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Changing the Guards: Expanding Cultural Diversity Training in Correctional Officer Basic Training

Herman Ayers

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CHANGING OF THE GUARDS: EXPANDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRAINING IN CORRECTIONAL OFFICER BASIC TRAINING

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The College of Humanities and Social Sciences
School of Conflict Management, Peacebuilding, & Development
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Abstract

This research examined the effectiveness of cultural diversity training in state basic correctional officer training programs. In recent years, the demographics of the U.S. prison population has become much more culturally diverse. This shift is noted by recent academic literature from scholars who have experience working in correctional settings. The growing diversity of the inmate population puts a new emphasis on the importance of cultural diversity in correctional officer basic training programs. This exploratory study uses original data collected from a survey of correctional officers and a sample of state correctional officer basic training programs in a cross-sectional design to investigate if the level of cultural training offered is meeting the needs of correctional officers. Findings from this data suggest that there is a disparity in basic training programs between use of force topics and topics related to cultural diversity. Also, responses indicate that cultural diversity and communication skills are utilized more frequently than use of force training. Moreover, officers indicate that they believed more cultural training should be included in correctional officer basic training programs. Findings from this research could inform policymakers in reviewing current basic correctional officer training programs such that training programs meet the needs of correctional officers and the changing inmate population.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. Their unwavering support and prayers allowed me to reach my goals. Philippians 4:13.
Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the men and women working in the prison system. Their hard and stressful work often times goes unnoticed and unrewarded outside of the prison confines. A special thanks to the officers that participated in the survey for this research. The data gathered from the survey will be of continued use and help me formulate future research that will include the often overlooked opinions, thoughts, and insight of COs.

Acknowledgements are also due to the directors of training and research at the Georgia, Alabama, and Wyoming department of corrections. They were brave enough to allow me to conduct my research through their departments. The data collected and findings was in no way meant to shed a negative light on the departments, but rather offer a small assessment that could possibly help inform the future evolutions of BCOT.

I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues. They offered a great sounding board as I worked through the dissertation process. Each of them told me stories of their time working on their dissertation, which helped me persevere. Special thanks to Dr. Vanessa Griffin. Her knowledge and mentorship on formatting saved me a substantial amount of time.

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List of Abbreviations

AL          Alabama
AR          Arkansas
BCOT        Basic Correctional Officer Training
BJS         Bureau of Justice and Statistics
BOP         Bureau of Prisons
CADORE      Cadet Orientation
CO          Correctional Officer
COMDEV      Communication Device
CONSER      Contraband Search
CPR         Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation
CRDT        Control Restraint Defensive Tactics
CULCOM      Cultural Communications
CULDIV      Cultural Diversity
DEFTAC      Defensive Tactics
DESTRN      De-escalation Training
DOC         Department of Corrections
DR          Disciplinary Report
DT          Defensive Tactics
DV          Dependent Variable
EFINC       Effects of Incarceration
FTO         Field Training Officer
GA          Georgia
GDC         Georgia Department of Corrections
GRADPRO     Graduation Procedure
H1          Hypothesis One
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Cultural diversity training is becoming more commonplace in the United States and around the world for law enforcement and security personnel, large businesses, and education in an effort to reduce conflicts that arise based on cultural insensitivity. One area of interest that has not been explored to date is in correctional facilities, where conflict is embedded in the culture itself. Some efforts to train officers are present, but the extent to which they are seen as sufficient or useful by those being trained is unknown. To fill this gap in the literature, Correctional Officers’ (CO) perceptions of their cultural based training during the academy program is evaluated. This dissertation will gatherer data from two sources. First, the number of hours spent on training topics will be collected from a sample of basic correctional officer training syllabi. Second, a survey will be distributed to officers working in state correctional facilities. The data collected from this survey will focus on officers’ perceptions of how cultural elements of their basic training program and how it impacts their ability to identify prison conflicts that are culturally based. Gathering data from CO’s training programs and asking officers for their insight on cultural training is a logical progression for research in the area of conflict resolution in correctional facilities, an underrepresented area in the literature.

