Keep Calm and Carry On
An International Comparison of Stress in Law Enforcement

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Abstract

This paper will present the results of a comprehensive review of the literature and cross-cultural comparison of law enforcement-related stress in the United States and United Kingdom. In the formation of this comparison, we will obtain a better understanding of law enforcement exposure to stress and its effects. By comparing the stress experienced by law enforcement in these seemingly similar countries, we conceptualize the potential causes of these similarities and differences. More specifically the organization/structure of law enforcement, support networks, community conditions, the police subculture, training, and culture of these countries will be analyzed. This analysis will show that while United States officers appear more likely to exhibit negative effects of stress as a result of avoidant coping strategies, officers in the United Kingdom are more likely to report feeling stressed but can cope more easily because of the use of problem-focused coping strategies. We attribute this dissimilarity to cultural differences between the United States and the United Kingdom. A systematic comparison serves to inform our policy recommendations related to stress response and preventative strategies for law enforcement. We recommend that both countries need to empower their officers through more effective training methods to build their resiliency to stress. However, the United States also needs to adopt programs to help law enforcement officers manage the negative effects that come from their avoidant coping mechanisms, while the United Kingdom should focus on the emotional aspects of coping for their law enforcement officers.
Introduction

When a crime is being committed, citizens rely on their country’s law enforcement officers (LEOs) step in to right these wrongs. However, LEOs are only human and their physical and psychological health is often significantly impacted, which can subsequently hinder their job performance. Considering the magnitude of responsibility held by LEOs, it is crucial that officers are psychologically and physically healthy, as well as committed to upholding the responsibilities of their profession. Numerous studies confirm that stress is positively correlated with negative health factors such as: body mass index levels, diastolic blood pressure, and waist circumference, all of which are associated with cardiovascular disease (Wright, Leiker & Hoekstra, 2011). Not only is stress associated with negative health factors, but it also leads to lower levels of job satisfaction and commitment (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). Because the association between stress and these negative effects have been well-founded, studying stress as it affects law enforcement officers is crucial to maintaining the officers’ well-being and performance of their duties.

Many studies have attempted to pinpoint various causes, effects and levels of stress in law enforcement officers, both in the United States and abroad, but little research has been done that utilizes cross-cultural comparisons to create a more comprehensive picture of stress experienced by law enforcement officers. Given the impracticality of reviewing all of the research conducted on law enforcement officers in every country, this paper will focus on research done on this topic in the United States and the United Kingdom, as these countries arguably have the most available literature on the subject. An important additional component of this analysis is an examination of the existing cultural differences between the two countries when measuring sources of stress and determining solutions. Although the U.K. and the U.S.
may, on the surface, seem similar in terms of socioeconomics, norms, and customs, in reality, the U.K. and the U.S. vary substantially in terms of goals, ambitions, procedures and organizational structures, especially when it comes to law enforcement agencies. Studies that have espoused causes of LEO stress and coping strategies by applying research done on a different country’s population to their own (e.g. Gershon, Barocas, Canton, Li, & Vlahov, 2009; Woody, 2005; Lating & Bono, 2008; Miller, 2008) do not acknowledge cultural differences between those countries. Additionally studies that assume that there was one larger “police subculture” without looking at the overall cultural differences (e.g. Conser, 1980; Woody, 2005; Miller & Rayner, 2012; Emsley, 1996; Easton, 2012) ignore the importance of a LEO’s social environment. By not acknowledging the cultural background of those LEOs, these studies overlook policies that could lessen the burden of stress on LEOs. By comparing the levels and effects of stress on law enforcement in these countries, an analysis of the potential causes of those differences and similarities can be used to propose better stress response and preventative strategies for law enforcement agencies to utilize.

It is first necessary to review the variability in how stress is measured. One approach is self-report instruments, such as the police stress questionnaire (PSQ; McCreary & Thompson, 2006), the perceived stress scale (PSS; Spielberger, Westberry, Grier, & Greenfield, 1979), the occupational stress indicator (OSI; Cooper, Sloan & Williams, 1988), and a shortened stress evaluation tool (ASSET; Cartwright & Cooper, 2002). Using this type of assessment approach, it is possible to determine how much LEOs believe that stress affects them, and it may be the only direct way to measure perceived stress. However, self-report measures risk having low validity because participants may not answer honestly, or may not realize or admit to their level of stress. A second way to measure stress is by measuring its effects, such as burnout rates,
health problems, suicide rates, and job-satisfaction (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). This type of measurement can be seen as a more objective way to measure stress than self-reports: however, the links between stress and these effects are not always causal or very strong. This means that, in some cases, it may be possible for police officers to experience serious health problems or low job-satisfaction which would not be attributed to stress.

Before a comparison between LEO stress in the U.S. and the U.K. can be done, the question of whether or not LEOs experience significantly more stress than the average person should be examined first. Although numerous commentators assert that policing is one of the most highly stressful jobs or that LEOs experience the most occupational stress worldwide (e.g., Levenson, O’Hara & Clark, 2010; McCreary & Thompson, 2006; Arter, 2008), proving that claim is a much harder endeavor.

**United States Research**

In the United States, research about LEOs and stress is boundless; the very nature of their work as it relates to stress has made LEOs a well-researched group. Occupational stress as a whole has been linked to depression, heart disease, stomach disorders, alcohol and drug use and abuse, divorce, and even suicide attempts (Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006). There is a plethora of research that suggests that LEOs experience greater stress and negative physiological and psychological health, as well as harmful or deviant behaviors, as a result of that stress. Gershon, Lin and Li (2002) and Violanti (2009) claimed that evidence points to LEOs leading shorter and sicker lives than the general population. Toch (2002) found that LEOs experience higher mortality rates and higher rates of coronary diseases than the general population. LEOs also often experience more psychological problems, such as depression, PTSD, and anxiety disorders, compared to the general population, as a result of their perceived stress (Gershon,
Baroca, Canton et al., 2009; Levenson, O’Hara & Clark 2010, Toch 2002). Gershon and colleagues (2009) found that, in self-report measures burnout of LEOs was also associated with perceived work stress. Furthermore, police stress has also been associated with acts of deviancy and other maladaptive behaviors such as problem-drinking, aggressiveness, and violence (Gershon et al., 2009; Toch, 2002; Arter, 2007). Additional evidence that U.S. LEOs experience more stress than the general population can be gleaned from analyzing suicide rates. From 1985-1994, the suicide rate of New York LEOs was four times that of the general population (Hem, Berg, & Ekeberg, 2001). However, some commentators would assert that LEOs having a high suicide rate is a common misconception, citing that these figures do not accurately utilize demographically comparable groups (Gershon et al., 2009). Notably, most empirical evidence supporting the claim that LEOs experience increased stress does not come from directly measuring the levels of stress in LEOs and the general population and then comparing them.

