaptive leadership are linked.

Adaptive Leadership in Law Enforcement

Integration of adaptive leadership for police is slowly on the rise, as the globalization of our society requires different approaches to dealing with diverse perspectives and experiences. Law enforcement agencies tackle adaptive challenges on a daily basis as the people they serve enter each encounter from a different vantage point and for a different reason (Stogner et al., 2020). As such, they have the experience in adaptive challenges despite the traditional approach to leadership that law enforcement utilizes. Adaptive leadership in policing involves shifting from a hierarchical, power-based perspective to a flexible and open-minded approach (Batts et al., 2012). This requires understanding the community's needs and values, being receptive of

new ideas and intervention methods, and continuously learning and adjusting to the changing demographic landscape.

A subset of the adaptive leadership framework is adaptive decision-making. The idea of adaptive decision-making is best realized as the cerebral process of successfully responding to a disruption in a situation. For law enforcement, success can be defined by various goals related to the duties of an officer. Brookman and Innes (2013) defined success for homicide detectives resulting in the arrest and conviction of a suspect. Whereas Sewell (1992) classified success as officers exhibiting leadership, understanding of the community and the profession, and possessing dedication to the organization. As such, this exemplifies not only the complexity of the challenges that law enforcement faces, but the complex system that is policing. Whereas Sewell identified knowledge of the community as a marker of success in law enforcement, Peyton et al. (2019) revealed that positive exchanges between police and Black people resulted in better decision-making that led to a decreased use of force. S. G. Brown and Daus (2015) revealed that analytical and instinctual mental processes of police officers have a shared impact on decision-making and recommended the significance of training that helps decision-making to address adaptive problems, such as those that occur between police and community members.

Evolution of U.S. Policing and its Impact on Black People

Understanding the importance of a well-designed and strategically implemented DEI training program for law enforcement requires a review of the historical relationship with Black communities, and showcasing the current state of this issue supports the need for an effective training program. The United States' population is undergoing a demographic change. Per the Pew Research Center (2019), the racial makeup of the United States has changed considerably from the late 1950s and will continue to undergo a drastic shift over the next 40 years. In fact, by

2050, the U.S. is estimated to be comprised of a majority non-white racial makeup--a stark difference from the 85% white majority in 1960. Frey (2018) estimates that by 2060 the white population will decrease drastically to 44%, ultimately creating a new chapter in U.S. American history and a catalyst for other transformations. Historically, racial changes to the country's landscape have been met with resistance. As attested by the civil rights movement, institutions across the country made efforts to deny access Black people. The criminal justice system, particularly its law enforcement branch, has a notable history of discriminatory and biased practices against Black people (S. A. Schwartz, 2020). The roots of discrimination within the criminal justice system began with slave patrols, continued through post-emancipation with Jim Crow laws, and presents itself today through use of force rates.

Slave Patrols and the Origins of Policing

Slave patrols originated in the early 18th century as a response to 17th century U.S. slave codes, which were adopted from the slave codes of Barbados (Robinson, 2017). Slave patrollers monitored all enslaved movement and activity through passes given by owners; violation of these codes often resulted in physical punishment (R. Brown, 2019). Without just cause, slave patrols could enter the home of anyone suspected of aiding escaped enslaved people. According to Robinson (2017), slave patrols were also developed as a deterrent to potential revolts to ensure the institution of slavery continued. Eventually, slave patrols expanded to function as a method of protection for wealthy white owners against thieves and thus, is regarded as the first advance toward modern-day policing (R. Brown, 2019; Reichel, 1988).

Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws

After the Civil War, many states developed black codes across levels of government to severely limit the rights of Black people. These codes were developed as strict laws that dictated

how formerly enslaved Black people could earn a living and restricted their level of compensation (Cooper, 2015; Guy, 2020). These codes spanned the Southern U.S. region as a legal avenue to combat the abolition of slavery by luring Black citizens into indentured servitude, eliminating voting rights, and controlling their ability to migrate (Brucato, 2020). Enforcement of these codes was the responsibility of a legal system heavily composed of former Confederate soldiers holding positions of judges, lawyers, and police officers (R. Brown, 2019).

During this period, law enforcement officials were selected by local politicians in order to create influence in the community that could support political reelection. Consequently, there was limited focus on training (Archbold, 2012). This makeup of the criminal justice system resulted in Black people being subjected to racial targeting by police, and impartiality in court cases that often resulted in mass incarceration. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 eliminated the enforcement of Black codes by requiring all states to abide by the 14th Amendment, which asserted equal protection for all citizens—most notably, allowing Black men to vote. In response to the protections of the 14th Amendment, Jim Crow laws were enacted for nearly 80 years across southern states as a replacement to Black Codes (Cooper, 2015; Martinot, 2014). These discriminatory laws disallowed the sharing of public spaces like schools and bathrooms amongst Blacks and Whites. Those who broke the law or violated Jim Crow standards were often subjected to brutality by the police (Robinson, 2017).

The Influence of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theorists propose a race-consciousness, contending that the racial inequities that existed in the early 20th century are still present because they are embedded into the social structures of the U.S. (Harrison et al., 2021; Reece, 2019). As an outcome, Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be used to showcase the experiences of people of color and provides a framework to

analyze those experiences in a way that highlights the connection between individual experience and specific social structures, such as those that exist in organizational settings like law enforcement agencies. For instance, CRT studies focused on how Black people interact with the police show that many Black people feel they are profiled, over-policed and subjected to repeated stops and surveillance by law enforcement (Gilbert & Ray, 2016; Long, 2021).

This study looked at the history of policing practices, the impact on Black people and how DEI training programs utilizing adaptive leadership theory can influence police training curricula and alter the way Black people experience the police. CRT can be a useful approach to explore DEI training and policing because it underscores how white supremacy and Black suppression are not merely personal feelings, but are rooted in complex, social structures and institutions that are filled with complex challenges that should be addressed using a flexible framework, like the adaptive leadership model.

Policing Reform in the United States

After World War II, the United States underwent a boom in activism within the Black community, ushering in the civil rights era, which confronted police misconduct and various types of discriminatory and prejudiced behavior. Though Jim Crow Laws were only enforced in the southern region of the country, the impact was felt across the country as many Black communities experienced impartiality and brutality by police. A 1958 investigative study by the NAACP revealed a systemic pattern of misconduct and brutality against Black people by the Detroit Police Department by means of racial profiling, warrant-less arrest, physical assault, and other illegal methods (Norris, 1958). As pressure mounted for federal support to safeguard the human rights of Black people and other racial and ethnic minorities, Congress passed the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, which barred instances of discrimination predicated upon factors like race or national origin and ultimately ended the legality of Jim Crow Laws.

Notably, Title VI of the Act, in conjunction with the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Statute, addressed discrimination by law enforcement agencies. Together, these laws disallow discrimination by local and state law enforcement agencies that operate on funding from the Department of Justice. These laws prohibit singular or systemic practices of discriminatory misconduct by police. The discriminatory practices prohibited by Title VI and the OJP Statute can include, for instance, discriminatory traffic stops and arrests predicated by race. The laws also serve as protections against retaliation for complaints filed against police, and the refusal by law enforcement to answer to complaints of discrimination by officers (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2020).

In 1994, the DOJ created a division, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), to advance affairs concerning communities and the police. Since its inception, COPS has committed billions to training that is designed to reduce racial discrimination in policing. These programs highlighted topics that included race-based profiling, cultural competency, and how police should govern themselves within diverse communities (U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014). As a result of the shifts in the population and laws governing how racial and ethnic minorities are treated, law enforcement has been pushed to recognize the realities of rising diversity in the United States and the need to address policing practices (Glenn et al., 2003).

Evolution of DEI Training in the Workplace

DEI Training from the 1960s-1970s

Participants of the early training focused on anti-discrimination frequently walked away with a variety of emotions, few of them positive (Bennett-Alexander, 1990). Since the aim of the training was meant to focus primarily on the treatment of historically marginalized groups, like Black people and women in environments dominated by White males, people that didn't identify with of these marginalized groups resented the training and expressed that they viewed favorable treatment was being given to the targeted groups (Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Kravitz & Platania, 1993). Anand and Winters (2008) also argue that the dominant group did not gravitate toward the training due to their inability to correlate diversity training with improved business results. Despite companies' beliefs that compliance would be easy to uphold, workplace discrimination legislation produced a period of training in the private sector as a response to the wave of lawsuits filed against employers with the goal of educating employees on the consequences of workplace discrimination (Dobbin & Kalev, 2013; Hirsh & Kornrich, 2008). Other early cases, such as the 1977 discriminatory practice case against the Duquesne Light Company, found that the organization engaged in discriminatory practices against Black employees and women. As a result, the company was mandated by the EEOC to train all its managers (Anand & Winters, 2008). By 1976, more than 60% of large companies in the U.S. offered anti-discrimination training (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

DEI Training from the 1980s-1990s

While training spurred by issues of federal compliance continued, the early 1980s saw little improvement to expand diversity training nor to advance hiring practices that increased the number of racial and ethnic minorities, such as Black people, into the workplace (Dobbin &

Kalev, 2013). Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2006) concluded that women were the major recipients

of workplace diversity efforts during this period. One of the largest contributing factors to this

lack of advancement during this decade was the presidency of Ronald Raegan, which B. D.

Wood (1990) posited as a contributing factor in limiting the scope and power of institutions like

the EEOC to hold companies accountable for violations centered around diversity and

discrimination in the workplace. B. Williams (2015) echoed this sentiment by highlighting

multiple attempts by the administration to roll back discrimination policies in the private and

public sector. Reagan's actions aligned with the idea that employers should have increased

responsibility over their own anti-discrimination policies (Kalev & Dobbin, 2006). Facing less

oversight from the federal government, many organizations redirected their focus to business

issues that impacted their bottom line (Edelman et al., 2011).

While aspects of affirmative action and anti-discrimination training were still present in

companies' training brochures, the training lacked the cultural shift expected in today's

implementation of DEI training. Some organizations that implemented training during this

downturn in federal enforcement of antidiscrimination practices were more likely to offer

training with the goal of aiding women and minorities to adapt into existing company cultures by

designing programs based on the idea that women and minorities did not yet meet the corporate

expectations of employees (Donohue & Siegelman, 2008; J. P. Fernandez, 1981). Much of the

training during this period was influenced by Bandura's (1977, 1994) self-efficacy hypothesis

(Gist, 1987; Luthans et al., 2006). Bandura conceptualized that how a person felt about their

abilities resulted in performance that influences important events in their lives (Lunenberg,

2011). While training in self-efficacy grew in popularity amongst corporations, the late 1980s

saw a shift in diversity efforts for many businesses as increases in immigration, generational

retirements, and the ushering of women and racial/ethnic groups into the workplace impacted

companies (Roberson, 2019; Wildman, 1996). Friedman and DiTomaso (1996) argued that

despite these changes, these additions to the workforce resulted in relatively small additions in

comparison to the overall labor force. Nonetheless, the future makeup of the workforce was

being questioned and the concept of diversity was being introduced into the business lexicon.

By the 1990s DEI education in the U.S. focused on barriers to inclusion for other identity

groups (C. L. Williams et al., 2014). According to Soni (2000), a shift occurred moving away

from compliance and primarily centering on women and racial/ethnic groups, to encompass a

larger sect of the population, such as White men and religious groups, into the conversation of

diversity. The rationale was to make all parties more cognizant and sympathetic to the necessities

and differences of others. Yet, Anand and Winters (2008) note that it is crucial to recognize that

as the umbrella of diversity began to widen, White men were not perceived as having compelling

reasons for needing to be included as a marginalized group in new, diverse workplaces,

particularly in comparison to their counterparts that historically faced discrimination. Thus, the

backlash that many organizations faced internally as leaders struggled to find a balance between

inclusiveness and diversity education that did not alienate the majority demographic of workers.

DEI Training in the 21st Century

As inclusion became part of the workplace discourse at the end of the 1990's, the

beginning of the 21st century ushered in a version of DEI training that focused on developing

competencies and skills that allow learners to alter their behaviors to be respectful of

demographic differences. Unlike the past years where DEI training focused on making sure

White men in the workplace were more accepting of others, the modern-day DEI training

assumes all people should be provided with knowledge and skills to build cultural competence in

a global world (Corsino & Fuller, 2021). As such, organizational cultures shifted to focus on cultures of learning meant to enhance the experiences of employees while resulting in productivity (Alonazi, 2021). Social demands for societal reform played a significant role in bringing about this change. DEI has greatly expanded beyond training to become embedded as policies and positions within organizations to ensure the knowledge and skills obtained through professional development training becomes a standard part of an organization's operations (Olzmann, 2020). Specifically, the recent growth of the DEI sector corresponds with current social movements focused on racial justice. The influx of new positions coincided with the "racial reckoning" of 2020 as people around the world witnessed a police officer murder George Flord. Coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations quickly jumped at the opportunity to showcase their plans to address systemic inequality and racism. Bunn (2023) revealed that DEI positions increased by 50% in 2020 following calls for broader racial and ethnic justice and equity across institutions.

While demands for DEI practices within organizations have remained steadfast, commitments to continuing filling and operating those positions have decreased. Revelio Labs' 2023 study on the status of DEI in wake of massive corporate layoffs in 2022 found that DEI-focused positions underwent a churn rate of 40%, whereas non-DEI roles experienced a 25% attrition (Ayas et al., 2023). When diversity initiatives pledge financial gains but ultimately disappoint, support is likely to be withdrawn. Anders (2023) notes fatigue with diversity initiatives as a catalyst for the decline in DEI roles. As DEI practices and training often don't yield immediate results, many organizations struggle to maintain commitment to policies and practices that don't deliver financial return (Georgeac & Rattan, 2022). Nevertheless, as DEI

practices continue to be under the microscope, organizations still turn to DEI training to address many of the institutional challenges predicated upon race or ethnicity.

The Historical and Current Landscape of Police Training

As this research looks at the evolution of training for police, it will be examined from the three periods presented by Kelling and Moore (1988): the Political Era, the Reform Era, and Community-Problem Solving era.