Inspiration for this research comes from personal experiences working in the prison system as a correctional officer. Several times during this researcher’s decade long career, conflicts arose between inmates and COs. Similar situations would arise within the prison population between prisoners. Many of these conflicts had cultural undertones. Differences in the participant’s cultural backgrounds and their lack of cross-cultural communication skills seemed
to play a role in the origin of the conflicts and their escalation. For example, during this researcher’s experience working as shift sergeant, or officer in charge (OIC), a standard operating procedure (SOP) mandated that the OIC supervise floor officers while conducting searches of inmates’ living quarters. During a search of a Muslim inmate’s locker, an officer removed the inmate’s Quran and placed the text on the inmate’s bed. The inmate stated that placing the Quran in a place that is deemed disrespectful, such as a bed or a seat, is a violation of Quranic protocol. The officer had no knowledge of Islam nor the religion’s practices. This lack of cultural understanding created a conflict between the officer and inmate that lasted until the inmate’s eventual parole. In another example, a situation occurred when a new inmate was transferred to the prison and spoke very little English. The inmate’s file indicated that he was from Cuba and had been in the US for only a short time before his arrest. The only Spanish-speaking officer in the prison was also from Cuba. This officer served as the prison translator for Spanish speaking inmates. When the new inmate and the translation officer met, both men seemed to recognize each other. Immediately the two men began to speak to each other in raised voices. The officer began walking toward the inmate with clenched fists. It was at this point the officer was restrained and the inmate placed in segregation. It was later revealed that the inmate was a ranking member of the communist party in Cuba. Also, the officer explained to prison staff that the party to which the inmate belonged was to blame for the suffering of the officer’s family members.

These are only two situations, from experience, in which the conflicts that occurred had strong cultural undertones. As the demographics of correctional officers and the inmate population changes, culturally driven conflicts are more likely to occur. From a policy standpoint, one might expect that training should be expanded to include skills in managing a
changing prison population. However, during Georgia’s five week long Basic Correctional Officer Training (BCOT), the percent of time spent on cultural communication and diversity represents a small percentage of the training time. Georgia’s Department of Corrections BCOT includes 240 credit hours of training. The majority of this time is spent on skills than include hands on manipulation of inmates including defensive tactics, firearms certification, and less lethal weapons training. The portion of this training that focuses on cultural diversity and communication totals only approximately 4% of training time. If training can help COs manage culturally-driven conflict, more time spent on cultural diversity training and communications could potentially give COs the skills to handle situations, such as the ones mentioned above, in a way that would be more conducive to the prison meeting the goals of the penal system.

It is commonly accepted that there are four goals for the correctional system (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, and rehabilitation of inmates are the goals to which the prison system strive. These goals were not set during the creation of the prison system, but rather have developed over time as society and the political landscape changed (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Punishment for violation of a rule or law is an idea as old as civilization. However, the idea of prison as punishment did not develop until the 1600s (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Before this time, houses of incarceration were used to hold individuals while they awaited trial (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). The horrendous conditions of America’s colonial prisons brought about the reform era. During the reformatory era, (1870-1910), thoughts turned to rehabilitating the inmate while incarcerated. Sentencing during the late 1980s through the 1990’s added the goal of incapacitation to the prison system. To combat the “War on Drugs” criminals were sent to prison on mandatory minimums and were subject to “three strike” laws (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). These sentences also sought to
reinforce the deterrence goal of the prison system by making an example out of people involved in the drug trade. Each of these phases of the U.S. prison system added a goal to which prison staff and officers are tasked with achieving. As the focus of the prison system has changed from a more punitive model to one that seeks to be more rehabilitative, the role of the CO has changed from brutish guard to a more professionalized standard (Hemmens & Stohr, 2001). However, basic training for COs focused on skills that would be more appropriate for an earlier time in the American prison system. The task of meeting one goal of corrections is daunting enough. Adding three more goals to the COs job is an unrealistic challenge. This point is further exacerbated when two of the goals, retribution and rehabilitation, are contradictory in nature. Offering COs basic training that is more reflective of the desire to move the role of the CO to an institutional professional and away from a mere subjugating guard could also make reaching the four goals of corrections less challenging. Data from the officers’ survey could also provide insight into how expanding cultural training would affect their abilities to identify and manage prison conflicts that are cultural based.