Recently, a few U.S. studies have found that the perceived stress of LEOs and non-LEOs was not significantly different. One such study was done by Franke, Ramey and Shelley (2002), who were hoping to determine whether LEOs experienced a higher cardiovascular disease (CVD) morbidity rate than the general population and whether, in the LEO group only, perceived stress was a significant contributor to the prevalence of CVD or CVD risk factors. Franke and colleagues (2002) measured perceived stress of LEOs (males only) and males with similar backgrounds and demographics from the general public using the PSS, and found that LEOs had a score on the PSS “which was very similar to that of a randomly sampled cohort of 949 American males” (p.1187). Furthermore, being a LEO was not associated with an increased risk of CVD and the prevalence of CVD did not differ between the LEOs and the general population. Recently, Wright, Barbosa-Leiker and Hoekstra (2011) completed a similar study.
and found analogous results. Although it appears indisputable that being a LEO in the U.S. is stressful, when obtaining a direct comparison of perceived stress between LEOs and the general population LEOs may not feel more stress as previously assumed.

Despite the strength of the evidence in Franke and colleagues’ (2002) and Wright and colleagues’ (2011) studies, there is some controversy surrounding these results. For one thing, the PSS may not be an accurate measure of stress for LEOs (McCreary & Thompson, 2006; Wright et al., 2011). The PSS does not take into account stress caused by work-family or work-community conflicts (McCreary & Thompson, 2006), which some believe to be a main causal factor in LEO stress (Franke et al., 2002). Furthermore, both Franke and colleagues (2002) and Wright and colleagues (2011) only measured Caucasian males in one concentrated area (the Midwest), which limits the generalizability of their studies. It should also be noted that both Franke and others (2002) and Wright and others (2011) did find that LEOs were at an elevated threat for certain cardiovascular risk factors such as: hypertension, BMI, and hypercholesterolemia and found an association between perceived stress and the prevalence of these factors in LEOs. At this time, the author is unaware of any quantitative data that directly compares perceived stress between LEOs and the general population to support the hypothesis that LEOs experience significantly more stress than the general population in the U.S.: however, more quantitative research on this subject needs to be done using a better measure of perceived stress, such as ASSET.

**United Kingdom Research**

The question of whether or not LEOs experience more stress than the general population has a different answer in the U.K. One U.K. study (Juniper, White & Bellamy, 2010) compared the frequency of experienced work-related well-being (WRWB) issues to LEOs and their civilian
counterparts in those policing agencies (i.e. civilian staff members and community support officers). They found that all members of police agencies experienced some stress related to the following WRWB issues: advancement, home-work interface, specific aspects of working in a policing agency (labeled as JOB), organizational, physical health, psychological health, work relationships, workload, and facilities. However, LEOs’ well-being was significantly more impaired than their civilian counterparts. Compared to civilians working in policing agencies, LEOs were more likely to experience problems with all but two dimensions of WRWB issues: organizational and work relationships. Although this study’s findings may not necessarily be generalizable to all police populations yet, it does take into account specific factors, such as advancement opportunities and home-work interface, that other stress scales, like the PSS, ignore (Juniper, White & Bellamy, 2010). Another U.K. study by Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright and colleagues (2005) indicates that the LEO occupation is one of the most stressful occupations in the U.K. This study compared the perceived stress levels of employees in 26 different occupations utilizing the ASSET stress questionnaire. ASSET “was developed as a screening tool for all occupations and assesses stressors ranging from work-life balance to overload, control, and work relationships” (McCreary & Thompson, 2006, p.495). Based on the study result, Johnson and colleagues (2005) classified law enforcement as one of the top six most stressful occupations, due to LEOs’ levels of psychological and physical well-being, as well as level of job-satisfaction. LEOs were found to have the third highest rate of job dissatisfaction. These U.K. studies contradict the U.S. studies’ findings that LEOs do not experience significantly more stress than the general population when stress is directly measured and compared (Franke et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2011). This contradiction may, in part, be attributed to inaccurate evaluation approaches utilized by the U.S. studies.
Not surprisingly, U.K. officers experience some of the same negative effects of stress that U.S. LEOs experience. According to the Occupational Disease Intelligence Network (ODIN), LEOs are among the top three occupations most reported by occupational physicians and psychiatrists as experiencing mental illness, and 26% of medical retirement is a result of ill psychological health (Collins & Gibbs, 2003). Collins and Gibbs (2003) proposed that, in the last ten years, stress-related mental health in LEOs may have almost “doubled to a level of 47%” (p. 261). Similarly, 13% of U.K. LEOs reported experiencing symptoms of PTSD such as: anxiety, insomnia, and alcohol abuse. Rates of PTSD are also projected to be four to six times higher in LEOs than the general population (Green, 2003). The physical health of LEOs in the U.K. has also been negative: like the U.S. studies done by Franke and colleagues (2002) and Wright and colleagues (2011), U.K. officers were found to have a higher incidence of CVD risk factors than the general population. Despite having no pre-existing history with heart disease, LEOs were more likely to have higher blood pressure, cholesterol, as well as an increased use of alcohol and smoking (Joseph et al., 2010). One interesting discrepancy, however, is that LEOs have not been more likely to commit suicide; in 1982-1996 policing was actually listed among occupations with the lowest suicide mortality ratio in England and Wales (Hem, Berg, & Ekeberg, 2001). The argument can be made that the low suicide mortality ratio of LEOs to the general population was not due to a lack of stress experienced by LEOs, but to the relatively high proportion of all men committing suicide in the UK up until 2006 (Suicide, 2006 April 13). Unlike the U.S. studies that show LEOs as more likely to engage in negative social or deviant behaviors like aggressiveness, violence, or rule-breaking, there is no evidence that U.K. LEOs engage in those behaviors more than the general population. When combining the evidence of the increased incidence of negative health effects commonly associated with stress experienced by LEOs with
the direct reports of higher stress levels, the U.K. research indicates that U.K. LEOs experience more stress than the general population.