Policing and Training in the Political Era

The Political Era marked the beginning of what modern society regarded as policing. From the 1840s-1920s, a massive increase in the U.S. population saw a rise in city occupancy that brought concern about increased crime and the need for preventative policing (Brandl, 2021; Monkkonen, 1992). According to Archbold (2013) many of the officers chosen during this period were often selected by local political leaders and regarded as the most formidable males from the community. H. Williams and Murphy (1990) noted that oftentimes, employment in the newly formed police agencies was granted by politicians in exchange for votes in upcoming elections. However, this exchange was not the only form of *quid pro quo* that occurred during this era. H. Williams and Muphy (1990) also detailed some of the exchanges during this period between police and politicians, including overlooking crimes. Like modern day politics, the early 20th century was not exempt from the revolving door concept, where local political officials changed offices or left altogether (Baker et al., 2019). This often led to many of the hand-picked police officers being replaced after new officials took office, thus creating a pattern of turnover that greatly impacted the stability of police departments—most notably through inconsistent training (Brandl, 2021).

Since early U.S. policing evolved from the slave patrols and sought to continue monitoring the movement of both formerly enslaved and non-enslaved Black people, formalized training was not the highest priority (Robinson, 2017). More than four decades post-emancipation, the first formal police school was created by Vollmer in 1908 (McDermott & Hulse-Killacky, 2012). From that time, formal police training programs spread across cities such as Boston, New York, and Detroit, though they lacked consistency and structure (Oliver, 2016). Early iterations of police training included instruction on local laws and how to effectively collect and manage evidence. It was not until the 1930s that police training began to professionalize with the support of additional instruction by the federal government (Bykov, 2014).

Policing and Training in the Reform Era

Much of the early Reform Era was highlighted by conflict regarding the control over police departments (Bykov, 2014; Kelling & Moore, 1988). This battle from 1930s to the 1980's represented a strain between community politicians who aimed to preserve power over their neighborhood police departments and civic reformers that wanted to usher in improved structure, organization, and productivity to policing and government (Gultekin, 2014). These changes were part of a larger movement to eliminate corruption at all levels of government, including police departments, as they were perceived to be corrupt agencies due to heavy political influence. In 1931, the Wickersham Commission presented its report to President Hoover and recommended increased dependence on civil service departments to boost the legitimacy of hiring officers and the integration of evidence processing supported by science (Bykov, 2014). The move toward professionalization that occurred during the 40-year period following the Wickersham Commission considerably altered how people perceived policing in the United States.

Gultekin (2014) notes that although the impact of these efforts to eradicate corruption was not immediate, law enforcement leaders did not hesitate to enact a more centralized and hierarchical, organizational structure. Important decisions, such as ones regarding department policies regarding duties and training methodology were increasingly made by civilian administrators who perceived as "out of touch" from the concerns of community members (Treverton et al., 2011). The reform era is lauded for its introduction of enhanced selection and training protocols, including civil service exams (Robinson, 2017). In some communities, precincts were eliminated in favor of more centralized metropolitan stations. Places like Philadelphia implemented targeted policies, such as the one that made it illegal for police officers to reside in the same area they monitored, were created to shield officers from the possibility of political and criminal influence (Brandl, 2021).

Although tensions between community members, law enforcement officials, and politicians continued to rise during the training era, Strom (2016) notes that one of the biggest influences on police training from the 1930s-1970s was the advancement of technology, particularly the use of patrol cars, which allowed for rapid response to dispatch calls, fingerprinting methods, and two-way radios. This move toward "professionalism" that was reflected in technological advancements was viewed as a success for the organizational development of law enforcement agencies (Liou, 2019). The transition to efficiency was also embedded into police training practices as new recruits were taught policing tactics that focused on addressing crime in timely manners (Lum et al., 2017). By the end of the 1950s, all 50 states had a formal, local police department with a training program; the FBI also had its national academy for their recruits (Brandl, 2021). Yet, despite these advances, training was still widely inconsistent across the country, which led to states to advance their training programs, similarly

to how California developed its Peace Officer Standards Training (POST) program in 1959. Robinson (2017) contrasts this idea of professional success by highlighting how the new focus had a tremendous impact on relations amongst police and community members, as officers were perceived to deliver a "cookie cutter" approach in their responses to problems.

However, by the 1960s the success of the early stages of the Reform Era were overshadowed by law enforcement's difficulty to control crime and their role in contributing to many of the racial injustices identified by the Civil Rights Movement (Ware, 2013). Gillham and Marx (2018) note that in the 1960s and 1970s, acts of police violence, were most notably what caused protesting; once dispatched, police responses were a key contributor to whether violence began or surged. In addition, by the late 1960s, public perception of police responses was described as excessive, unnecessary, or ineffective (Wasow, 2020). Community calls for police reform would push police departments to reorient themselves again.

Policing and Training in the Community-Problem Solving Era

As law enforcement moved into the 1980s, changing organizational structures, concerns about the efficacy of policing styles, and reestablishing commitments to communities represented a shift into the community era of policing. Cha-Jua (2014) asserts that although the tension continued between police and communities of color, hate crimes committed by civilians took priority over the issues of police brutality according to the general public. This shifted in 1991 once the visual of police beating Rodney King reignited national attention to the issue of police misconduct. The subsequent uprisings in Los Angeles, other documented incidents of police misconduct and police response to these events propelled the issue of police brutality to become topics of scholarly research and training intervention for police (Schlosser et al., 2015).

Much of the focus of policing in the 21st century shifted to community-oriented relations that sought to repair relationships with civilians, most notably Black communities (Schlosser et al., 2015). President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing was a hallmark of this era as it identified training and education as a pillar of police reform (Kimbrough, 2016). Peyton et al. (2019) illustrates community-oriented police training as a method that focuses on nonenforcement contact between officers and civilians. It was also lauded as a legislative effort that focused on building community trust and improving police legitimacy. Recent studies in law enforcement training researched how to improve the structures and content of training programs (Andersen & Gustafsberg, 2016; Di Nota & Huhta, 2019). For example, Di Nota and Huhta (2019) showcased how scenario-focused training that integrated elements of stress and anxiety, can improve the situational awareness and decision-making of police officers. Koerner and Staller (2020) illustrated that trainers are tasked with creating learner-centered environments that focus on examining tangible solutions to shrink the gap between officer training and their work responsibilities. Blumberg et al. (2019) suggest that addressing the needs of police training content, particularly in early police training, is a key component of training in the community-policing era. Specifically, improving the cognitive, emotional, moral, and social skills of officers would improve police wellness and promote healthy relationships with community members. In this shift to a community-focused policing model saw the rise of the modern-day DEI training for police.

Practices in DEI Training for Law Enforcement

The disparities in police practices based on racial and ethnic backgrounds have been noted for decades (Crutchfield, 2012; Glaser et al., 2014; Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018; Pierson et al., 2020). Engel and Swartz (2014) notes that the causes of these disparities are complex, and

researchers have struggled to unravel the crucial markers to determine if disparities are the result of discrimination. Nevertheless, based on the idea that disparities in policing outcomes are caused by individual police discrimination or bias, the response to reduce racial disparities has been the need for additional police training (James, 2018; Oh et al., 2017). An example of this is the adoption of racial sensitivity training in the 1990s as a response to the uprisings around the country and instances of police brutality (Anand & Winters, 2008). This was followed by the adoption anti-profiling training in the early 2000s after scrutiny over tactics such as the NYPD's "stop and frisk" practices (Legewie, 2016) and most recently, anti-bias policing in the early 2010's as a result of the many cases of Black males killed by police (FitzGerald et al., 2019), which has led to pressure from community members to address these concerns.

Of these many DEI-based training programs to tackle the racial disparities in policing, several have emerged as staples amongst practitioners and law enforcement leadership (Fridell, 2017). Sereni-Massinger and Wood (2016) asserted that people benefit when members of law enforcement learn to work past their biases. This skill development can assuage widespread stereotypes and diminish underlying bias that may influence behavior (Sim et al., 2013). Furthermore, it is hypothesized that DEI training intentionally crafted to test assumptions and advance technical police skills decreases the chance of harm during interactions with police, can diminish negative stakeholder perceptions reduces arduous litigation, and improves public safety (Coon, 2016; Kramer & Remster, 2018; Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016). In consideration of best practices utilized by consultants in DEI training, this research will explore literature in three specific areas: pre-training preparation, content selection and training placement.

Pre-training Preparation

A review of literature on DEI training best practices revealed some key components as consultants and practitioners prepare to implement organizational DEI training. A key component of a successful DEI program is the preparation stage prior to designing and implementing the program. It is paramount to the reception of any training program that a leadership team, inclusive of the consultant or practitioner, reflect the values and outcomes they seek to incorporate across all teams (Cheng et al., 2019; Lingras et al., 2023). Engaging employees in discussions regarding the company's values and goals can help promote the importance of planned training initiatives. Without leadership's commitment to modeling the messaging on DEI training, day-to-day practices are likely to undermine DEI goals.

Internal climate assessment surveys allow organizations to develop better insights of their environment. For members of law enforcement, this would include officers from patrol to management. Errida and Lofti (2021) note that climate assessment surveys should measure several aspects of an organization and should be administered annually. This requires organizations to make consistent and significant investments in the survey tools. Internal surveys are best constructed when they pose questions that measures factors relevant to the success of the intervention method, such as (a) an employees' perceptions and understanding of job requirements; (b) attitudes regarding existing leadership; (c) professional development opportunities, and (d) organizational philosophy and values (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). For practitioners working with law enforcement, considerations regarding how officers feel about training opportunities, perceptions on policing working with communities of color and understanding of policies and procedures related to engaging with civilians could be paramount to how likely they will engage in the DEI training program.

In addition to leadership modeling, selecting the appropriate length of the training also supports the effectiveness of the program. Studies have shown that a single DEI training experience can produce meaningful results (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Cheng et al., 2019). One training session can be sufficient to provide participants with new information related to cultural differences or compliance issues. However, if an organization such as law enforcement is seeking to shift behavior of its employees, long-term efforts have proven to be more successful than short-term or one-off training events (Beruzkova et al., 2016; J. Y. Kim & Roberson, 2022). More so, Bezrukova et al. (2016) propose that DEI training that is embedded into the regular course of organizational development is likely to have a longer impact. DEI practitioners and organizational leaders could benefit from developing a sustainable work plan that includes DEI training as foundational to new and continuing employees.

The design of effective DEI training for police can be a dynamic and complicated endeavor. Leigh Wills and Schuldberg (2016) posits that members of law enforcement are often motivated people that are generally perceived to display authoritarian character traits. Like other adult learners, members of law enforcement must be amenable to absorbing the training material and possess some pre-existing sense of subsequent value (Coon, 2016). Studies have shown that police officer are more receptive to DEI training when there is a clear connection regarding its utility in their job duties (Cohen & Goodman, 2023) and when officers are motivated by the topic (Wolfe et al., 2019). Without these factors, officers are less inclined to place value in the training tools.

Trainer Selection

Success of DEI training also hinges on the ability of the facilitator to connect with the audience (Gebert et al., 2016). If an organization wants to implement DEI workshops for staff

members, a decision must be made about whether to hire an external consultant to provide the
training or to rely on a person from within the organization. Gassam and Salter (2020) argue that
selecting an external consultant is the best approach for conducting DEI workshops because of
the distinct nature and challenges regarding the topic. While choosing to conduct DEI training
led by an internal practitioner has advantages, such as organizational familiarity, Gassam and
Salter (2020) assert that it limits a trainer's ability to hold objectivity, dedicate maximum time to
only the training as opposed to other job duties, and it limits participants' exposure to expanded
organizational perspectives. However, Blumberg et al. (2019) highlight how police officers are
accustomed to training, such as de-escalation or internal organizational directives, which are
designed and delivered by other members of law enforcement that are experts in the knowledge
area. Nevertheless, DEI is a discipline that requires specific training and knowledge, which often
requires law enforcement agencies to hire experts to support these training efforts.

Gebert et al. (2016) found that DEI training participants often struggle to voice their
opinions due to perceived judgement. Creating an environment that elicits understanding and
learning are important to any learning space. Lindsey et al. (2019) noted that DEI participants
were inclined to engage more when the facilitators shared similar cultural backgrounds or
revealed a high-level of expertise with the content and organizational sector. In aligning with
Lindsey et al. (2019) hiring facilitators that have expert knowledge in law enforcement is one
way to meet this criterion. If the consultant does not hold specific knowledge of the sector,
another demographic similarity such as race or ethnicity can help participants feel at ease during
the training sessions. Hayes et al. (2020) emphasize that a core responsibility for DEI consultants
is to clarify jargon so that participants have clear expectations. It will be vital for DEI consultants

to be extremely detailed and showcase practical integration of these terms or ideas in order to deliver effective engagements.

Content Selection

Several approaches have been pursued by facilitators with expertise in DEI. As DEI training often includes content regarding racial equity, developers of curriculum often consider theoretical concepts that speak to the content (Corsino & Fuller, 2021). Moore et al. (2018) offers CRT as a framework that allows for interrogation of the way of race and racism show up in society. Utilizing the central belief that racism and social structures are intricately linked, law enforcement agencies and their training methods can be studied utilizing CRT. Rivera and Ward (2017) named CRT as effective in shaping learner outcomes and revealed correlations of identity and awareness of racism. Yet, the research also raised concerns regarding the necessary, but lacking amount of education in shifting police-community relations. In this section, the research will provide insight into some of the current DEI tactics and programs crafted to address disparities in policing Black people.

Implicit Bias Training

Implicit bias training, or unconscious bias, describes attitudes or associations that alter our perceptions of and impact our behaviors and decision-making (FitzGerald et al., 2019; Staats & Patton, 2013) In differing from explicit bias, which is aligned with overt racism, everyone is susceptible to a form of implicit bias that impacts our interactions and behaviors (Devine, 1989; Staats & Patton, 2013). The rising rates of diversity amongst different racial and ethnic communities in the U.S. has resulted in more police interactions with these groups, which means the result of implicit bias in policing could have a large impact on racial and ethnic communities. Devine (1989) led the early research on implicit biases and how they are particularly relevant to

police officers as they connect different demographics with traits related to violence and crime. Much of implicit bias's current relevance is maintained by law enforcement because of the significant number of shootings of Black men (Davidson, 2016; Hall et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 2016). Like others, police officers are not exempt from forming stereotypes, and because they hold a high degree power, it is pertinent for them to understand the makeup of stereotypes and the possible impact on their behavior and decision-making (Spencer et al., 2016). Helms and Costanza (2020) offered insight on race in the context of deadly interactions with law enforcement. By researching individual aspects of incidents with deadly force, Helms and Costanza (2020) showcase that race was a major predicting factor of law enforcement killings, as well an individual's socio-economic conditions. The research does not imply that implicit bias is the foremost factor of police killings; however, it does reveal that a victim's race is a strong factor.