**Traditional Concepts of Prison Culture**

The current body of literature focuses on the elements of prison and culture and defines the term culture as a unified inmate culture, described by Clemmer (1940) in his seminal work. Clemmer’s (1940) described the prison confines as a community in which inmate and officer cultures operate. Since the publishing of Clemmer’s work, scholars continue to use his frame of culture when conducting research in corrections (e.g., Walters, 2016, Lindegaard & Gear, 2014, Kaufman, 2012, Galanek, 2013). However, a recent trend in research has begun to move the idea of prison culture to a broader understanding. Articles by authors that have experience working in the prison system are looking at culture in prisons from an anthropological frame (ToerBijns,
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2012, Lawrence, Delaney & Bynum, 2015). These authors argue that the demographics of the prison system are changing due to globalization and migration (Lawrence, Priest, Delaney & Bynum, 2015). Thus, cultural diversity of the inmates should be considered in future research. However, current training and scholarly work tends to lump all prisoners into a combined inmate culture instead of looking at the prison population as a diverse community.

Challenges to traditional understandings of prison culture are reinforced by insights from anthropology and peace studies. The idea that prisons are made up of two dominant cultures is too limiting. Cultural Relativism suggests cultures inside the prison are more complex. Franz Boas’ ideas on culture examines how individuals perceive their own culture based on their own experiences (Avruch, 1998). Therefore, officers, inmates, and staff bring social artifacts from outside the prison to the inside creating an environment which is culturally complex. Thomas’ importation model suggests that cultural elements are brought to the prison to counter some of Sykes’ (1958) deprivations (Thomas, 1977). Avruch’s work on conflict resolution focuses on the role culture plays in conflict (1998). Avruch’s argument is that culture is ever changing and also is based on one’s perception (Avruch, 1998). Key to this argument is that a practitioner does not become specialized in learning about one culture, but rather learns a little about a broad variety of cultures. Avruch uses Cohen’s idea of a Model C practitioner to support the idea that a person that has a training in dealing with diverse cultural aspects will be much more effective as a negotiator (Avruch, 1998). Cohen suggests that there are different types of negotiators with different skills sets and expertise. Some have academic knowledge about a specific culture and little experience. Others have very little knowledge of the culture of which they are trying to negotiate. The Model C negotiator lies in the middle. This person would not have expert knowledge on one cultural difference but would be aware that people are diverse and
negotiations that would work for one culture would not necessarily work for another (Avruch, 1998). The link between this research and the Model C negotiator is that correctional officers are in contact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Training that would move the officer toward becoming more of Cohen’s Model C practitioner would allow officers to more effectively communicate with a diverse inmate population.

These theories, when combined with the new research referenced above, suggest that the older Clemmer model is too narrow and that cultural problems in prisons are apparent. There have been tremendous changes in the prison system since the 1990s with an increased prison population and a growing diversity of COs (Hemmens & Stohr, 2001). Correctional officers are on the frontlines in an institution that, by its nature, forces an inmate to be incarcerated. Giving COs a more developed basic training program would help perpetuate the role of the CO from what Hemmens and Stohr call a “hack” to more of a human service role (2001). Furthermore, it suggests that increased training in cross cultural communication and cultural diversity could give COs the skillset to mitigate conflicts and move forward to reaching the goals of corrections.