**Cross-Cultural Comparison**

What does this data suggest of the overall relationship between LEOs and stress? Despite the more inconclusive research available in the U.S., an argument could be made that the U.K. research could be extrapolated to infer that U.S. LEOs experience significantly more stress than the general population. However, the discrepancies in the LEO experience of stress in the U.S. and the U.K., as well as the types of effects exhibited by LEOs, could be caused by cultural differences in terms of reaction to stress, coping with stress, and reporting stress, as well as the ineffective assessment measures, as discussed above. Thus, before utilizing the U.K. research to infer that U.S. LEOs also experience more stress than the GP, the potential cultural differences need to be examined. If there appears to be significant cultural differences between LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K., than the U.K. research *cannot* infer that U.S. LEOs experience more stress than the GP; however, if there does not appear to be significant cultural differences than the U.K research *can* be utilized to infer that U.S. LEOs experience more stress than the GP.

When comparing the effects of stress of LEOs in these two countries and their self-reports of stress, U.S. officers appear more likely to exhibit the effects of stress, whereas the U.K. officers are more likely to report feeling stressed than to overtly exhibit the effects. This difference may be attributable to a variety of explanations including: 1) U.K. and U.S. LEOs have different sources of stress which causes them to vary in their reactions; 2) U.S. LEOs are less adept at effectively dealing with the stress they feel; or 3) cultural differences between the U.S. and the U.K. However, these seemingly distinct explanations could also overlap or be in a cyclical relationship with one another. For example, the LEOs’ interactions with the community
or the community’s conditions impact the amount of support LEOs receive, and the police subculture, in many ways, impacts the relationship LEOs have with their communities.

**Sources of Stress for Law Enforcement Officers**

The stress experienced by LEOs has been attributed to many of the same sources in both nations: occupational stressors, organizational stressors, and the negative aspects of the police subculture. Before discussing the impact these various stressors have on LEOs, we first need to clarify the categorization of them. The conceptual framework of these stressors aims to further clarify the nature of the sources of stress for LEOs and was compiled from previous examples and lists made in recent articles (Ayers & Flanagan, 1990; Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006; Gershon et al., 2009; Brown, Cooper, Kirkcaldy, 1996; Violanti, 2011; Collins & Gibbs, 2010). Organizational stressors include aspects such as: lack of advancement opportunities, negative interactions with coworkers, status within the department, lack of support from superiors, a militaristic or bureaucratic structure, work overload, lack of participation in decision-making, inflexible rules, shift work, lack of manpower, long hours, insufficient consultation, lack of communication or feedback within the department, unfair discipline, role conflict or ambiguity, meeting deadlines, and amount of paperwork (e.g. Ayers & Flanagan, 1990; Brown, Cooper, Kirkcaldy, 1996; Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006; Violanti, 2011). Occupational stressors would consist of how: crime rates, the size/type of community (large, small, urban, rural, etc), threats of terrorism, exposure to traumatic incidents, physical danger as a result of actions by community members and day-to-day interactions with community members (as victims, perpetrators, and witnesses) cause stress for LEOs. Negative aspects of the police subculture that cause LEOs additional stress include: the machismo nature of the police subculture which gives rise to harassment of coworkers, discrimination within the police departments, the token status of
some law enforcement officers, home-work issues and denial of support networks, and the denial of emotional or mental ill-health; role conflicts; and the “us versus them mentality” (Morash, Haarr, Kwak, 2006; Gershon, 2009; Violanti, 2011).

**Occupational Stressors**

Now that we have created our conceptual framework of stressors we can begin to look at the impact that each type has on LEOs. Occupational stressors have consistently been identified as the main cause of police stress. It is common sense that LEO stress comes from the unique aspects of their job such as: facing off with the lawbreakers and criminal offenders of the community, being in constant fear of harm or death, and dealing with grisly crime scenes (Miller, 2009). U.S. studies have found that LEOs reported a variety of critical incidents as emotionally distressing and traumatic (Perez, Jones, Englert & Sachau, 2010; Gershon et al., 2009). For example, LEOs who were involved in the investigation of internet child pornography reported experiencing substantial rates of burnout and were at risk for Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder; specifically, 46% of those LEOs indicated that “viewing the images was the most difficult thing about their work” (Perez et al., 2010, p. 210). Furthermore, Gershon and colleagues (2009) found that 66.4% of LEOs reported experiencing a “high emotional affect” from attending a police funeral (p. 280). Similarly, some UK studies also found that interactions with the community lead to higher stress levels in LEOs. When looking at levels of police stress, Johnson and colleagues (2005) noted that senior LEOs reported lower stress scores and higher rates of job satisfaction than did their junior counterparts. Johnson and others explained this inconsistency by looking at the different types of work senior and junior LEOs were assigned. Senior LEOs spent “less time ‘on the beat’ and more time working behind the scenes than did other officers” (p.185). This would mean that senior LEOs had less face-time with the
community and potentially dangerous situations.

It is interesting to note that, in a UK study comparing levels of stress in LEOs in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, officers from England and Wales reported “the highest scores in response to job stressors” (Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996, p.38). Furthermore, LEOs from Northern Ireland were found to have the highest physical well-being, despite the certainty that LEOs from Northern Ireland will become injured or attacked in the line of duty as a result of terrorism. Nearly 300 LEOs in Northern Ireland had been killed in the line of duty as a result of terrorism from 1969-1996. Brown and colleagues (1996) explained this quandary by highlighting the notion of the certainty of injury or danger as being less stressful than the uncertainty of it. If someone is sure that danger lies hidden behind the door, that person can mentally or physically prepare themselves to be on guard against it; whereas, someone who is unsure or unaware where danger is hidden and is taken by surprise will be less able to make the necessary mental/physical preparations.