The 21st Century Policing Task Force report directly acknowledged implicit bias and its influences in producing disparate outcomes for Black people and called for revised training to decrease the effect of unconscious biases held by police (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Though these trainings vary in how they are developed, structured, and delivered, there are some foundational elements that are standard across the board (Dalton & Villagran, 2018). Most implicit bias training sessions are rooted in a science-based approach, focusing on how the brain engages in conscious and unconscious decision-making (Dalton & Villagran, 2018; Pritlove et al., 2019). Burke (2020) recalls how crucial it was to include the scientific focus of implicit bias in trainings and translate it into digestible language for police officers. Worden et al. (2020) acknowledged the reception to police-focused implicit bias training was greater in officers that had more understanding of the science behind it. In the study

of the NYPD's implicit bias training program, Worden et al. (2020) revealed that the most

impactful practice of the training was including components that established or added to officers'

knowledge and understanding of biases, and the impact for themselves and members of the

community. Additional research has demonstrated that biases can be managed through

interventions that focus on educating individuals about the science-backed existence of implicit

biases and the skills necessary to mitigate their effects (Fridell, 2017; Fridell & Lim, 2016).

Forscher et al. (2019) suggested that if implicit biases can be challenged through targeted

intervention, decisions and actions influenced by biases can also shift.

However, Worden et al. (2020) acknowledged the challenge in connecting the training to

a specific behavioral challenge, like decreasing the inequities surrounding use of force tactics for

demographics, given it was not an objective of the training. Setting realistic and measurable

objective are critical to participants' experience with implicit bias training programs and should

be considered for any implicit bias training program for law enforcement (Spencer et al., 2016;

Worden et al., 2020). Yet, this best practice could also be a challenge for consultants and

practitioners as there is a gap in understanding of the real-world impact of implicit bias training

for police, despite its popularity and availability (James, 2018; Spencer et al., 2016). Researchers

have found that signaling examples of implicit bias during training sessions allows participants

to better process the concept (Carter et al., 2020; Fridell, 2017). Other psychological elements,

such as social dominance, also reside within law enforcement culture. Researchers have

emphasized that incorporating these components into an implicit bias training program can

disrupt the intended learning outcome surrounding bias identification and mitigation, particularly

as trainers attempt to inform police participants that racism and implicit bias should not be

conflated, as biases can exist across various forms of demographics (Dalton & Villagran, 2018;

Hall et al., 2016). In addition, a deep look into the racial bias of officers decreases the effect of the greater issue of prejudice and racism in society (Hall et al., 2016). Similarly, as members of the public view racism differently, so do police officers. To build toward successful collaboration between law enforcement and community members, particular Black people, both groups must possess an understanding that violence and racism are issues that plague the broader population (Greenwald et al., 2022).

There has been an influx of studies on shooter bias, which suggests that implicit bias may influence police officers' speed, accuracy, and decision-making on which people to shoot based upon their race (Frenken et al., 2022; Kahn & Davies, 2017; Mekawi et al., 2016; Stelter et al., 2023). One study by Mekawi et al. (2016) explored the idea of White fear, which is regarded as a White participant's fear of non-White individuals. During a study of a shooter test, the results revealed that a large degree of White fear equated to less resistance to shooting Black individuals, compared to other racial or ethnical groups. As such, the application of simulated implicit bias tests has become foundational to many police-focused trainings (Greenwald & Lai, 2020). To date, the most well-known and accessible tool is the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald et al., 1998) hosted by Harvard's Project Implicit project. The IAT was created with the goal of uncovering hidden biases, preferences, and attitudes toward various groups by analyzing the time it takes an individual to arrange concepts into two categories. Greenwald et al. (2015) detailed that historically, IAT results have shown that White people have higher, automatic preference for themselves than for Black people. In addition, Black people were found to also possess a higher, instinctive preference for White people, prompting the researchers at Project Implicit to attribute this statistic to the negative stereotypes that have socially and culturally been assigned to their group. Marini et al. (2021) concluded the IAT could be a useful

tool for DEI consultants and practitioners to quickly measure many forms of implicit

discrimination and to stoke ideas surrounding implicit bias. The IAT can be useful for educators

that are prepared to be creative and reflexive in addressing tensions that arise from its use

(Sukhera et al., 2019).

Though readily available to be used as a foundational practice for educating and

measuring implicit bias, the IAT has its fair share of challenges. Some debate the test's

legitimacy (Meissner et al., 2019; Oswald et al., 2013; Schimmack, 2021). Others worry that the

publicity is pushing it into the public conscious, particularly into the hands of scholars and

organizational leaders, who advocate for its usage in policy (Bartels & Schoenrade, 2022).

Additionally, research has shown growing concerns regarding the IAT's ability to serve as

accurate predictors bias (Oswald et al., 2013; Sukhera et al., 2019). Given the ability to re-test at

any time, researchers theorize that changes in scores on implicit measures may not be associated

with changes in behavior as participants become more aware of the testing methodology and

subconsciously, or consciously, skew the test results to meet a desired outcome (Forscher et al.,

2019). As such, consultants that develop training should carefully consider the outcomes they

seek when looking to utilize measurement tools, as behavioral change may not be a likely

outcome.

Carter et al. (2020) regard implicit bias training as an effective complementary tool and

that practitioners should not be afraid to be reveal the limitations that exist with solely relying on

its focus. For law enforcement, Engel et al. (2020) theorize that implicit bias training should be

utilized alongside other evidence-based training programs that focus on de-escalation.

Atewologun et al. (2018) also suggest that implicit bias-focused DEI training is paramount to

raising awareness to the ways in which our views impact how we navigate the world and should

be met with complementary trainings and organizational strategies to limit and mitigate biases. Spencer et al. (2016) affirm this notion by highlighting that most departments supplement trainings on bias with concepts related to community-oriented policing and cultural competence.

Cultural Competency Training

Developing cultural competence in public sector employment has been a research emphasis since the1980s (Getha-Taylor et al., 2020). Research on the creation of cultural awareness for police had not received the same level of priority until the recent incidents of police shootings of Black males revealed a huge gap in police cultural training (Moon et al., 2018). Although cultural competency training has been offered for many years, the tactics for application and its addition to police training curricula are fairly new. Historically, training that adds to cultural competency centers workshops as its primary pedagogical technique that span several hours or over the course of a couple of days (Corsino & Fuller, 2021).

Cross et al. (1989) classified cultural competency as a combination of policies, attitudes, and behaviors in a system or organization designed to promote successful outcomes in cross-cultural situations. Getha-Taylor et al. (2020) discuss cultural competency training as knowledge that results in a person identifying appropriate communication forms and differentiating between varying cultural environments while being able to plan and adapt appropriately. Not only can cultural competency improve one's ability to understanding actions of different communities, but it can also foster more open communication across cultures. Sereni-Massinger and Wood (2016) offer the perspective that in relation to law enforcement duties, building cultural competency and awareness has the ability to create safer outcomes for parties involved in police interactions. Hennessy et al. (1994) identified audience and instructor selection, learning goals, and program implementation methods were identified as critical considerations for an effective cultural

competency training. Additionally, Hennessy et al. (1994) noted the importance of embedding real-world implications to enhance the relevancy of training for police. Moon et al. (2018) suggests the use of cultural competence assessments for employees of public organizations can inform instruction that will improve employees' levels cultural competency. Similarly, to the post-training analysis referenced by Worden et al. (2020), the ability to evaluate participants' knowledge before and after training will yield better knowledge on the successes and challenges associated with culturally based training for police. Yet, like other forms of DEI training, law enforcement does not have a standardized approach to cultural competency training nor how to evaluate and measure a department's cultural competence (Engelman & Deardorff, 2016). This creates a challenge for measuring the success of culture competency training. Hammer (2011) asserts that many people overestimate the amount of intercultural knowledge they possess. Shepherd (2019) proclaims the brief nature of most cultural competency training programs do not allow for substantial content absorption. For law enforcement leaders, this could lead to prioritizing other forms of police training over cultural competency training.

Emotional Intelligence Training

Today's police officers face increasing pressure to meet the demands of community calls for accountability in racial disparity, which can lead to stressful decision-making. Effective policing requires a combination of skills. Examples of such skills, like resilience (Andersen & Gustafsberg, 2016), emotional intelligence (Al Ali et al., 2012), and stress management (Patterson et al., 2014) have been regarded as important in policing. Emotional intelligence surfaced as a prominent psychological concept in the late 20th century, where it was theorized as a set of skills parallel to standard intelligence (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018). Early leading work on emotional intelligence was steered by Salovey and Mayer (1990), which presented it as the

competency to track and distinguish between emotions and feelings and to integrate that knowledge to guide one's decision-making. When an individual holds strong feeling they are more likely exhibit behaviors based on generalizations such as stereotypes and establish greater belief in the validity of these behaviors (S. G. Brown & Daus, 2015).

Although an increasing amount of research has examined the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance (Gong et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2016), the results of the impact are limited. Regarding studies within law enforcement agencies, very limited research has investigated the connections between emotional intelligence training and outcomes that reduce the number of Black deaths by police. Despite these limitations, there is theoretical knowledge that indicates emotional intelligence training could have a significant impact on police work (Al Ali et al., 2012). Policing is a profession that faces inherent dangers that are sometimes violent, which can lead to feelings of stress in uncertain situations. Huhta et al. (2023) note that police officers are trained to survey their surrounding and absorb information in a short amount of time before they act, a practice known as situational awareness. There is a growing amount of research on the effects of stress on decision-making by police (Andersen & Gustafsberg, 2016; Fridman et al., 2019; Kelley et al., 2019). Bishopp et al. (2018) also revealed a connection between police stress and acts of misconduct. Basinska and Dåderman (2019) offers the insight that new officers are trained to be aware of their shortcomings and hide perceived negative emotions, such as sadness, because of police cultural values like bravery. This can be challenging during confrontational situations that require a heightened understanding of emotion. As such, emotional intelligence training could be particularly relevant in policing.

Yet, studies have shown there is limited research on whether racial prejudice on behalf of police causes the discomfort that leads to officers' decision-making regarding use of force (De

Angelis, 2016; Skinner & Haas, 2016). This presents a challenge for practitioners seeking to

facilitate learning around racially motivated emotional intelligence needs. Nevertheless,

Basinska and Dåderman (2019) assert that it is pertinent for law enforcement agencies seeking to

implement change management initiatives addressing racial disparities to focus on training that

alters emotions and thoughts. Incorporating real-world implications and data into emotional

intelligence training is paramount for building efficiency and social skills of public sector

employees, including police officers (Kotsou et al., 2019). Similarly, to implicit bias, emotional

intelligence training is thought to be best received when it is embedded into the culture of the

organization (Clark & Polesello, 2017). However, many of the challenges associated with

emotional intelligence training for law enforcement, and other DEI-based training, is how to

make it a long-standing complementary learning goal. Romosiou et al. (2018) found that officers

that participated in emotional intelligence training reported increased levels of awareness and

emotional control, however; a three-month post-survey showed decreased levels of attributes

related to emotional intelligence. The lack of retainment in DEI programs is not unique to law

enforcement, as various organizations struggle with how to embed the knowledge into workplace

culture (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). As such, leaders may be required to consider multiple and

constant entry points for emotional intelligence training into police training programs.

Training Placement Strategies

Police Academy

Research suggests that in order to shift the culture of racial disparities policing, the

climate of academic training within law enforcement needs to change, inclusive of its training

with recruits preparing to enter the police force (Cohen & Goodman, 2023; Radebe, 2021).

Blumberg et al. (2019) revealed the training during a recruit's time in the police academy

generally falls into the following allotment: 10 hours for mental health, 90 hours for legal

education, 90 hours for professional and personal development, 170 hours for use of force, and

over 200 hours for department operations. Despite this, states still vary in how to incorporate

DEI training into academy curricula. The state of California mandates that police academy

trainees to participate in a minimum of 16 hours of diversity training and 15 hours of disability

awareness training (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, n.d.).

Whereas the state of Florida requires recruits to take a 40-hour course focused on serving diverse

communities (Broward College, 2016). While the difference in training hours is one

measurement for assessment, it is still difficult to evaluate the merit of these courses without a

national standard of assessment for DEI curricula, and thus presents a challenge to standardizing

best practices for police academies (Radebe, 2021; Sloan & Paoline, 2021).

Though they differ in curricula hours and content, standard police academy education

utilizes a pedagogical teaching and learning format that places high levels of ownership on the

facilitator throughout the process, including assessment (Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016).

Whereas utilizing the andragogy method of teaching and learning would encourage academy

trainees to be responsible for their own learning and evaluation. Knowles et al. (2015) opined

that adult learning should be more focused on problem solving skills, which contrasts with the

police academy approach. Today's adult learning experts advocate for the Constructivist

approach, which holds similarities to andragogy. Constructivism encourages learners to engage

through peer collaboration and problem-based instruction (Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016).

Open discussion is encouraged, and learners are expected to become proficient in collaboration

despite their cultural differences. Shipton (2011) notes that advocates of this approach contend

that problem solving, and situational roleplay better prepares learners to enter their community as

law enforcement professionals. Blumberg et al. (2019) echoes this sentiment and offers the perspective that new officers trained following the adult-learning theory are encouraged to cultivate communication skills, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking skills.

Education as a Precursor

The variations in police academy training also extend to the hiring the requirements for each department (Stickle, 2016). This impacts the implementation of DEI training by leaving the decision to law enforcement leaders and policy makers to determine its place in police education. As this research discussed the formation of police academies in the early 20th century in Chapter 1, levels of higher education in police continue to be a point of contention amongst policy makers and hiring managers (Cordner, 2019). Barring any formal higher education, police academies are often the first education setting where trainees receive higher education in social sciences, compared to a formal education institution where courses on concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion would typically be offered (Stickle, 2016). Community colleges often play a crucial part in law enforcement training. Finkel (2021) notes that the curricula generally follow directives law enforcement boards governed by the state and has gradually increased its focus of DEI and racial profiling. This could lead to adjustments in professional development for law enforcement trainers and DEI practitioners and recruiting methods to diversity faculty and students; all of which would have an impact on the preparedness of recruits entering police academies. However, as these types of efforts vary by states and sometimes local municipalities, the outcomes would also vary.

McElvain and Kposowa (2008) investigated how higher education for officers influences their use of deadly force. The researcher's viewed one department's records over a 15-year period and found that officers holding with advanced experience in education were less likely to

utilize deadly force. Yet, the concept that higher education would lead to hiring officers that possess increased levels of emotional intelligence, cultural competency and bias management is not unanimous. Rosenfeld et al. (2018) challenge this notion and reveals that members of law enforcement with higher levels of education performed higher amounts of traffic stops, citations, and arrests compared to those that don't possess a college degree. Moreover, higher degrees of arrest and traffic stops correlated with officers seeking advancement within the department. Fliss et al. (2020) revealed a connection between the prioritization of traffic stops, racial disparities, and negative health outcomes for Black people. The noted inconsistencies in educational preparation for police present opportunities and challenges in standardizing DEI training police. Nevertheless, ongoing professional development is vital to the growth of any workforce.

Literature Gaps

Social injustice is a phenomenon that is prevalent across demographics like race, gender, and socioeconomic standing. While the occurrence of social injustice at the hands of police is a problem in many other communities (Alang et al., 2023; Campney, 2021), the conduct toward Black people in the United State by police, which has been lauded as some of the most inhumane treatment in the country's history, is of grave concern that should be addressed (De Angelis et al., 2016; S. A. Schwartz, 2020). While police training and practices related to curricula have been studied extensively (Alanis & Pyram, 2022; Blumberg et al., 2019; Cohen & Goodman, 2023), there is little academic literature available that discusses the ways in which DEI training programs for law enforcement can be refined to invoke behavioral change that will to improved outcomes of Black people (James, 2018; Lai & Lisneck, 2023).

As leadership in organizations has become a popular subject of interest, particularly as training and professional development of employees has grown as an industry, scholars have

conducted studies on leadership models adopted by police leaders and their subordinates (de Moura et al., 2023; Simmons-Beauchamp & Sharpe, 2022). Scholars have also examined the experiences of members of law enforcement that have participated in DEI training (Farrell & Barao, 2022; Lai & Lisneck, 2023). However, the perspective of practitioners responsible for training police in DEI is noticeably absent from academic literature. To establish what "works" in DEI training for police, the researcher focused this study on the experiences of professionals responsible for designing and delivering DEI programs to law enforcement.

Summary

Though the historical treatment of Black people has evolved and improved, there are still disproportionalities and injustices that have yet to be eliminated. The system of policing is one of the many ways that inequitable treatment of Black people continues to exist. As many members of society desire reform in policing, it is important to look at the methods of training to determine whether they can produce the desired impact of reducing the disparity that exists in policing Black people. As race and policing are complex issues, it is crucial to gather insight on the ways police are trained to navigate challenges that do not have a prescriptive solution. This is especially important as DEI consultants and practitioners are the leaders that hold the responsibility of providing police officers with the tools to navigate challenges that involve race and policing. As such, the perspectives of DEI practitioners who work with police are vital pieces of information that can influence how DEI training programs are implemented in the future. This literature review validates the need to gather their viewpoints and the investigation of the literature gaps that exist.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

As law enforcement continues to face scrutiny for the disparity in which Black people are killed during police encounters, behavioral outcomes related to DEI training continues to be analyzed. However, research has shown that law enforcement continues to fall short of meeting their desired goals surrounding DEI training practices (Blumberg et al., 2016; McCandless, 2018). This qualitative, phenomenological study was designed to look at the perceptions and experiences of U.S.-based DEI consultants and practitioners who have designed and facilitated DEI training programs for law enforcement. This third chapter re-states the research questions, explains the methodology, setting, and participant population. It also explains considerations for human subjects, the instrumentation utilized, and how the researcher performed data collection, management, and analysis.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

Well-defined research questions help guide the author toward making decisions about the study design and ultimately what information will be gathered and analyzed (Maxwell, 2013). Dodgson (2020) revealed that questions specific to the participant decreases the likelihood of generalizations that can be harmful, supports the researcher's consciousness of the diversity among the study's participants, and allows the researcher to direct attention on thoughts and experiences that study participants choose to disclose. This study sought to examine how DEI consultants and practitioners utilize adaptive leadership to design and deliver training programs for law enforcement. Therefore, to reach this study's goals, the following research questions were utilized:

- RQ1: From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black people?

  o How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?

  o What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that interfere with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for adaptive work?

  o What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge is improving or resolved?

Research Methodology and Rationale

This qualitative research study examined the experiences of U.S.-based DEI consultants and practitioners who design and deliver training programs to members of law enforcement. The researcher employed a phenomenological approach to gather data through a semi-structured interview method.

Methodology

Qualitative research aims to investigate a social experience, disclose feelings connected to the issue and understand the involvements of participants connected to a research topic (Mwita, 2022). Qualitative inquiry places emphasis on discerning how people place meaning and value on their experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that qualitative research seeks to gain understanding of a phenomenon from the subject's point of view via an informed process by providing vivid accounts of the studied phenomenon. It is believed that qualitative inquiry is best suited when the nature of the study is investigative (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, Maxwell

(2013) indicates that qualitative research encompasses an authenticity that considers theoretical claims made by the researcher, and also considers the thoughts of the participants. Qualitative research allows subjects to take part in the research study via their experiences and at their own comfort level (Creswell, 2012). Phenomena such as behaviors and attitudes can be difficult to capture via a quantitative design given the focus of quantitative work is statistical in nature, as opposed to focused on gathering deep insight into experiences (Tenny et al., 2020).

There are many advantages and disadvantages to utilizing this form of research design. Qualitative research encompasses a flexibility that is appealing to researchers (Mwita, 2022). In showcasing the flexibility of the qualitative approach, H. Kim et al. (2017) illustrated how research questions can be adapted to collect more data in order to improve the quality of findings. Filomeno (2019) also showcased the advantage of flexibility during data collection, where the investigator modified questions to meet the cultural competency that was desired by participants. An adjustment such as this could only be achieved through a qualitative research design (Mwita, 2022). In addition, qualitative research offers the researcher the ability to gather detailed evidence. Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019) revealed that the qualitative approach provides investigators with the opportunity to gather more data, which allows them to better interpret and understand details of the research problem that may be nuanced. Methods such as observation, open-ended surveys, and interviews provide researchers with an opportunity to inquire and draw out additional information.

Alternatively, there are also disadvantages to qualitative research that should be considered when utilizing this approach. Bazen et al. (2021) note that utilizing a qualitative approach is time intensive at it often relies on the researcher to decipher and code a rich amount of narrative data. Ferguson and Gordon (2019) posit that the laborious nature of the qualitative

data collection and analysis process can be daunting and discouraging for researchers. Subsequently, researchers should take careful consideration of the study design. Another disadvantage of qualitative research is that the data is less likely to be used generally across the discipline due to the small participant sample (Leung, 2015). Nevertheless, Polit and Beck (2010) offer the perspective that generalization of results is not the aim of most qualitative studies; instead, the objective is to add rich, contextualized knowledge regarding the experiences of specific groups. Qualitative investigation created space for the collection of data that was enriched with the deep perspective of DEI practitioners that could not be achieved through a quantitative design.

Approach

As previously stated, qualitative research allows the investigator to develop a more descriptive understanding the of experiences of participants (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). There are various approaches in qualitative research, like grounded theory or ethnography. Grounded theory cultivates ideas rooted from the viewpoint of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018), whereas the ethnographic method permits the researcher to identify a group's culture in a natural environment. Per Neubauer et al. (2019), the objective of the phenomenological approach is to obtain an account of the phenomenon by examining it from the viewpoint of someone who lived it to comprehend the significance, if any, that participants give to the occurrence. Consequently, phenomenology was considered the suitable approach for this dissertation as the researcher aimed to gather meaning behind the phenomenon of DEI practitioners designing and delivering training programs for law enforcement.

Data Collection Method

In this research study, the author aimed to uncover the experience associated with being a DEI consultant or practitioner that creates and implements training programs for members of law enforcement. Busetto et al. (2020) highlight qualitative interviews as informal, conversational exchanges that are guided by a goal. Interviews gain insights into an individual's subjective beliefs and experiences (Christ, 2014). Semi-structured interviews are identified using a topic guide and open-ended questions in which the areas of interest are clearly defined (Busetto et al., 2019). Using open-ended questions gave the researcher opportunity to gather detailed explanations and insights into the phenomenon of interest. Once interviews concluded, the subjects' responses were examined to determine if any shared themes existed amongst their individual responses. The goal was for any commonalities to provide the researcher with an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon Thus, the semi-structured interview technique was best suited for this study.

Design Validity

Confirming validity is a necessary and crucial component of any study. For design validity to be acknowledged, researchers need to show that data analysis has been done in a meticulously, consistently, and extensively through documenting, categorizing, and revealing the analysis techniques with a degree of specificity that enables readers to determine whether the process is reliable (Nowell et al., 2017). In studies, researchers should institute protocols that validate the process as worthwhile of a readers' attention (Amankwaa, 2016).

Peer Review Validity. This study underwent a peer-review process conducted by current and previous doctoral candidates at Pepperdine University, as well as members of the researcher's dissertation committee. Scholarly review conducted by colleagues is an accepted

research practice in the field of academia (Kelly et al., 2014). It is perceived as the basis of the

scholarly literature practice because it exposes an author's work to the criticism of other scholars

in the field (Harris & Davison, 2020). As such, it motivates writers aim to produce high-quality

research that will make positive additions to the field.

Setting

Police departments and policy leaders continue to look at the training function of their

organization to remedy problems with community members. Examination of the existing state of

DEI training programs in law enforcement suggests that states are taking regional approaches to

the type of training implemented to address issues with historically marginalized racial and

ethnic groups (Cohen & Goodman, 2023). As geographic range is a secondary criterion of this

study, it is possible that this inclusion could highlight information about practices in DEI training

for police that are not commonly known across the U.S. As such, this dissertation could

potentially add a perspective to the literature that could provide police, policy, and DEI leaders

with practices that can add elements of uniformity to approaches in DEI training for law

enforcement that supports work with various communities.

As part of this study's design, the researcher conducted the interviews online via the

Zoom platform. Audio from all meetings were recorded utilizing the Otter.ai software to

maintain confidentiality and secure handling solely on the part of the researcher. After

transcription, the recordings were destroyed. Remaining documented data will be kept in a

protected folder on the researcher's laptop.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

Participants of research studies should be designated by several factors, such as key

characteristics or the use of a number for identification (Boeije, 2010). They should represent the

population, which is the broader group the participant was selected from. For this dissertation, the population included all U.S.-based DEI consultants and practitioners who have worked with law enforcement agencies on at least two occasions. After choosing a segment of the practitioners from this population to serve as participants, the data was collected and analyzed to draw conclusions about phenomenon.

In purposive sampling, the researcher seeks to sample research participants strategically, as opposed to randomly, so that the chosen participants hold relevance to the study's key questions (Campbell et al., 2020). Therefore, while sampling participants the researcher holds the research questions in mind as they indicate what units need to be sampled. Research questions serve as a guideline to determine what categories of people fit the criteria and should therefore be sampled. Gay et al. (2012) revealed that the number of participants in qualitative investigations can range from one to sixty, yet it is rare to find qualitative studies that include more than 20 subjects. Gay et al. (2012) also highlighted that researchers should consider representativeness and redundancy when establishing sample size sufficiency. Representativeness refers to the criteria participants meet relating to relevancy with the topic and representing the population. Redundancy signifies that continuing to interview participants is not resulting in new information, and as such the study has reached saturation (Creswell, 2013; Gay et al., 2012). In phenomenology, the number of participants can range from three to 15 people (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Gray (2018) supports that an ideal sample size should not exceed 20 participants. Therefore, for this study, the researcher sought to interview up to 10 participants.

To develop a frame, or the broader list of people the researcher can potentially have access to, the researcher purposefully designed a process to ensure they interviewed the most appropriate participants. To create a list of potential subjects, the researcher utilized LinkedIn,

which is a professional networking site that connects millions of professionals across the world

(LinkedIn, n.d.). Utilizing the platform's search function, the researcher typed the following

phrases to gather as many potential participants as possible:

- "DEI consultants law enforcement"

- "DEI trainer law enforcement"

- "DEI consultant police"

- "DEI trainer police"

- "DEI practitioner law enforcement"

- "DEI practitioner police"

The researcher also utilized the location tab to produce results that only showcased professionals

located in the United States.

Utilizing the information obtained from LinkedIn, the researcher organized their names

into a spreadsheet that served as the participant database. Following this, the researcher

performed additional data collection procedures that are detailed later in this chapter.

Criteria of Inclusion

The following list showcases the criteria of inclusion:

1. Must be a DEI consultant/practitioner.

2. Based in the United States.

3. Has worked with law enforcement on at least two separate occasions.

Secondary Criteria of Inclusion

Though it is the intention that this research does not exceed more than 10 participant

perspectives, it is understood that additional viewpoints could greatly add to the body of this

work. Therefore, the researcher has determined that if more than 10 participants are eligible for

this study, priority selection will be determined based upon geographic range across the United States.

Criteria of Exclusion

The following list details the criteria of exclusion:

1. Not consenting to interview audio being recorded.

2. Incapacity to participate in the full the interview.

3. Does not have a direct means of contact via LinkedIn profile or company website.

Human Subject Considerations

The protections of human subjects and ethical considerations are crucial components of academic research (Creswell, 2012). The potential benefit of this study's result should not take priority over the possibility of risk and harm to human participants. Therefore, it paramount that the researcher displays trustworthiness throughout the process. As a result, the researcher focused on elements of human subject participation such as informed consent and participant confidentiality.

Even though some study topics may be unproblematic for participants to recall, investigators should not make presumptions regarding these topics. As part of this study, the researcher understood the potential impact of discussing topics that deal with race relations, considering the literature's concentration on the public scrutiny surrounding police training. The researcher aimed to shield subjects from harm. As part of the guidelines for conducting doctoral research, the investigator applied for this study to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the governing entity that reviews and approves research proposals (Appendix B).

The IRB application detailed the study's plan to obtain informed consent, which served as proof that all human subjects were willing participants, held knowledge regarding the purpose

of the study, were aware of any risks and benefits that could have arisen as a condition of

participating in the study, and understood that they could have withdrawn their consent to

participate at any juncture. Practicing confidentiality is a core component of the academic

research (Boeije, 2010). The researcher kept participants' information confidential by

eliminating the use of descriptors that can make the subjects recognizable by readers. This

included converting names to pseudonyms and eliminating the use of names during the coding

process. Based upon university the guidelines, the investigator passed the Collaborative

Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course. Completion of these prerequisites met the

university protocols and validated the researcher's dedication to upholding honorable standards

throughout the study.