Another explanation that has been set forth is that officers from England and Wales experience the greatest amount of media criticism over their conduct and investigations. Similarly, U.S. studies found that the public holds many negative stereotypes of LEOs because of the media since the mid-sixties (Horn, 2002; Miller, 2009). Regardless of whether this type of negative media attention is deserved these reports “undermine the support of the public toward the men and women who put their lives on the line every day for America” (Horn, 2002, p. 314). This aspect of occupational stressors does seem to have a deep impact on the stress experienced by LEOs. In the UK, theorists have contended that, in general, stress is linked to “discursive constructions of identity and value” (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007, p. 37). This means that we may become stressed when facing confrontations of our identity and when we feel less-valued.
When applying this theory to the media criticism LEOs face, it is apparent that LEOs may feel that their identity as “heroes” is being questioned when the media portrays them in a negative light and also feel that their efforts and sacrifices are not being valued (Horn, 2002; Miller, 2009; Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996). The relation between LEOs and their community affects LEO stress. Although LEOs may be trained to handle certain aspects of their positions, like the threat of violence and witnessing despicable acts of violence, they do not have adequate training on how to cultivate a better relationship with their community (White, 2006). With this argument, we can see that community conditions are not as likely to affect LEOs if they are adequately trained or prepared to deal with those situations.

**Organizational Stressors**

Although the common perception that LEO stress should be most attributed to community conditions is true to some extent, the bulk of the evidence suggests that community conditions are not the largest source of LEO stress. Gershon and others (2009) found that less than 20% of officers reported critical incidents like responding to a bloody crime scene and being involved in a hostage situation as causing a “high emotional affect,” despite being frequently exposed to this type of incident (p. 280). Furthermore, community conditions like crime rates and poverty do not appear to have strong predictive value in explaining stress, according to self-reports of stress of LEOs (Morash, Haarr & Kwak, 2006). Total violent victimizations have been decreasing in the U.S. since 2005 and in the U.K. since 1995; so, if there was strong predictive value between crime rates and poverty and LEO stress, than LEO stress would have been declining as well, but evidence does not support this claim (Chaplin, Flately & Smith, 2011; Truman, 2011). Interestingly enough, a high property crime rate was found to be related to low levels of stress by Morash, Haarr and Kwak (2006). This could be
Because crime rate is not a primary stressor for police, or because LEOs “self-select into police work because they have the capacity to cope with violence and disorder” (p. 37). Part of this explanation may also lie in the fact that, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999), U.S. LEOs spend only ten percent of patrol activity on criminal-related matters (Birzer, 1999). Because only a small portion of LEOs’ time is spent dealing with crime and criminals, it may not affect LEO stress much. It is undoubtedly true that community conditions do cause stress in LEOs; however, LEOs themselves report that it is organizational stressors, not community conditions, which cause them the most stress.

Research on LEO stress has consistently found that organizational stressors affect LEOs most in both the U.S. and the U.K. When compared to the other various types of stressors (i.e. critical incidents, crime rates, lack of support, etc) U.S. studies found that organizational stressors were most strongly associated with perceived police stress (Gershon et al., 2009; Morash, Haarr & Kwak, 2006). One important U.K. study by Collins and Gibbs (2010) found that organizational stressors were perceived as more stressful as a whole by U.K. LEOs over “occupational stressors,” such as exposure to critical incidents, negative interactions with the community, and encountering physical aggression in the line of duty (p. 5).

The credibility of these empirical studies is also bolstered by research done specifically on organizational stressors. Violanti (2011) explained that organizational stressors are particularly harmful because LEOs perceive them as “oppressive and beyond their control” (p. 32). LEOs feel like the long hours they work, massive amounts of paperwork they complete, and the lack of resources they receive is forced onto them by their superiors, the administrators who are not out on the front lines with them suffering like they suffer. Furthermore, LEOs feel powerless to change how they are treated within the department because of their lack of status.
This lack of communication between LEOs and their superiors gives rise to role conflict or role ambiguity. Many LEOs feel frustrated that the administration sets rules or standards that are ambiguous or that conflict with LEO duties or their own perception of themselves (Ayers & Flanagan, 1990). This is another application of Blaug, Kenyon and Lekhis’ (2007) theory of “discursive constructions of identity and value,” which creates stress for LEOs (p. 37). What follows from this ambiguity or conflict is discipline of LEOs at the hands of the administration for not following the rules. LEOs perceive this as a lack of support, especially when the administration’s management philosophy is autocratic, militaristic or negative and who focus on negative actions of LEOs rather than positive ones. This increases feelings of suspicion towards supervisors and decreased performance (Violanti, 2011; Ayers & Flanagan, 1990).

Police Training

This ambiguity between what the police administration wants and what the LEOs themselves feel prepared to handle, stems from the curriculum in police academy training. As discussed previously, LEOs spend only a small portion of their time in criminal-related matters; however, the U.S. LEO “training curricula are designed almost exclusively to teach officers what they will be doing a small percentage of their on-duty time” (Birzer, 1999, p. 17). Meadows (1987) complained that “criminal justice educators and police administrators do not agree on the value of time needed for training” (p. 8). The gap between what criminal justice educators were teaching recruits and what police administrators expected from the newly hired recruits may, in part, explain why LEOs, especially rookie officers, feel organizational stress stemming from role conflict.
Another contradictory message stems from policing initiatives. U.S. police agencies have currently been trying to implement a community policing initiative, a system of policing which creates police-community partnerships, a problem-solving approach, and organizational decentralization (Somerville, 2008). Although community policing instruction increased slightly from 2002-2006, the training methodology is still authoritarian or oriented toward a stress-based military model (Reaves, 2009). Stress-based military model of academies includes intensive physical demands, public discipline, value inculcations, and obedience (Birzer, 1999; Reaves, 2009). Similar probationary training programs have been adopted in the U.K., despite also utilizing community policing (English & English, 2003; Somerville, 2008). Currently, the structured “lecture” approach of police training “does not encourage effective learning or support the community policing mission” (Birzer, 1999, p. 18). Shifting the focus of training from mastery and obedience to problem-solving and empowerment would show that community policing is more than just a “fragmented, management fad” (p. 397). White (2006) found that, in the U.K., the verbal behavior of criminal justice educators “‘pays ‘lip service’ to their espoused principles,” and their nonverbal behaviour sends a contradictory message to their recruits (p. 397). This study proposed that this contradiction creates a distrust or ambivalence in the police organization which, as discussed before, leads to organizational stress.

**Police Subculture**

As is evident, organizational factors are the highest reported stressor; however, its negative effects are only exacerbated by the negative aspects of the police subculture which are built within the organizational system. Studies in both the U.S. and the U.K. acknowledge the existence of a larger police subculture that consists of machismo behavior, an “us versus them” mentality, authoritarian values, toughness, honor, cynicism, and camaraderie (Conser, 1980;
Officers who do not fit into the standards of this police subculture faced being mocked, bullied, and isolated by their coworkers (Miller & Rayner, 2012; Woody, 2005; Conser, 1985). The adoption of these cultural values “is essential to being accepted, retaining employment, and achieving advancement in law enforcement” (Woody, 2005, p. 526).