Instrumentation

The interview question instrument was adapted from previous academic research studies;

one study involved adaptive leadership and the other study examined law enforcement

relationships with Black communities. The interview questions were selected from a prior study

conducted by Dr. Jason Bosch (2021), as well as another study conducted by Dr. Brittany Palmer

(2021), both of whom consented to the adaptation and usage of these questions for the purpose of

this dissertation. To fit the relevance of this study's goals and overall investigation, the open-

ended interview questions were adjusted. Participants were invited to answer a series of

questions, as shown in Table 2, that were intended to produce thorough responses from

participants while allowing flexibility to expound with follow up questions to gather additional

detail.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Question	Adapted Interview Question	Instrument Source
From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black people?	1. Could you briefly describe how you came to be involved in DEI training and 2. working with law enforcement specifically? 3. What leadership training have you received? 4. What have you learned regarding the practice of adaptive leadership? 5. Can you think of a specific time when you attempted to practice adaptive leadership or applied adaptive leadership principles in your work with law enforcement to? If so, please describe.	Dr. Jason Bosch
Sub-question How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?	Adapted Interview Question 6. What strategies would help law enforcement develop a better relationship with Black communities?	Instrument Source Dr. Brittany Palmer
What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that interfere with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for adaptive work?	7. What would help law enforcement leaders more effectively build adaptive leadership capacity? How can this be applied toward the issue of racial disparity in policing?	Dr. Jason Bosch
What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge is improving or resolved?	What would help law enforcement leaders more effectively build adaptive leadership capacity? How can this be applied toward the issue of racial disparity in policing? 8. How do you measure progress toward the adaptive leadership goals during your work with law enforcement?	

Instrument Validity

Validity refers to the extent qualitative information accurately assesses what the investigator aims to determine (Gay et al., 2012). The instrument utilized in a prior study may not be best suited for future studies, and thus, relevancy to the research topic is a crucial factor for instrumentation. Given the interview questions were adapted, the researcher performed a pilot study with a DEI practitioner that was not part of the study to confirm content validity.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is performed to add to the quality of a research study (In, 2017). The objective of this pilot study was to ensure the study's instrument was crafted to properly assess the experiences of the participants in accordance with the research question and sub questions. After concluding the pilot study with the DEI expert, the researcher confirmed that the instrument met the conditions of validity for the study.

Data Collection Procedures

As previously stated, the selected participants were fielded utilizing the LinkedIn platform and contacted following the protocols set by the Pepperdine University IRB. A criterion of inclusion for this study was a minimum of two distinct instances of working with law enforcement on DEI-related training programs. As such, the researcher observed the following data collection procedures:

1. Established a pool of potential participants utilizing LinkedIn.

2. Added potential participants' names to a password-encrypted Excel document.

3. Utilizing LinkedIn, the researcher messaged each potential participant and sent a copy of the recruitment letter, which included eligibility criteria.

a. In the event some participants were unable to be contacted via LinkedIn due to privacy settings or inactivity on the platform, the researcher utilized the Google search engine to locate participant emails via a company website and added the emails to the contact list.

b. For potential participants contacted outside of LinkedIn, the recruitment flyer was sent via email.

4. If a participant expressed interest in the study, the researcher set up a phone call to confirm eligibility and provided potential participants with the initial consent information.

a. Once eligibility and initial consent was obtained, the researcher confirmed the participants' email address and confirmed to conduct the full interview.

5. The researcher followed up the phone call by emailing participants the informed consent letter, the confirmed date and time of the interview, and the Zoom information.

6. For each interview, the researcher logged on to the Zoom link to ensure functionality of the platform. Once the participant logged into the waiting room, the researcher ensured the participant was the only additional person logged into the session before beginning the interview.

7. Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher asked subjects if they had any questions pertaining to the informed consent. If there were no questions, the researcher began recording audio utilizing the Otter.ai software. The researcher performed the following steps for each interview:

a. Asked each interview question.

b. Asked follow-up or clarifying questions, as appropriate.

c. Documented notes during each interview.

d. Refrained from utilizing participant names during the recording.

At the end of the process, the researcher performed the following:

- Transcribed all audio recordings and interview notes utilizing the HyperResearch software.

- Coded and segmented the data utilizing the HyperResearch software.

Data Management

Effective data management is essential to the qualitative research process, as researchers are trusted with sensitive information (Antonio et al., 2020). Consequentially, breach of this trust by refusing to establish sound data management practices could have negative implications on the willingness of human subjects to participate in research studies. This researcher practiced effective data management by storing all electronic documents, including notes and transcriptions in a password-protected folder on the interviewer's laptop. This laptop is to be only accessible to the researcher. As required by Pepperdine University's IRB, this researcher will maintain records associated with this dissertation for 5 years. At the conclusion of this term, the research data will be deleted.

Data Analysis

The analysis step necessitates great attention to detail (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For a study utilizing phenomenology, Creswell (2013) offered a process to analyze and characterize the data. This approach was adapted from Moustakas (1994) and Polkinghorne (1988), which designates the researcher to perform the following process:

1. Bracket their experience of the phenomenon.

2. Go through the data to identify statements of significance related to the phenomenon and create clusters.

3. Develop themes.

4. Create a description of "what" and "how" the phenomenon was experienced based on the identified themes.

5. Highlight and identify common experiences described by the participants.

6. Close the analysis with a summary.

The researcher performed two cycles of coding. The first round utilized an open approach that incorporated all the data to extract the predominant themes and any prospective new groupings that appeared from the full data set (Boeije, 2010). Data was condensed into controllable segments using the first cycle of coding. The segments were then further categorized during the second cycle. The next chapter details the key findings that emerged from the data.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability is often performed in qualitative analysis (Cheung & Tai, 2023; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The assessment of coding by other reviewers can result in many benefits to qualitative research studies, including the conveyance of transparency to readers and the formation of systematic processes for data analysis (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). At minimum, two independent reviewers should be utilized to participate in the inter-coder reliability process (Eagan et al., 2020; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Additionally, the amount of data that needs to be inter-coded is an important aspect to the process. While O'Connor and Joffe (2020) suggest a range of 10 to 25% of qualitative data to be sent for coding by independent reviewers, depending upon the amount of data collected, Cheung and Tai (2023) noted that studies such as Jansen et al. (2019) only utilized 10% of interviews for coding by a secondary reviewer. Though this

showcases how varied the amounts may be, it does offer a frame of reference for a standard minimum. As noted, this research study sought to recruit up to 10 participants. Thus, this researcher thought it was crucial to the integrity of the data analysis process to ensure suggested inter-coder guidelines are followed. Therefore, the researcher provided 30% of the transcriptions and codes to other reviewers that carefully reviewed the information and offered recommendations to modify themes.

Positionality

In research, bias arises if the investigator's lived experiences or predetermined ideas regarding the research topic impact the study's results (Galdas, 2017). This occurs when the findings align with the feelings of the researcher, as opposed to what was observed. To counteract bias, the researcher must engage in self-reflection and restraint regarding implicit or explicit biases (Johnson et al., 2020). However, positionality in research also has positive attributes. Massoud (2022) reveals that positionality in research can offer many benefits such as lending credibility and connection to the work, providing space for newer voices in research, and providing communities with information that can transform their lives.

As a Black woman in the U.S., the researcher has engaged in positive and negative interactions with members of law enforcement. The researcher also grew up as the daughter of a police officer that performed his entire career of public service in Compton, CA, most notably retiring as chief. As such, the researcher grew up in an environment that was heavily influenced by police culture and afforded her privileges and opportunities that came at the result of this upbringing. Additionally, the researcher's experience studying race relations and DEI has offered insight that has allowed her to form connections with practitioners who have contributed to the field. This proved to be a valuable attribute throughout data collection. These aspects of the

researcher's positionality aided in her developing a passion for contributing to the improvement of police training that will lead to better outcomes for Black people. In consideration of all these positionality factors, the researcher maintained awareness of potential biases regarding Black people, law enforcement, and DEI work that could have undermined the analysis and understanding of the research data.

Summary

In Chapter 3, the qualitative method and phenomenological approach were described. It was hypothesized by this researcher that investigation of the lived experiences of DEI practitioners working with law enforcement will be a suitable for the phenomenological approach. The nature and methodology of this research necessitated the inclusion of a purposeful sampling technique. The researcher proposed a detailed data collection process that involved holding individual, confidential semi-structured interviews to safeguard human subjects from harm. The fourth chapter reveals the study's data findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological dissertation was to explore the

perceptions and experiences of U.S.-based DEI practitioners who have designed and facilitated

DEI training for law enforcement. A comprehensive look into the analysis is showcased in

Chapter 4, which was obtained from 10 DEI practitioners through semi-structured, virtual

interviews. Each of the practitioners met the necessary conditions to participate in this research

study, which included being based in the United States and possessing experience facilitating

DEI initiatives and training with law enforcement on more than one occasion. The research

question and its sub-questions are as follows:

- RQ1: From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to

  successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the

  disparity in policing of Black people?

  - How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the

    solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?

  - What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that

    interfere with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for

    adaptive work?

  - What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge

    is improving or resolved?

Overview

Chapter 4 begins with an overview of the data collection process. It then reveals the

research's key findings that were obtained by conducting interviews with the 10 DEI

practitioners, as well as the themes that surfaced from the data analysis. This segment showcases

highlighted topics and the number of times they surfaced throughout the process. The data analysis constructed nine themes, each of which spotlights a specific aspect of the participants' experience working with law enforcement. A qualitative and phenomenological approach were utilized to perform the data analysis. Individual accounts and a summation of the analysis are included to deliver understanding of the experiences of the DEI practitioners and their lived experiences navigating their work with law enforcement from the viewpoint of adaptive leadership. The capacity of this phenomenological research to gather deep insights is reflected in the detailed descriptions, which showcase how DEI practitioners' perspectives and experiences influenced their work with law enforcement. Example passages from the research participants are provided to substantiate the findings. Thematic significance was achieved if at least six of the participants provided similar responses.

Data Collection Process

The data from this research study were collected from participant interviews conducted using the Zoom platform. The interviews with the were recorded using the Otter.ai software with the participants' consent, and precise transcriptions were created. The investigator reviewed each transcription in conjunction with the audio to establish accuracy. Direct quotes included in the study's findings accurately illustrate the information provided by the participants. The only edits made to the direct quotes included the removal of immaterial words such as "like," "alright," and "uh."

Sampling

Six participants were recruited utilizing purposive sampling from LinkedIn. Four of the participants were recruited as the result of snowball sampling, a frequently utilized recruitment method in qualitative research where research participants assist researchers in identifying other

potential subjects (Parker et al., 2019). Several of the six participants who were recruited from LinkedIn forwarded the researcher's recruitment email to other DEI colleagues in their network. As a result, four practitioners reached out expressing their interest in participating. The researcher responded to each inquiry in accordance with the recruitment protocol.

Participant Description

A total of 10 human subjects were interviewed for this study. Five participants were women, four participants were men, and one participant was a transman. All participants held multiple years of experience as DEI practitioners advising in the creation and delivery of DEI training, policies, and procedure for law enforcement. However, only eight had previous experience as police officers. At the time the study was conducted, four of the participants worked as external practitioners who were not employed as full-time staff members of a law enforcement agency. The omission of names and use of pseudonyms provided confidentiality for the study participants as they revealed personal, and sometimes sensitive, information throughout their interviews.

Table 3

List of Participants, Regional Location, Prior Experience in Law Enforcement and Employment

Participant	Gender	Regional Location	Prior Experience in Law Enforcement	Employment at the Time of the Study (External or Internal)
P1	Man	West	Yes	External
P2	Woman	Northeast	Yes	Internal
P3	Man	Northwest	No	Internal
P4	Woman	Northeast	No	Internal
P5	Man	Midwest	Yes	External
P6	Transman	Northwest	Yes	External
P7	Man	West	Yes	Internal
P8	Woman	Midwest	Yes	Internal
P9	Woman	West	Yes	External
P10	Woman	Southeast	Yes	Internal

Findings

The data analysis involved textual and structural analysis that led to the development of themes. The textual analysis included participant reports of experiences with the phenomenon under investigation and the structural analysis revealed how subjects perceived their experiences. These analyses allowed for an early understanding of participants' experience in preparation of the findings and analysis of key ideas within the data for each individual and the full sample. To safeguard the data validity, the researcher applied a rigorous process that also included peer review.

Epoche

Throughout the bracketing process, the researcher sidelined any preconceived notions. The researcher focused on analyzing the practitioners' experiences to discover significance and meaning.

Horizontalization

After bracketing, the researcher reviewed the participant transcripts for significant statements that could be used to illustrate their experiences working with law enforcement and extracted these statements. Each statement, or horizon, adds new meaning to the conversation and provides a more robust account of the participants' experiences. This step by Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994) is related to the epoche process and necessitates that the researcher holds an open mind when examining each statement. Statements that related to the phenomenon under investigation were highlighted in the transcript within the HyperResearch software.

Textual Analysis

Creswell (2013) described textual analysis as the researcher's ability to describe, interpret, and understand texts. These text, also known as descriptions, showcase that while all

participants have experience working with law enforcement, they each have distinctions within their experience. Creswell (2013) also noted that textual analysis often strives to relate the text to a broader societal context. When engaging in textual analysis, observations should be made in clear and reasonable ways to reinforce the bracketing process and helps the researcher to avoid confirmation bias. The following are examples of individual DEI practitioners' textual descriptions:

> To build that capacity, one of the things I see having to change is this idea that practicing equity means we are taking inherent rights away from people because that is not the case. There is a sense in DEI work that correcting the historical wrongs for a particular group is discriminating against another group and it's hard to get around. They think they are going to have less and that is one of the biggest oppositions to DEI work in this field. (P8)
>
> One of the things that I think is critical in diversity, equity, and inclusion work, especially in a culture like law enforcement or traditional or predominantly white industries or cultures or groups, is acknowledging and honoring the loss they feel by assuming a new identity. To separate from things of the past may be to separate from deeply held connections or people in their lives. Like, you know, [they're] not racist, but [they] know [their] grandma, [their] grandpa, who [they] love and raised [them] hold these feelings and I'm asking them to assume a new identity and be more open to ideas. (P3)

Textual-Structural Descriptions

The data collected from this research study resulted in the researcher creating textual-structural descriptions of the subjects' experience designing and facilitating DEI training

programs for members of law enforcement. Within phenomenological research, this is commonly understood as the "essence" of the experience. The description was created by delving into the study's findings to illustrate how the analysis connected to the broader context of the study. The process required extensive research to distinguish between data that was either vital or secondary (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1988).

Cluster of Themes

The themes identified from the research data highlighted how adaptive leadership practices played a part in the experiences of DEI practitioners who work with law enforcement, particularly as it connects to reducing the racial disparity in policing against Black people. Table 2 located in Chapter 3 showcased how the interview instruments were created to align with the specific research question and sub questions. The participant interviews led to a data process that identified nine themes. Table 3 gives a summary of this correspondence among the themes, research question and sub questions. The nine themes are: (a) lived experiences with marginalization, (b) law enforcement background, (c) increase opportunities for leadership development, (d) navigating unforeseen challenges, (e) changes in practice, (f) listen to Black community members, (g) expand DEI training in academies, (h) increase financial support for DEI, and (i) participant feedback.

Table 4

Summary of Themes

Theme	Summary
Research Question	From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black people?
Lived Experience with Marginalization	Participants share identity with members of historically marginalized groups and provides connection to the DEI topics relevant to their work as practitioners.
Law Enforcement Background	Participants have experience as officers which provides insight into the skills and knowledge of policing.

Theme	Summary
Increase Opportunities for Leadership Development	Additional opportunities for all levels of staff to develop skills in leadership are essential to building capacity for law enforcement
Navigating Unforeseen Challenges	Participants demonstrate situations that required adaptive skills in handling complex problems.
Changes in Practice	Participants attempt major changes in policing practices to showcase how adaptive behaviors leads to positive outcomes.
Sub Question One	How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?
Listen to Black community members	Setting aside time and space for members of law enforcement to hear the needs and concerns of Black community members.
Sub Question Two	What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that interfere with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for adaptive work?
Expand DEI Training in Academies	Shifting DEI curriculum in recruit academies to include more historical knowledge on the intersection of race and policing in the United States.
Sub Question Three	What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge is improving or resolved?
Increased Financial Support for DEI	Showcasing support and belief in the work of DEI by allocating additional funding to DEI departments
Participant Feedback	Participants obtain insight from members of law enforcement that participate in DEI training or other initiatives.

Research Question: From the Perspective of DEI Consultants, How Does Adaptive Leadership Lead to Successfully Altering the Behaviors of Law Enforcement as it Relates to Reducing the Disparity in Policing of Black People? Five themes emerged in alignment with the study's main research question: (a) lived experiences with marginalization; (b) law enforcement background; (c) increase opportunities for leadership development; (d) navigating unforeseen challenges; and (e) changes in practice.

Theme One: Lived Experiences with Marginalization. All participants identified themselves as members of a historically marginalized group that is commonly associated with diversity initiatives. Their experiences navigating and witnessing discrimination, ostracizing, or feelings of "otherness" provided them with a connection to many of the DEI topics that are covered in workplace trainings. Each participant mentioned an experience in their personal or professional life that showcased their experience with marginalization. Theme one is illustrated by this excerpt from P1:

I was one of the statistics, if you will, that was navigating the space as a historically

underserved, marginalized, and underrepresented member of minority group, my

expertise was built in working in administrative investigations, working in criminal

investigations and seeing the impact that there was disproportionately on Black and

Brown communities versus White communities. My identity connected directly to the

work that I was doing.

This theme is also exhibited by a quote from P6:

I am a transman. So, a lot of my perspective is based on 54 years of being socialized as a

woman in law enforcement spaces and everywhere. And now navigating this space with

my identity is forcing me to develop a new perspective of this work and how I present

and experience the training that I do.

P2 also showcases theme one with the following quote:

I've worked in every field of the police department and have felt every marginalized

issue that I could have experienced in 26 years in law enforcement. Once I had a male

officer arrive to call that we were going to together. We get to the scene, and I'm hands

on with the suspect and the male officer pushes me to the side so that he can handle the

issue instead. As a woman in law enforcement this is unfortunately common. Despite the

education and experience we often get treated like we can't do the same things as the

male officers.

Theme Two: Law Enforcement Background. Eight of the participants had experience as

a police officer before engaging in their work as a DEI practitioner and believed it to be

important to their work. Their experiences working in field provided them with the skills and

knowledge of policing that inform their work as DEI practitioners. This theme is shown through

this quote from P9:

> Well, I would tell you that even in policing, there are some levels of receptivity with how
>
> things get done. I will tell you the navigation part of this, specifically talking about
>
> policing, is the fact that I've got a policing background. So, my ability to come in right
>
> away and be able to not only relate to, but to be able to understand and talk to you about
>
> how the structure works and doesn't work. So, the ability to be a quick study on what
>
> processes and things you're seeing and be able to communicate that from a not just from
>
> a policing perspective, but from an individual officer perspective because I was the one.
>
> So that allows me to bring a certain level of legitimacy to that conversation.

Theme two is also illustrated by this quote from P10:

> When I graduated high school, I finished in July and went straight to the academy in
>
> August. So, I've spent my entire career in policing. With the DEI [work], I feel like I've
>
> been a part of it since I've been in employment. I don't think you can miss it, especially if
>
> you're a person of color and being a woman. Also, where I currently work, I was kind of
>
> brought in because of some issues they were having when it comes to diversity, and you
>
> really need someone that has the police knowledge and diverse identity side to do this
>
> job.

> ***Theme Three: Increase Opportunities for leadership development.*** All the participants

identified experiences participating in leadership development training, whether sponsored by an

employer or through their own personal endeavors, including higher education programs. The

eight participants with a law enforcement background recalled their early access to leadership

training being afforded to them as the result of promotions that required supervisory duties. All

the participants revealed that members of law enforcement need additional opportunities to participate in leadership development training. Theme three is demonstrated by the following excerpt from P4:

> You have to provide intentional leadership training for your staff, especially command staff. You can't have one adaptive leader. You have to create a culture of adaptive leadership in each level of the organization. And that would first require some change management called coaching. It has to be a culture. They have to be taught. They have to be given examples. They've got to see it at work. Only then can that mindset translate to the Black community where you can use those decision-making tools and see people individually and as humans.

Theme three is also revealed in this passage from P5:

> They [officers] adapt to the behavior of their leader. And it becomes that subculture within the organization. You have the leader in the chief, but sometimes they're so far removed, that the behavior of the rank and file doesn't always reflect the top person. It's the people they interact with more. More of the behavior from middle management leadership. They reflect what they hear, and you see it on the streets in how they interact with communities of color. So, you need to expand the leadership training to more people so that the behavior you want becomes that subculture that I mentioned earlier. And it has to be the right type of training. I've seen some bad training that has done more harm than good.

Theme Four: Navigating Unforeseen Challenges. Seven of the participants revealed navigating unforeseen challenges as a tenet of practicing adaptive leadership in their DEI work with law enforcement. Four of them experienced situations that caused them to pivot to an

alternate course of action to meet their DEI goals. Three of the participants revealed that

practicing adaptive leadership and educating members of law enforcement on the principles has

supported officers with their decision-making amongst community members. P3 provides an

example of theme four in the following passages:

> Somebody that was promoted into a leadership position was essentially forced to meet
>
> with me because their role intersects with implementing new policies and procedures
>
> around managing our DEI program. Our executive leadership was already on board, but
>
> this new person told me that they held the view that DEI manager was completely
>
> inappropriate for the law enforcement profession, and it caught me off guard. He felt like
>
> the energy around putting this position in our state was completely inappropriate and was
>
> just a reaction in the wake of George Floyd.
>
> For me, navigating this meant getting into that productive range of tension where I can
>
> partner with him on ideas and shared values. The goal was to establish credibility to this
>
> role and the DEI work by showing we share the same religious beliefs and shared values,
>
> which was helpful to navigate that tension.

Theme four is also demonstrated in the following quote from P7:

> Practicing this [adaptive] form of leadership has helped in showing younger officers to
>
> start to critically think about a lot of the things they're saying and doing. It's been helpful
>
> in the field when they know how to course correct or adapt when they find themselves in
>
> situations that don't mirror the kind of DEI principles they've learned. They no longer
>
> just follow what they're told now they're being taught how change their thinking. I
>
> wanted these officers to question the status quo to question the culture of policing to do
>
> things differently.

Theme Five: Changes in Practice. Six of the participants cited changes in organizational practices as an example of how they model adaptive leadership in their DEI work with law enforcement. Each of the six participants referred to the change in practice as the result of a DEI initiative set forth by a law enforcement agency. Theme four is illustrated in this example from P8:

When we do our promotions and our hiring interviews, we now use panels of three people for every interview. Our colonel had one word injected into the policy and it was the word "diverse." So, he said that now every three-person panel will be a diverse panel. And it was like wildfire. I mean, just one word and you wouldn't believe like the kickback we got from it and honestly, it's hard to achieve in an agency with as little diversity that we have. But diversity also shows up in a lot of ways. Not just in race or gender or even age. So now we've made a change where we are allowing our civilian staff to be on all these promotional and hiring interviews, almost weighing the same as an enlisted member, but they must be above a certain rank.

Theme five is also demonstrated in this excerpt from P9:

We wanted to increase the number of Black recruits in the police department. And to do that, it required much more than just putting out ads or sending a recruiter to recruit. It actually took us to say we need to have to do a deeper dive to understand what was going on, which means that you would have to reach out and talk to those who might have applied and didn't follow through or those who applied and didn't make the process…all the way up to those who applied and were successful in getting in and then taking the next step to actually graduate from the academy. And so, we had to make that pivot in our practice as opposed to investing a lot of money in old school recruitment practices,

that we knew were not getting us the numbers that we needed, but the ability to be

successful to get folks all the way into as I say, butts in seats.

Theme five is also revealed in this quote from P1:

I was hired as a consultant with an accrediting body for law enforcement for a particular

state that trains recruits. The process of how DEI gets infused in the academy curriculum

and what it encompasses as it currently stands is terrible. And the point was to change the

way this was being done and creating a new practice of how DEI training happens for

recruits. From my understanding I was brought in to help facilitate a change that was

going to happen with recruit training, but I was met with such resistance.

Sub Question 1: How Do Members of Law Enforcement Invite Black People to Be

Part of the Solution in Reducing the Racial Disparity Present in Policing? The

corresponding theme for this sub question is *listen to community members*.

Theme Six: Listen To Black Community Members. All participants noted the

importance of law enforcement listening to the needs and concerns of Black community

members as a strategy for reducing the racial disparity present in policing. Each participant

spoke to bridging gaps and developing understanding of community members as a vital

component of this issue. P1 expressed this theme in the following quote:

People outside of the Black community needs to close their mouths and open their ears to

truly listen to community members. And it's not enough to just rely on Black officers

because law enforcement was built on white supremacist founding and still operating that

way today. So, law enforcement as a whole needs to invite Black leaders, members of the

clergy, etc. to the conversation and ask them what they would like to see from law

enforcement.

P3 shared insight into theme six via the following passage:

> Having a nuanced conversation around stereotypes and culture is important so that we're
> removing that judgment in law enforcement, especially when you see the same thing over
> and over, you start generalizing and making judgments about people which is unfair bias.
> So having those conversations has been a strategy internally, but there's opportunity and
> need to bridge gaps in the community through outreach and intentional community
> engagement to have those conversations with community members, to hopefully find
> common ground.

Theme six is also communicated in this excerpt from P4:

> One of the things we need to do us collect more data. We don't where we got the
> narratives about how Black and Brown communities think about and interact with police.
> Those narratives are far more nuanced than hashtags we see on social media. We need to
> one of the strategies to be real engagement with the community by having serious
> conversations to know what they want from us. We need more bridge building, and I
> don't mean to campaign or lobby for things. I mean intentional sit downs to hear their
> needs. And then we have to act on it.

Sub Question Two: What Are the Existing Gaps in Knowledge and Skills Related to DEI That Interfere with Establishing and Maintaining the Holding Environment for Adaptive Work? One theme addressed this sub question: expand DEI training in academies.

Theme Seven: Expand DEI Training in Academies. Seven of the participants suggested expanding DEI training for academy recruits as a strategy. Each of these participants expressed the need for a renewed DEI curriculum that went deeper into the historical context of

relationships between law enforcement and Black people. P7 communicated theme seven with the following passage:

> We [police] are the tool that was used to continue to oppress us to make us feel like we couldn't do anything. Look at Jim Crow and the Black Code. All of the stuff that is not taught in policing. If you go to the academy, you aren't hearing any of that stuff. Revamping the racial and identity profiling curriculum in the academies is necessary.

P6 also spoke to theme seven in the following quote:

> We need to teach people how to be allies, specifically teaching White people how to be allies. When it comes specifically to your question regarding Black folks, I don't think people know enough history about how we got to this place with police and the Black community. You need to be teaching these important historical concepts on day one of their police training. Some real anti-racist training is needed. Get in there early and don't stop after they graduate. Keep it going.

Theme seven is also demonstrated by the following excerpts from P5:

> Doing DEI training is dependent on the geographical location. There is no one blanket this work. In Illinois I can use the word DEI and they embrace it. If I use it in North Carolina, the idea of quotas comes to their head. So, the approach must be different. The message will be the same in the end. And the real truth is that we don't do DEI training enough. We don't train enough on the right things like cultural competency and understanding communities, like Black and Brown communities.
>
> And for me, I believe there's a gap in community policing. We've been doing community policing for years, but why hasn't it been as effective as it should be in certain places versus others? Because we left out that one critical piece which is the cultural training

that we need. People need to be aware of their cultural environment. And I think we need

to do it in the academies. If we do 40 hours on use of force training, then we need 40

hours in DEI because with it we get the cultural competency knowledge. Because the

communication training comes with that and is crucial to community policing.

Sub Question Three: What Are the Measures of Success That Determine When an

Adaptive Challenge Is Improving or Resolved? Two themes emerged that address this sub

question: increased financial support for DEI and participant feedback.

Theme Eight: Increased Financial Support for DEI. Seven of the participants identified

increased financial support for DEI initiatives as a measure of success in evaluating whether they

are meeting their DEI goals. Theme eight was demonstrated by P1 in the following excerpt:

They need to put these efforts, outreach and DEI based efforts into the operational

budget, not specialty or grant funding. It can't be that way because once the money is

gone, the urgency is gone. It needs to be properly resourced and properly structured.