LEOs feel pressured to adopt these values even at the expense of their own health, for many of these values create extra stressors for LEOs. For example, the machismo nature of the police subculture gives rise to harassment or discrimination of coworkers that do not fit the norm and discourages the utilization of support networks (Conser, 1980; Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006; Ortega et al., 2006; Miller & Rayner, 2012). In addition, cynicism leads to the adoption of ineffective coping strategies (Ortega et al., 2006; Kirkcaldy, Cooper, Eysenck & Brown, 1994), and the authoritarian values lead to LEOs feeling powerless within the police organization (Violanti, 2011; Conser, 1980; Emsley, 1996). Furthermore, by adopting the police culture in its entirety, LEOs risk becoming isolated within their community. The “us versus them” mentality and the camaraderie within the police organization may lead to increased support within the organization, but it also causes mutual hostility, suspicion and distrust between LEOs and their community (Conser, 1980; Emsley, 1996). Although some aspects of the police subculture have proved to promote healthy attitudes, such as the value of honor promoting honesty, protection and defense of the weak (Woody, 2005), many will have to change before LEOs can adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Despite the apparent existence of a larger police subculture, there is evidence that there is also some variation. Emsley (1996) pointed out that there is a softer side to the English police culture, namely “the avuncular, caring, George Dixon image” (p. 222). He stresses the
differences of the “English Bobby” from other European and North American policemen, insisting that past police memoirs, newspapers, and research suggested that English LEOs were more approachable, less aggressive, non-military and non-political; however, Emsley (1996) cautioned readers to have a hint of skepticism toward this description. If this variance between the two police subcultures is true, it could explain why U.K. LEOs do not exhibit as many negative effects of stress (i.e. deviance, alcohol and drug abuse, and violence). Unfortunately, little to no research exists comparing the two police subcultures because most research just assumes of the existence of a larger police subculture (e.g. Conser, 1980; Woody, 2005; Miller & Rayner, 2012; Emsley, 1996; Easton, 2012). Thus, before conclusions can be drawn as to the effect that the police subculture has on LEO stress, more qualitative and quantitative studies comparing the two police subcultures need to be completed.

From the research, it seems clear that the main source of stress for LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K. stems from organizational stressors. Alternative sources of stress can likely be ruled out as an explanation for the apparent variations in U.K. and U.S. LEO’s experience of stress. However, this difference is most attributed to the different coping strategies of the countries and the overall differences in culture between the U.S. and the U.K., which impact differences in the police subculture.

**Coping Strategies**

Different aspects of stress management fall under the umbrella category of coping strategies, including resiliency and coping behavior. Resiliency factors include “traits, characteristics, and circumstances that make some people more resistant to traumatic stress effects” (Miller, 2008, p. 111). Coping behaviors are strategies that aim to effectively deal with stressors and the feelings that emerge from those stressors. The lack or ineffectiveness of these
strategies leads to poor stress management for LEOs and causes the negative psychological, behavioral and physical effects of stress discussed earlier.

In both the U.S. and the U.K., research has found a strong association between resiliency and work stress or strain (Gershon et al., 2009; Horn, 2002; Beehr, Johnson, & Nieva, 1995). Resiliency factors include, but are not limited to: good cognitive skills, intelligence, an internal locus of control, easy temperament, interpersonal skills, hardiness, a sense of coherence, optimism, a willingness to seek help, a learning attitude, and a sense of optimism (Miller, 2008; Alexander & Walker, 1994; Maddi and Kobasa, 1984). It seems intuitive that LEOs who inherently possess these traits are better equipped to manage stress that comes from organizational stressors and community condition stressors; however, the traits that LEOs possess that benefit their job performance can also make them vulnerable to stress.

Some research indicates that U.S. LEOs tend to have similar personality traits (Lefkowitz, 1975; Fenster et al., 1977) and have been found to be obsessive compulsive, controlling, risk-takers, highly dedicated, possessing a need to be needed and a high need for stimulation (Horn, 2002). Similar personality characteristics have been reported in LEOs in the U.K. Gudjonsson and Adlam (1983) found that probationary constables and more experienced officers were more reserved, controlled and exhibited fewer empathetic responses. According to Kirkcaldy, Cooper, and colleagues (1994), senior officers displayed similar Type-A personality behaviors characterized by competitiveness and a drive for recognition and achievement. LEOs who reported more Type-A personality characteristics also reported experiencing poor psychological and physical health (Kirkcaldy, Cooper, et al., 1994; Collins and Gibbs, 2003). Ortega and others (2006) found that LEOs who scored high on Neuroticism personality traits were more aware of sources of stress. Although the existence of a “shared personality” may not
be conclusively unique to LEOs, the research suggests that LEOs do share similar traits and that some of these traits are linked with inadequate resilience. Further research is needed that compares police personality types in the U.S. and the U.K. This would not only help determine whether there is an underlying police personality, but could also inform efforts to identify areas of vulnerability in LEOs’ level of resilience, as both U.S. and U.K. police agencies currently lack strategies to build resilience in LEOs.

One of the first (and only) strategies implemented by police agencies to ensure that LEOs could cope with stress before being confronted with a stressor was to create more stringent selection and evaluation guidelines for LEOs. These selection guidelines would hypothetically discriminate non-resilient and psychologically unhealthy candidates from the “good” ones. Psychological evaluations of police applicants began in the U.S. in 1967 (Benner, 1986), with the purpose of selecting out those who are emotionally unstable or endanger other officers, bystanders, or suspects (Miller, 2009). Currently, police candidates in the U.S. and the U.K. must pass multiple psychological, physical and medical evaluations before being sworn in as a police officer (Ref 363.22; Wellbrock, 2000). Although psychological evaluations of potential LEOs typically screen out candidates that are not a good fit for police work and could potentially harm themselves or others, they do not offer solutions to candidates who would be good LEOs, but need to build resilience.