People write a check on the things that they are impassioned about, and we don't see that

in DEI so what does that say? Putting money towards DEI resources shows we're making

progress with the work we're doing, but we've also got to find out what we should be

communicating. All of that requires more money than what we're currently allocating.

P4 illustrated theme eight in the following quote:

Many of us sit as a party of one in a department and you will not make headway with a

party of one. So, police departments need to really ask themselves if their budget for the

DEI office is enough to get the work done. What does the staffing look like?

Unequivocally for me the answer is no. We need more financial resources and the

staffing to carry out the work. To me, that shows a couple of things: that you care about

this work and that you see the value in the change that DEI departments are bringing on. Without more money we're just here checking off boxes.

Theme Nine: Participant Feedback. Nine of the participants cited feedback from members of law enforcement as a measure of success in their work. Each participant that contributed to this theme expressed the importance of gathering data on DEI initiatives to evaluate how to move forward with their DEI work. Theme nine is shown in the following narrative from P3:

We have a couple of trainings that we've built in surveys at the end to try to qualify and quantify the trainer and the curriculum. An area we're constantly trying to hone in on is if officers can see themselves using information they learned in this training in their role within the agency. After each training we look at the scores and the feedback to try to improve upon that number by tweaking our training to make it more effective so people can more easily align the learnings to their day-to-day job.

Theme nine is also demonstrated in this quote from P2:

The greatest tool that I have discovered and found beneficial in this work is feedback, whether word of mouth, an email, or a comment box. Having multiple streams of feedback from our officers and civilian staff is important because people have different ways of communicating. It's the same way when people have various ways of learning and retaining information. We utilize all those different ways so that we can get that feedback on our training or even our policies to determine if what we're putting into action is actually working.

P10 also spoke to theme nine in the following passage:

Working one-on-one and having conversations with people directly has been the most

useful way for me to get feedback on how our DEI work is going within our department.

Especially since I've seen our university use climate surveys in a way that assumed

everyone can participate in the same way, so I don't solely rely on that. When I see that

they're comfortable enough to ask me something then I know that I'm doing things the

right way. Because there have been many times when something's happened on the news,

or like when the George Floyd protests happened, officers that have done work with me

were pulling me to the side like can I ask you something? And they were getting my

perspective on views, asking questions, and even being willing to have conversations on

race issues that they probably never thought of before.

Summary

The findings associated with the data analysis of this study were shared utilizing the

method refined by Creswell and Poth (2018), which was modified by Moustakas (1994) and

Polkinghorne (1988). The evidence provided showcases how each participant demonstrated the

ways in which their lived experiences influenced their DEI work with law enforcement. The

researcher followed the procedures of bracketing to set aside preconceived notions and biases

before the data gathering and analysis processes. Ultimately, nine themes materialized from the

data analysis: (a) lived experiences with marginalization, (b) law enforcement background, (c)

increase opportunities for leadership development, (d) navigating unforeseen challenges, (e)

changes in practice, (f) listen to Black community members, (g) expand DEI training in

academies, (h) increase financial support for DEI, and (i) participant feedback. The fifth chapter

of this research study provides a discussion of key findings, conclusions and considerations for

future study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

This research investigated the experiences of DEI practitioners who work with law enforcement and how they used adaptive leadership to integrate these experiences in their work toward reducing the disproportionate rate of how Black people are killed by police. This final chapter starts with a look at the problem statement, study purpose, research question, and design. It progresses by providing a discussion of the results and connections to the study's research question and sub questions. To conclude this chapter, the investigator discusses implications and considerations regarding policy, practice and future research.

Study Problem

Law enforcement in the U.S. has received criticism regarding the treatment of Black people (Schlosser et al., 2015). The interaction between law enforcement and Black people has resulted in a racial disparity in policing that has made it three times more likely that they will be killed by members of law enforcement (G. L. Schwartz & Jahn, 2020). Efforts to address the past and ongoing treatment of Black people include policy and training reforms guided by principles of DEI. These efforts are often led by DEI practitioners. However, research has shown that DEI training focused on topics of racial injustice has resulted in limited change to address this racial disparity (Cox, 2023; Kulik et al., 2007). There is limited understanding about how the perceptions and experiences of DEI practitioners supports efforts to reduce the disparity that exists in the policing of Black people. As a result, there is a need and opportunity to examine DEI practitioners' experiences on how to design and facilitate DEI training for law enforcement. This study investigated how DEI practitioners incorporated their experiences into their work with law enforcement.

Purpose of the Study

The study's purpose was to examine the perceptions and experiences of U.S.-based DEI consultants and practitioners who have designed and facilitated DEI training for law enforcement. To give context to this study, the researcher presented significant literature across five topics: (a) evolution of U.S. policing and the impact on Black people, (b) evolution of DEI training in the workplace, (c) the historical and current landscape of police training, (d) practices in DEI training for law enforcement, and (e) training placement strategies. The investigator fulfilled the study's purpose by gathering and analyzing data from 10 participants.

Theoretical Framework

Heifetz's (1994) theory on adaptive leadership is an important aspect of this study and served as the guiding framework. Adaptive leadership provides a theoretical and practical approach for leaders to understand and address complex issues. Heifetz (1994, 2006) theorized that challenges are technical, adaptive, or both, and have distinctions in how they should be addressed. For challenges that are complex, Heifetz (1994; Heifetz et al., 2009) offered six behaviors as guidance for leaders looking to address adaptive problems. The six behaviors aligned with the adaptive leadership framework are: (a) get on the balcony, (b) identify the adaptive problem, (c) regulate distress, (d) maintain disciplined attention, (e) give the work to the people, and (f) protect leadership voices from below. The key findings and conclusions of this study deliver information that answers the research question and sub questions:

- RQ1: From the perspective of DEI consultants, how does adaptive leadership lead to successfully altering the behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black people?

     o   How do members of law enforcement invite Black people to be part of the

          solution in reducing the racial disparity present in policing?

     o   What are the existing gaps in knowledge and skills related to DEI that interfere

          with establishing and maintaining the holding environment for adaptive work?

     o   What are the measures of success that determine when an adaptive challenge is

          improving or resolved?

Study Design Overview

This qualitative research study was designed by using phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research aims to gather rich descriptions of an experience by examining it from the viewpoint of people that lived it (Neubauer et al., 2019). The study's purpose was to gather deep insights into the experiences of DEI practitioners that work with police. The phenomenological approach was determined to be an effective way to fulfill the study's purpose. Through interviews, the investigator was able to gather detailed knowledge of the experiences of the participants.

Discussion of Key Findings

By utilizing a phenomenological approach and conducting interviews with 10 participants, the researcher aimed to understand the ways DEI practitioners utilized the aspects of adaptive leadership behavior in their work with members of law enforcement. The analysis of the research data resulted in nine themes revealed in the findings of Chapter 4. The nine themes are: (a) lived experiences with marginalization, (b) law enforcement background, (c) increase opportunities for leadership development, (d) navigating unforeseen challenges, (e) changes in practice, (f) listen to Black community members, (g) expand DEI training in academies, (h)

increase financial support for DEI, and (i) participant feedback. This section provides a discussion of the findings in relation to Chapter 2's literature review.

Research Question: From the Perspective of DEI Consultants, How Does Adaptive Leadership Lead to Successfully Altering the Behaviors of law enforcement as it relates to reducing the disparity in policing of Black People? Five themes arose that address the research question: (a) lived experiences with marginalization, (b) law enforcement background, (c) increase opportunities for leadership development, (d) navigating unforeseen challenges, and (e) changes in practice.

Theme One: Lived Experiences with Marginalization. Organizations have employed strategies to increase the representation and practices of DEI work by hiring internal and external leaders to facilitate DEI initiatives (Iyer, 2022). Lingras et al. (2023) noted that practitioners seeking to lead initiatives within organizations must reflect the experience and values they seek to obtain from any program participant. This experience can surface in the form of cultural experience with the shared topic or shared connections with the training participants (Lindsey et al., 2019). The responsibility for DEI work in organizations has often fallen on members of marginalized groups to educate non-marginalized individuals (Madzima & MacIntosh, 2021); oftentimes these efforts are undertaken in addition to their full-time job duties (Miller, 2020). There are also instances where experiences with injustice have propelled professionals to seek out DEI roles to help shape equitable practices for organizations (Fields et al., 2022).

As identified in Chapter 4, all the research participants revealed experiences with marginalization due to race, ethnicity, or gender. Whether in their personal or professional lives, these experiences shaped how they view their work as DEI practitioners in law enforcement. Although experience with marginalization was not specifically mentioned in the literature, it is

often a motivating factor for individuals seeking to engage in social justice work, as exhibited by the participants' responses. For several participants, their direct experiences with marginalization while employed as police officers propelled them to seek out opportunities to work in DEI within law enforcement. Part of the work in developing and implementing practices in DEI relies on the practitioners' ability to communicate its importance effectively. Practitioners who possess the ability to ground communication with firsthand knowledge can provide valuable insight for those who lack a lived experience of marginalization.

Theme Two: Law Enforcement Background. Gebert et al. (2016) asserted that the success of DEI training programs is connected to the facilitator's capacity to connect with the training group. This includes the practitioner's ability to communicate with language that is familiar to the audience (Hayes et al., 2020). Law enforcement is a skilled profession with its own jargon, customs, and policies that are unique to this profession. As noted by Blumberg et al. (2019), police are accustomed to receiving training that directly correlates to the law enforcement profession and is generally performed by experts with experience in law enforcement. However, DEI practices and training are new aspects of police culture. Given these factors as a part of the culture of policing, DEI training is likely to be best received when infused with context that relates to the duties of law enforcement.

Eight of the study's participants have experience as a sworn police officer, upon which they draw in developing their strategies and practices for DEI training. Although DEI content can be developed and presented on a broad scale, its success and the audience's receptivity hinge on practitioners' ability to relate it directly to roles and responsibilities within the organization, which is knowledge that the eight participants possess given their law enforcement background. DEI training and policies are concepts meant to be molded and embedded into specific sectors.

This means that DEI content for law enforcement is best poised for success if it is designed carefully with situational examples that are specific to law enforcement. This can be a difficult task for practitioners who do not hold a background in policing. Two of the participants in this study do not have experience as police officers. However, while this study was conducted, those two participants were employed internally as employees of a law enforcement agency, which provides them with access to vital information regarding the duties, expectations, and culture of law enforcement. What they lack in experience as police officers is subsidized by their daily exposure to the work of law enforcement.

Theme Three: Increase Opportunities for Leadership Development. Traditional approaches to leadership that focus on hierarchical patterns are decreasing in popularity (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017; Billinger & Workiewicz, 2019). Law enforcement is one of the few fields that continues to utilize conventional leadership models that rely on one or a few decision-makers. As such, the leadership development of police officers is likely to be decided by a small number of people.

Although the literature review did not discuss works related to the state of leadership development opportunities for officers, it was a theme that emerged from each of the participants. Eight of the participants with law enforcement background revealed that they gained access to leadership training because of promotions that required them to hold supervisory duties. The FBI Leadership Academy was one such example that was mentioned by five participants. All participants noted a lack of opportunity or focus for leadership training across police rankings. They also revealed that they sought out their own additional training in leadership through means such as graduate degree programs or standalone leadership development programs that were not specific to law enforcement. Developing one's leadership

ability can be accomplished in several ways, as illustrated by the participants' experience. However, for those officers who are not on a promotion track, do not hold supervisory duties, or want to gain knowledge in the broader works of leadership development, opportunities are limited. An employee's ability to gain experience in leadership development should not be constrained to the position they hold within an organization. Law enforcement leaders will need to deviate from investing only in employees at the top of the organizational hierarchy who have authoritative roles. It is important to acknowledge the "unofficial" leaders that exist throughout the police department and allocate resources toward their development. It necessitates an alternate approach to police leadership development than what is typically practiced across the U.S.

 Theme Four: Navigating Unforeseen Challenges. The adaptive leadership framework is regarded as a practical tool that can support organizations and through which individuals develop agility and resiliency in difficult circumstances (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive work often requires leaders to challenge the status quo and enact changes that may be perceived as drastic but are vital. An adaptive leader's ability to recognize that all adaptive problems require differentiated approaches is crucial to how the framework is applied (Northouse, 2019). Distress and conflict are common occurrences in a workplace, yet the specific nature of the challenge is not always foreseeable for leaders (Vaheed, 2021). This requires leaders to develop skill sets that allow them to be effectively proactive and reactive when faced with the possibility of encountering a unique challenge.

 A leader's ability to navigate unforeseen challenges presented itself across much of the adaptive leadership literature presented in Chapter 2. Seven of the participants revealed this theme as a key component of how they view and understand adaptive leadership, especially in

their work with law enforcement. How leaders respond to uncertainty and surprising

circumstances is crucial to mission success. Change does not surprise an adaptive leader because

a true adaptive leader has established strategies and systems to respond to challenges. Whether

they are *regulating distress* by demonstrating the poise it takes to deal with frustration or *giving*

the work back to the people by establishing work groups, adaptive leaders use these practices as

a springboard for tailoring direct solutions that are relevant to the specific challenge. The current

landscape of DEI programs in policing is relatively new, as is the practice of adaptive leadership.

For DEI practitioners working in law enforcement, it is vital to establish change management

tactics that draw upon their experiences addressing complex problems while also seeking to

mitigate negative outcomes when new challenges emerge.

   Theme Five: Changes in Practice. When leaders have identified the adaptive problems

within their organization and assumed responsibility for leading the change process, they are

responsible for enacting relevant solutions to address the challenge (Siebel et al., 2023). These

actions can include delegating key aspects of the change process to other leaders within the

organization or hiring external parties with expertise germane to addressing the problem.

Implementing new or improved practices are critical to the work of DEI consultants and

practitioners. Olzmann (2020) noted that training is simply one component of DEI work for

organizations; establishing policies and protocols is foundational to DEI efforts.