A variety of coping strategies are utilized by people to help themselves continue functioning in their daily lives. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguished between two general categories of coping: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused strategies of coping involve resolving or confronting the stressors; emotion-focused strategies involve regulating the feelings that emerge from the stressors (Alexander & Walker, 1994).
In one UK study, Evans and colleagues (1993) looked at the coping strategies utilized by LEOs in Scotland and found that the majority of them used problem-focused strategies. Problem-focused strategies were found to be helpful in reducing symptoms of depression and distress during stressful conditions, although it has also been argued that problem-focused strategies are not helpful for long-term coping (Alexander & Walker, 1994; Miller 2009). Evans and colleagues (1993) had also found that, along with problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies, avoidance techniques were also reported to be highly used among LEOs in Scotland. Examples of avoidant coping techniques include ego-defense mechanisms like denial, displacement, and withdrawal. LEOs may use more problem-focused or avoidance strategies for coping over emotion-focused because they do not have the skills for emotional regulation or because the police subculture discourages them from doing so (Woody, 2005; Miller & Rayner, 2012; Conser, 1980). U.S. LEOs overall are more likely to utilize avoidant coping strategies, such as alcohol abuse (Levenson, O’Hara, & Clark, 2010). A recent U.S. study by Gershon and others (2009) distinguished between four different types of coping strategies: cognitive, faith-based, avoidance and negative behavior. This study found that there was a strong association between avoidant and negative coping behaviors with high perceived stress and cognitive problem-solving with low perceived stress, although there was no association between faith-based coping and stress.

Another type of coping strategy for LEOs is support networks. Officers in the U.S. and the U.K. who were able to cope with stress caused by experiencing a critical incident reported that talking with peers was very helpful (Honing and Roland, 1998; Regel, 2007; Miller, 2008). However, as previously discussed, the police subculture’s value of machismo and the “us versus them” mentality discourages LEOs from talking through their problems with an
outsider and creates feelings of distrust and hostility toward LEOs (Ortega et al., 2006; Emsley, 1996; Conser, 1980). This lack of support within the community has been found to increase the stress experienced by LEOs. According to Ortega and others (2006), the characteristics of the police organization makes it difficult to balance work and relationships outside of policing. LEOs explain that the nature of their work compels them to keep their emotions hidden, either because they think it will help them cope, to “save face” and seem in-control, or to protect their loved ones from the ugliness they see at work (Morash et al., 2006; Alexander & Walker, 1993; Juniper, White & Bellamy, 2010; Levenson et al., 2010; Miller, 2008). Research has expounded on how a lack of support networks contributes to LEO stress (Morash et al., 2006; Lester, D. 1982; Brown, Cooper, & Kirckaldy, 1996; Juniper, White & Bellamy, 2010): however, very little research exists on how often LEOs utilize support networks to cope with stress.

Although it is important to keep in mind that the U.K. studies were published over 10 years before the U.S. studies, and that both U.S. and U.K. LEOs reported an underutilization of emotion-focused strategies, U.S. LEOs appear to use avoidant coping strategies more than U.K. LEOs. This conclusion is bolstered by the previous discussion on the cross-cultural differences of the experience of stress in LEOs from the U.S. and the U.K. U.S. and U.K. officers both experience more stress than the general public, but U.S. LEOs exhibit the effects of stress (i.e. deviant behaviors such as: alcoholism, suicide, and aggressiveness) more than U.K. LEOs. Many of the common avoidant coping strategies include: alcohol or drug abuse and increased conflict with others (Gershon et al., 2009; Levenson, O’Hara, & Clark, 2010; Alexander & Walker, 1994; Arter, 2007; Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1994). Although it cannot be said that U.K. LEOs effectively cope with the stress they feel and cannot make improvements, they do seem to be able to cope with their stress in a more positive or internal way than U.S. LEOs.
The Role of Culture in LEO Stress

To complete this cross-cultural comparison on LEOs experience of stress in the U.S. and the U.K., a final examination of the overall cultural differences between these two countries and how that factors into LEO stress will be discussed. To examine the cultural differences in British and American perspectives on economics, politics, religions, societies, foreign policies, environment, histories, and governments of the two countries is beyond the scope of this paper and would be fruitless, as previous research has shown that certain community conditions like crime rates, types of communities, issues of token status and economics of the communities do not affect LEO stress (Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006; Collins & Gibbs, 2010). However, there are some aspects of culture that would seem to have an effect on LEOs perception of stress and how they cope with it: the laws and norms regarding alcohol consumption, the politics of policing, aspects of history that affected the values of LEOs, and the subculture of violence in the U.S.

Cultural Views on Alcohol Consumption

The earlier discussion on LEOs’ experience of stress in the U.S. and the U.K. revealed that LEOs in the U.S. are more likely to abuse alcohol than U.K. LEOs. There is a significant lack of research on U.K. LEOs consumption of alcohol, whether this gap exists because researchers utilize U.S. studies on the subject to inform them or because U.K. LEOs do not have a problem with alcohol abuse is unclear. One U.K. study analyzed this topic (Green, 2004) and found that one of the symptoms of PTSD is an increased use of alcohol; however, when comparing LEOs with PTSD and civilians with PTSD, more civilians increased their consumption of alcohol than LEOs with PTSD. Emsley (1996) described drinking and gambling as a prominent feature of the U.K. police culture in the 19th century, but also mentioned that
LEOs were “disciplined for both activities” (p. 174). This could mean that, although alcohol and pub culture is a feature of the U.K. LEO’s life, it does not have the negative features that would cause it to be categorized as alcohol abuse. However, in the U.S., 20% of LEOs were found to have *abused* alcohol and that the alcohol use of LEOs was double that of the general population (Lindsay, 2008). In the general picture of alcohol consumption, about 15% of U.S. adults report binge drinking (Excessive, 2011); whereas, in the U.K., 35% of men and 28% of women reported binge drinking in 2010 (Health, 2012). Comparing these statistics is a little skewed, however, because of the different definitions of binge drinking in these countries. This difference could account for the higher numbers of men and women reporting binge drinking in the U.K. From this evidence, we can hypothesize that the cultural views on alcohol consumption in the U.K. discourages alcohol abuse more than the U.S.

Compared to the rest of Europe, alcohol is controlled more strictly in the U.K., but drunkenness is more accepted (Easton, 2012). However, compared to the older drinking age in the U.S. (21 years of age in the U.S. versus 18 years of age in the U.K.) and the stricter ordinances of public drunkenness in the U.S., the U.K. seems lax on its’ views on alcohol. In North America, “alcohol is imbued with a malevolent power to lead people to sin” and anthropologists have found a link between people’s behavior and their belief that alcohol contains a “diabolical force” (Easton, 2012, p. 12). Consequently, U.S. LEOs may abuse alcohol more than their U.K. counterparts because the U.S. views alcohol as a form of escapism; similarly, U.S. LEOs may behave more negatively after the consumption of alcohol because their culture suggests that alcohol is taboo because it causes deviancy within the individual (Easton, 2012).
Politics of Policing

Politics, as they relate to policing is also examined, because politics dictate the bureaucracy of police organizations, which has clear connections with creating stress for LEOs. The specific policy issues of gun control and closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) will also be discussed because they are unique policies of the U.S. and the U.K., respectively that heavily influence how LEOs execute their duties. Throughout the years, police agencies across the globe adopt different policing methods depending on the political climate of the time. Compared to other Western countries, the U.S. has a high crime rate and has the highest percentage of its population behind bars (Mauk and Oakland, 2009) When the perception that crime in the United States was out of control, police organizations adopted a “tough on crime” approach that advocated longer sentencing for criminals and three strikes laws. Comparable policies were later enacted in the U.K. because of similar perceptions of crime by the public: however, the U.K. policies were not as far-reaching in terms of extent as the U.S. policies (Black, 2004). Because the policies were similar in both countries, the effects on LEOs were similar as well. The “tough on crime” approach to policing emboldened the police subculture’s “us versus them” mentality and created more hostility between the LEOs and the general public. Furthermore, both countries switched to a community policing approach which, as discussed earlier, created apprehension, confusion, and stress in LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K (Birzer, 1999; White, 2006).

Gun Control

The public panic stemming from the perception of skyrocketing crime rates in the U.S. and the U.K. encouraged the adoption of extra measure of protection for citizens of these countries. In the U.S., this meant precariously balancing gun control laws with the rights of citizens to bear arms for protection. The reaction to guns in the U.S. is mixed; some Americans
believe that the accessibility of guns leads to events like the Columbine High School shootings; others believe that guns are vital for the protection of themselves and their families. Some researchers believe there is a link between the accessibility of guns and violence, although this hypothesis is highly debated (Duncan & Goddard, 2005). In the U.K., guns are rarely owned by citizens and even LEOs only carry guns on specific occasions. Holding and shooting a gun can feel empowering for LEOs and make them feel more in control: however, LEOs never know if a routine traffic stop will become a life or death situation because a gun is involved. Despite the added danger that guns pose to LEOs, evidence shows that there is only a small link between LEO stress and the increased risks inherent in carrying a gun (Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006).

**Closed-Circuit Televisions**

In the U.K. the increased perception of high crime rates meant an increased installation of closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs), or security cameras. CCTVs were installed as a situational crime prevention measure. In rational choice theories of crime, crimes are committed when people find that risk of detection is low and criminal opportunities are high (Farrington, Gill, Waples & Argomaniz, 2007). In theory, CCTV may reduce crime by deterring potential offenders because they encourage more people to use the area, which make offenders think they have an increased risk of being caught. CCTV also facilitates effective deployment of LEOs (Gill & Spriggs, 2005). The U.K. presently has more security cameras than any other European country, with 4.2 million public CCTV cameras (Farrington, et al., 2007). Not only does this mean that U.K. citizens are being watched, but LEOs are as well. Some LEOs are now anxious about being under constant supervision and about their every action being scrutinized (Goold, 2003). LEOs worry that the CCTVs will be used to persecute other LEOs, which clashes with the police subculture values of solidarity and camaraderie. These different policies of policing create
additional sources of stress for LEOs that are unique to these countries.

**Historical Reactions to Stress**

The simultaneous rising of the U.S. and the decline of the U.K. as a major global power, along with the impact of the two world wars and the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks will be discussed, as those aspects of history have created specific values in each country which affect how LEOs cope with stress. The 19th and 20th centuries were witness to the vast empire of the U.K. and then its decline as a global power, leaving the U.S. to rise and take its place. The two world wars had destroyed the industry, economy and empire of the U.K.; on the other hand the U.S. was able to capitalize on the wars because of its geographical seclusion, resources, and luck. The Great War, or WWI, decimated the British population, killing almost 1 million of its soldiers and civilians, and the United States only lost a little over 100,000 soldiers and civilians. In World War II the Blitzkrieg, which was the continual bombing of London by the Germans for two months, flattened London and destroyed any homes or factories in the area. Despite the continuous bombing day-in and day-out the Britons stayed in London and kept working in those factories for the war effort and would even have dance parties in the middle of the raids. Across Britain food was rationed and homes were destroyed, and yet the British kept working. The Queen of England and the Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not leave their stations in London either; they just went underground like the rest of the population (Clarke, 1996). The popular slogan “Keep Calm and Carry On” was born out of this era in British history. Panicking was no use to the British people, they just had to adapt to the awful situation and they did. Going from being the greatest empire in all of Western Europe to having absolutely nothing, changed the culture of the U.K. The people learned how to cope with stress in a way that allowed them to continue functioning. The U.S. has not had these same experiences as a nation. During
the past three centuries the overall picture of U.S. prosperity has been positive, showing growth
and recovery even during tough economic times like the Depression. Even though the U.S. had
events like Pearl Harbor and September 11th, they were short-term evils that America was able to
recover from quickly in all but the emotional sense. U.K. LEOs have embedded in them that
“Keep Calm and Carry On” mentality, the mentality of coping with stress through problem-
solving methods of coping, which the U.S. LEOs do not have because of differing historical
experiences.

Subculture of Violence in the United States

It would be remiss not to mention the “subculture of violence” that permeates U.S.
culture and how that affects LEO stress, which was first described by Wolfgang and Ferracuti
(1967). They surmised that the theme of violence creates a certain type of life-style, socialization
process, interaction/relationships between individuals within that subculture. It is theorized that
the subculture of violence first appeared in the South during the time of the Civil War. In the
South, a man’s honor was the most valuable possession he had and, if someone impeded on
his honor, it was his right to violently oppose that person to maintain or regain his honor. The
subculture of violence theory was also used to provide an explanation for the high crime rates in
African American communities in the U.S. (Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). The cruel treatment
of the African American slaves at the hands of their White captors inculcated into the African
American community that violence is power and only through violence can one maintain control.
U.S. LEOs would be no exception to being socialized into this subculture of violence, and it
would not be a stretch to hypothesize that U.S. LEOs act aggressively toward others in and out of
uniform to maintain control of their lives as a way to manage stress.