   Six of the participants recalled instances where they attempted to implement a change in

organizational practice as an example of how they have performed adaptive work in law

enforcement. The practitioners who work internally as employees of a law enforcement agency

are also tasked with establishing and implementing policies and protocols that influence the

functions of the organization. For external practitioners, opportunities to influence organizational

practices vary because their tenure with the organization has limitations. Each of the participants who revealed this theme discussed the resistance they experienced while attempting to enact the respective change in practice. Conflict and resistance to change are commonplace in organizations because change causes disruption to previously recognized and accepted ways of operating. Sereni-Massinger and Wood (2016) revealed the significance of establishing a culture of learning in law enforcement. More importantly, how leaders respond to what they have learned can be a sign of progress in organizations. Many of the practices in law enforcement have been criticized as discriminatory; thus, it seems appropriate that DEI practitioners would look to enact changes in how the organization operates to properly address complex challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Sub Question 1: How Do Members of Law Enforcement Invite Black People to be Part of the Solution in Reducing the Racial Disparity Present in Policing? This section will discuss the following theme associated with this sub question: listen to Black community members.

*Theme Six: Listen to Black Community Members***.** The history between police and Black people in the U.S. has been well observed and reported. From the changes that occurred with slave patrols in the 19th century to today's statistics on racial disparity in policing, law enforcement has established a reputation as an entity that systematically practices disregard for the lives of Black people (Gillham & Marx, 2018; Grabiner, 2016). Notably, the demand for civil rights reform in the mid-20th century sparked a movement where Black people began to demand that their voices be heard and considered across many legislative issues at the local, state, and federal levels (Darden, 2013; Jeffries & Beckham, 2021). Today, the advancement of technology has shined a spotlight on the tensions that still exist during interactions between Black people

and police which has fueled the belief that law enforcement neither understands nor cares about the concerns of Black community members (Gillham & Marx, 2018; Morin et al., 2017; Walsh & O'Connor, 2019). As a result of these systemic practices, law enforcement has moved toward developing models of community policing aimed at establishing trust between Black people and law enforcement.

Participants offered their own thoughts regarding strategies that could positively impact the relationship between law enforcement and Black people. *Listen to Black community members* was a constant theme across responses. Participants spoke to their belief that the voices of marginalized groups should be included in conversations where solutions being presented affect those groups. This is a core tenet of inclusion work in the field of DEI, particularly in settings where marginalized groups are underrepresented—or in the case of law enforcement, negatively and disproportionately policed. Listening to Black community members regarding issues of race and policing is also an example of how adaptive leadership calls for relevant parties to be part of the solution. From the perspective of adaptive leadership, it touches upon the behavior of *protecting voices from below*, given the fact that Black people have historically not been afforded opportunities to be part of conversations to improve policing. Participants in this study revealed current practices in the field where community members are being included in conversations regarding policing. Some of these examples include community task force groups, participation in advisory boards and focus groups. To fulfill this strategy identified by the research participants, law enforcement agencies will need to be intentional in creating physical and psychological spaces where Black community members can be part of the solution in dismantling the negative practices in policing that target their community.

Sub Question 2: What Are the Existing Gaps in Knowledge and Skills Related to DEI That Interfere with Establishing and Maintaining the Holding Environment for Adaptive Work? This section will discuss the following theme associated with this sub question: expand DEI training in academies.

Theme Seven: Expand DEI Training in Academies. Police academies are central to the development and introductory training of police officers. Guided by state legislative requirements, each law enforcement agency determines length of their police academy. For instance, California's requirement for basic academies is a minimum of 664 hours of training certified by the state's accrediting agency, POST. Yet, according to POST, most certified academies surpass this requirement by 200 hours (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, n.d.). To shift the culture of how Black people are policed, research proposes a change in how new officers are educated (Cohen & Goodman 2023; Radebe, 2021). Reaves (2016) revealed that the average police officer in the U.S. spends less than 6 months in police academy training. Of that time, it is estimated that DEI-related topics such as race and community policing make up less than 5% of the total training hours (Blumberg et al., 2019).

When discussing gaps in skills and knowledge to DEI, seven participants spoke to the need for an expansion of the DEI curriculum in police academies. They revealed a concern with the nature of the curriculum, the brief amount of time dedicated to DEI for police recruits, and the overall amount of time that recruits spend in basic training. The development of soft skills like bias mitigation and improved communication, combined with the experience of learning the history of race and policing are not prioritized in today's police academies. Whereas police operations and tactical skills account for nearly half of the training hours. Although these are important aspects of developing police officers' skills, it signals to officers that these are the

most essential elements of their duties. Police officers interact with people daily and utilize communication skills in their interactions. Not every interaction requires an officer to utilize their tactical skills. Expanding DEI curriculum in police academies should include educating officers on the historical and cultural relations between groups that influence how people interact with each other today. It should also include strategies that provide officers with skills that allow them to mitigate bias during encounters with Black people and potentially other groups that have negative relationships with police. Increasing the required number of hours for DEI training in academies will provide new officers with more time to develop these crucial skills and showcase community relations as a prioritized element of their position as peace officers.

Sub Question Three: What Are the Measures of Success That Determine When an Adaptive Challenge Is Improving or Resolved? Two themes developed from the research that address the third sub question: increase financial support for DEI and participant feedback.

Theme Eight: Increase Financial Support for DEI. One of the difficulties that DEI initiatives face is measuring their impact on organizational performance. Although there is substantial evidence that DEI can promote innovation, employee morale, and consumer satisfaction, these outcomes are often difficult to quantify and credit specifically to DEI actions (George & Rattan, 2022). An exception to this idea can be found in practices related to the recruiting and hiring of diverse employees, where tangible results can be achieved quantitatively. Ayas et al. (2023) revealed that the lack of financial return associated with most DEI initiatives has been a catalyst for many of the organizations that have cut DEI positions in 2022 and 2023. Oftentimes organizational success is determined by financial gain. For organizations such as those in the public sector, connecting DEI to the core of their business model remains be a struggle.

Financial return is not a direct outcome of law enforcement's work as a public agency; therefore, they utilize different measurements to determine organizational success. These direct measures can include statistics such as crime rates or arrests. The budgets for police departments are awarded by local and state governments, in addition to specialized programs at the national level; the allocation of those funds is based on priorities identified by leadership. The data gathered from this study showed that seven participants equate the success of their DEI programs with monetary support. This theme of increased DEI support as a measurement of success was identified by both external and internal practitioners of this study. DEI practitioners' ability to hire staff and carry out operations is dependent upon the availability of funds dedicated toward DEI. Limiting funds for DEI signals to practitioners that law enforcement leaders do not value their work as a central component of the organization's operations. As with any new practice, organizations must commit both time and resources to determine if the change initiative has any impact on performance. If law enforcement leaders truly value DEI and believe it has a direct outcome on officers' performance, then it is vital to increase funds to support the work of DEI practitioners.

Theme Nine: Participant Feedback. Crans et al. (2022) identified feedback generation as a useful tool for organizations to develop awareness and understanding of employees' learning and performance. The ability to gain insight into an employees' perceptions and understanding of job requirements, perceptions on the leadership team, development opportunities, and department philosophy and values are important components of organizational success (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Participant surveys are one method of obtaining information regarding how employees feel about organizational policies and professional development opportunities (Errida

& Lofti, 2021). For law enforcement, gathering data on officer perceptions and experiences can affect the design of a DEI training program, as well as its implementation and evaluation.

Gathering data on DEI initiatives can provide practitioners with information regarding the successful elements of their work. It can also provide insight into what factors may need to be adjusted. Nine of the research participants identified feedback as a method that helps determine whether they have achieved success with their DEI priorities. Feedback can be sought in various ways and should be incorporated into any method of evaluation. Siloing feedback to one method limits law enforcement officers' ability to engage with practitioners in ways that may be more comfortable or more accessible. Offering members of law enforcement multiple opportunities to provide feedback into their agency's DEI practices is also a tangible way to illustrate how DEI can be accomplished in various ways. Furthermore, doing so invites them to be part of conversations around DEI that can foster communication and buy-in. Because DEI evaluation is not a monolith, practitioners will need to ensure that the methods of seeking feedback allow them to gather the appropriate insight to advance their work. Evaluation work is a specific skill set that requires significant investment in time and people. To effectively measure DEI training in accordance with other organizational goals, law enforcement leaders will have to give DEI practitioners the appropriate resources to determine the outcome of their work.

Conclusions

Inferences and conclusions drawn as a result of this research study cannot be applied generally to all DEI practitioners who work with law enforcement because the sample size was only limited to 10 individuals within the United States. However, this study confirms that the practice of adaptive leadership for DEI practitioners is valuable when developing DEI programming that seeks to support the reduction of the racial disparity in policing of Black

people. Two main conclusions can be highlighted from this study's findings; (a) adaptive leadership is a valuable framework for DEI practitioners to utilize when facing difficult challenges in their efforts to help dismantle institutional racism in policing, and (b) establishing an internal DEI department allows for more dedicated efforts toward eliminating racial disparity in the policing of Black people.

This study aimed to understand the role of adaptive leadership in aiding DEI practitioners in developing content that alters the behavior of law enforcement. The key themes that surfaced from the interview analysis addressed the role of adaptive leadership in the experiences of DEI practitioners. It also showcased that adaptive leadership is not a widely utilized leadership model in policing and oftentimes conflicts with the culture of leadership in policing. Nevertheless, the tenets of adaptive leadership showcase how DEI practitioners and other law enforcement leaders can carry out behaviors that can lead to successful outcomes, even with a complex challenge like racial disparity in policing.

As described in the first chapter, the investigator held assumptions while that led to the formation of the research questions and study design. However, the researcher also held informal thoughts about the study that were discovered to be an important element of the study. The informal assumption was that most of the practitioners developing DEI content for law enforcement would be external consultants temporarily contracted to work with law enforcement. However, this study encompassed a substantial number of DEI practitioners were internal employees of a law enforcement agency, which greatly influenced their ability to develop more robust DEI efforts for their law enforcement agency. DEI training is only one method of intervention aimed at addressing institutional racism in policing. There are policies and practices within DEI work that practitioners can facilitate within law enforcement agencies

that are immensely important to this study's problem. However, these policies and practices can only be spearheaded by a DEI practitioner who has the time and resources necessary for implementation. This study affirms that allocating funding toward the development of an internal DEI team is an important step in addressing the institutional racism in policing that has disproportionately affected Black people. Several of the participants who have held internal DEI positions within law enforcement revealed challenges in performing their work due to limited staffing and funding to carry out their training programs and initiatives. Investing financial resources into DEI programs demonstrates organizational priority to officers and indicates to marginalized groups that the historical and ongoing treatment of their groups needs to be addressed.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The research findings are significant for five reasons. It adds to the body of knowledge regarding DEI training programs in law enforcement by:

1. Providing law enforcement leaders with an understanding of the resources that are needed to carry out DEI programs,

2. Allowing human resource leaders within law enforcement agencies to gather meaningful insights into the best practices associated with hiring DEI practitioners and embedding DEI frameworks into the hiring and retention processes,

3. Amplifying the voices of DEI practitioners to advocate for investment in the work they do and providing insights into the field for other DEI practitioners who aspire to work with law enforcement,

4. Providing lawmakers with insights into the current situation regarding DEI efforts for law enforcement and the role policy plays in prioritizing DEI training for police, and

5. Reaffirming the need to tackle the racial disparity that exists in the policing of Black people.

This research explored the experiences of DEI practitioners who work with law enforcement and the role adaptive leadership plays in their work to address the problem of racial disparity in policing. The institutional racism that exists in policing is the result of human interaction that was fueled by years of prejudice and discrimination. Given that police officers have historically learned how to police through these means, the lived experiences of practitioners who are experts in teaching practices rooted in DEI would have an effect on how they carry out their duties. The findings of this research cannot create consistency with DEI training across all law enforcement agencies. Each entity faces unique circumstances such as demographic makeup, state mandates, and resource availability that clarifies why DEI is not a monolithic framework. However, the findings can support police in reflecting on the status of their relationships with marginalized communities and whether they have attributed the necessary resources to be responsive to those community stakeholders. The findings can also support DEI practitioners as they look to develop new practices for their DEI programming.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon this study's findings and conclusions, the researcher is recommending three considerations for further studies. A comparative case study may be conducted to investigate the long-term impact on community interactions of police officers who have participated in DEI training in police academies and through continuing education opportunities. Exploring the outcome of DEI training on police work in relation to metrics such as official complaints or through a community assessment survey could provide insight into how DEI training translates into police work. This could be accomplished by examining two law enforcement agencies

situated within demographically similar communities that have higher rates of racial and ethnic minority groups.

It is also recommended to conduct a study to assess the impact of DEI training programs across agencies in relation to organizational budget size. This can be done by studying the percentage of a budget that is dedicated to DEI work to determine whether the financial investment into DEI translates into improved outcomes that can be measured by police officers and community members. It is also advised that a study be performed to analyze the impact of DEI training in relation to other marginalized groups. The disparity that exists for Black people will differ for other racial or ethnic minority groups; therefore, is important to understand the data for other groups to establish a fuller picture of how important DEI is regarding bringing equity and justice to policing. The significance of such a study will also help DEI practitioners develop practices and training content that is inclusive of different demographics.

It is also suggested that additional research be conducted on the impact of policing of Black people in the United Kingdon and the potential role of DEI to shift policing dynamics of Black people. Given the UK's participation in the slave trade and the historical similarities it shares with the United States, research could unveil vital information for the policing practices of Black people in the UK. Finally, it is proposed that researchers investigate the experiences of DEI practitioners who work in law enforcement agencies in comparison to practitioners who work externally as consultants. Although this was a relevant aspect of this dissertation's findings, the study was not designed with that focus. To gain more detailed insight into this aspect of DEI practitioners' experiences, a separate study should be performed.

Summary

This study offered insight into the experiences of DEI practitioners that work with members of law enforcement and the role adaptive leadership in how they develop programming to address racial disparity in the policing of Black people. The participants revealed their experiences with the phenomenon, disclosing the ways they incorporated their positionality and experience into developing DEI practices meant to address equity and inclusion in policing. These practitioners supplied examples of conflict they have navigated, strategies to overcome those challenges, and recommendations for how law enforcement can improve. The insights provided will be beneficial for stakeholders who want to see DEI prioritized in law enforcement.

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APPENDIX A

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Reply above this line.

MaryAnn Price commented:

Dear LaShawn,

Thank you for your response. I am pleased to report we can grant your request without a fee as part of your thesis or dissertation.

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If you have any questions, or if we may be of further assistance, please let us know.

Kind Regards,

Mary Ann Price (*she/her*)
Senior Rights Coordinator

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APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Notice

eProtocol
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: October 18, 2023

Protocol Investigator Name: Lashawn Taylor

Protocol #: 22-09-1942

Project Title: A Study of the Lived Experiences of DEI Consultants that Work with Law Enforcement

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Lashawn Taylor:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research