Discussion
This cross-cultural comparison of the relevant literature on LEO stress was intended to create a comprehensive picture of the different facets of a LEO’s experience of stress in the U.S. and the U.K. This examination has shown that the U.K. research on law enforcement stress cannot be used to bolster the credibility of the research in the U.S. and vice versa. Differences exist between the U.S. and U.K. law enforcement officers’ experience of stress. Specifically, U.S. officers are less likely to report feeling stressed and more likely to exhibit the effects of stress (i.e. deviant behaviors, alcohol or drug abuse, aggressiveness, norm violations, etc), whereas U.K. officers are more likely to report feelings of stress than to exhibit the effects. The findings of this report suggest that these differences are attributable to different coping strategies utilized by LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K. In the U.K., LEOs are more likely to adopt problem-focused coping strategies than LEOs in the U.S. and are less likely to adopt avoidant coping strategies. Even in the similarities between police subcultures, police culture in the U.K. portrays a softer side of LEOs over the police culture in the U.S. Furthermore, the differences within the cultures of these two groups of LEOs create different values, ideals, and ways of living that effect how LEOs perceive and handle stress. On the other hand, there are many similarities between LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K.: both groups reported organizational stressors as more troublesome sources of stress than occupational stressors, both groups are presumed to have a specific “police personality”, and both groups have similar values in their subcultures. However, by applying the research on U.S. or U.K. LEOs to all LEOs without making sure the results are generalizable across police populations in different cultures, researchers neglect the impact that the social environment has on LEOs. By ignoring this vital component, the various components related to stress that are the result of the social environment will not be addressed, and the problem of LEO stress cannot be solved.
Research Recommendations

Although research studies on LEO stress are not few in number, there are certain gaps in the research that have been mentioned throughout this analysis. First, a quantitative comparison of LEO and general public stress in the U.S. using ASSET should be completed. Not only would using ASSET to measure stress encompass more stressors than the PSS, such as work-life balance, overload, control and peer relationships, but ASSET was also utilized in the U.K. comparisons between LEO and the general public. By using ASSET in the U.S., the results can be more easily compared to the U.K. results. Secondly, the lack of research on LEOs’ consumption of alcohol and their use of violence in the U.K. should be remedied because, as it stands now, it is unclear whether the lack of research comes from a lack of occurrence. Thirdly, studies comparing the values, norms, hierarchy and structure of the police subcultures in the U.S. and the U.K. should be done to determine whether a larger police subculture exists. It would be even more fruitful to compare European police subcultures as well. Finally, research on how often LEOs utilize support networks in both the U.K. and the U.S. would be helpful in identifying whether there is a lack of support networks for LEOs to use or if the networks available are ineffective. The lack of research in these areas of LEO stress would go a long way in the identification, prevention, and resolution of LEO stress.

Policy Recommendations

Problems with the training, policies, subculture organization, and coping strategies of LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K. have been discussed throughout this paper. In this section, suggested procedures for police agencies in the U.S. and the U.K. will be offered in an attempt to improve LEOs’ experience of stress. As discussed previously, the training curricula of LEO training in both the U.S. and the U.K. has been deteriorating the morale of LEOs. The classroom
lecture-based and militaristic structure of teaching has lead to LEOs becoming more authoritarian, which contradicts the curriculum that espouses self-sufficiency. The training of LEOs in the U.S. and the U.K. should encourage empowerment and confidence over authoritarianism. One way to do this is to emphasize learning rather than teaching. A hands-on method of learning through interactive exercises that allows recruits to participate in learning and teachers to quickly correct misguided recruits not only creates self-sufficient and confident LEOs, but also helps them retain knowledge. In the U.S. the disjunction between what recruits are being taught and what their supervisors want them to know (Meadows, 1987) creates stress for the LEO. Increased collaboration between those responsible for the higher education of recruits and those responsible for supervising the LEOs needs to occur to solve this educational problem (Meadows, 1987). Problems with the police subculture have long been believed to be reduced by increasing the educational qualification of police candidates in the U.S. (Conser, 1980); so, in order to reduce the impact of the negative aspects of police subculture in the U.S., part of the training curriculum of LEOs could be to take a sociology, psychology, or some other humanities course. Furthermore, LEO training in both countries could involve building resiliency before LEOs confront stressful situations. As of now, U.K. and U.S. police agencies have no documented means of building resilience in LEOs. Teaching recruits about the effects of organizational stress and critical incidents, as well as problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies of coping would increase LEO resilience.

To further help LEOs cope with stress, especially in the U.S., strategies helping LEOs deal with stress after confronting it are needed as well. The U.S. should think about adding programs to help LEOs deal with the negative effects that come from their avoidant coping mechanisms, programs like: AA for LEOs, Anger Management Workshops, and the Badge of
Life (a program to help prevent LEO suicide; Levenson, O’Hara, & Clark, 2010). Seeing as LEOs in the U.K. are already using problem-solving methods of coping, resilience-building programs should focus on the emotional treatment of LEOs. Also, providing workshops on explaining officer rights and protocol in relation to CCTVs could also be an easy way to reduce LEO stress in the U.K.

**Limitations**

Some important limitations of this research should be noted. The aforementioned gaps in the research need to be filled before this comprehensive picture is finally complete. Furthermore, the conclusions of this study are only secondary, given that the information is pulled from outside sources. This means that the limitations or problems in the research reviewed creates problems with the conclusions of this research, even when accounting for those limitations. Finally, the policy recommendations above are only theories and have not been methodologically tested. Pilot programs of these theories are recommended before full implementation.

**Conclusion**

A vast amount of research exists on LEOs and their experience of stress: however, this does not mean that a complete picture of LEOs and stress exists. As this analysis has discovered, there are multiple gaps in current research that needs to be filled before stress as it affects LEOs can be understood. Furthermore, the usefulness of an international comparison of stress in law enforcement is great; not only does it help conceptualize limitations in research, but it also creates a better understanding of LEO stress in their respective countries. From this new information policies and programs that would help LEOs can be developed.

**References**


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