**The Research Question**

As the shift in the literature suggests, the changing nature of the CO profession and the prison population may require that COs understand culture in a more anthropological, post-Clemmer fashion in order to manage conflict. Therefore, this dissertation will explore how COs’ cultural awareness and training affect their understanding of the cultural dimensions of conflict and their ability to manage culturally rooted conflict. It will include an analysis of CO’s perceptions of the current level of cultural training, which skills are important to their jobs, and what value they hold on more cultural awareness training.
Research Question: To what extent does the level of cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program impact an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict?

To answer this question, this dissertation will examine five areas:

1. What role do officers think culture plays in prison conflict? Conflictual situations are an intrinsic element of the prison population. Examining the extent culture acts as a trigger could offer insight to decrease and mitigate prison conflicts that could turn violent.

2. What percentage of Correctional officers training is focused on cultural diversity and communication? Examinations of training syllabi may reveal both strengths and weaknesses of how current CO training prepares a new officer in dealing with cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication. Effective communication and conflict resolution skills would give COs a broader toolset in dealing with conflicts that arise in the prison confines.

3. How does the current level of training affect an officer’s ability to identify cultural-based conflicts? The pilot study for this dissertation revealed that, in the syllabi collected, little time was spent on cultural training and cross-cultural communication. Less than .05% of training time was spent on identifying cultural diversity. Examining a larger sample of syllabi could reveal that a greater or lesser amount of time is spent on cultural awareness in different regions of the U.S.

4. To what extent does cultural training influence interactions between officer and inmates? The evolution of prison architecture has reduced the physical barriers between officers and inmates. Traditional cells and cellblocks have been replaced by open dormitory style living quarters. Additionally, in the latest generation of prisons, officers are sometimes assigned to a post that are inside a “pod” putting the inmate and officers in close proximity with each other (Johnston,
2000). Cultural differences could play a role in how these COs interact with inmates. Communication and interaction is of growing importance due to the change in prison design. Identifying the effect cultural diversity has on CO communication with inmates could have large implications of future policy.

5. What priority level do COs place on the need for more developed cultural diversity training?

Correctional Officers are tasked with maintaining the inmate population. This survey will ascertain what level of priority put on cultural diversity training. Data from a pilot study indicated that officers are open to more training in cross-cultural communication but placed a moderate to low priority of cultural diversity training. This research will see if the data from the pilot study is consistent with officers from different regions of the US.

Methods and Analysis

To explore these issues, this dissertation collected a sample of Basic Correctional Officer Training (BCOT) syllabi from state correctional agencies. These syllabi were examined to assess mandated time in training spent on cultural awareness, diversity, and communication. A subsequent survey was distributed to correctional officers working in state prisons systems in the U.S. Outcomes from this research could inform policy to suggest changes to the current training curriculum or find that COs feel they are receiving the appropriate amount of cultural training and desire training to be focused in different areas. Data from the survey was analyzed using a variety of techniques.

Data collected from the sample of BCOT training syllabi was analyzed by a similar method used by Burton, Lux, Cullen, Miller, and Burton, (2018). Their study focused on CO training and distributed a survey to directors of different state’s training departments. Their survey was created by categorizing training elements into two general sections and each section
broken into five areas of focus (Burton, Lux, et.al, 2018). Following this design, this dissertation coded training syllabus into categories and analyzed in kind.

Surveys were distributed to COs working for state correctional agencies. Data from this survey was cleaned, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Independent variables were formulated from the demographic data collected in the survey. These independent variables represented COs based on their age, race, education level, length of service, and other identifying characteristics. A correlation matrix was then developed to look for statistical significance between the independent variables and dependent variables that focus on CO’s perception of training, need for training, interaction with inmates, perception of culture, recall of training, and which training CO’s want more developed. Chi-Squares, Bivariate Correlations, and descriptive statistics were used. Variables tested in this portion of the dissertation focused on exploring links between the data and the research questions and sub-questions.

Findings from these data was examined to see if there was support for these research questions and sub-questions. Theories discussed in the literature section of this dissertation were used to explain how the findings relate to the research questions and how a more developed training program could affect mitigation of conflict in the prison. Results from this dissertation could be important in informing future research in an area that is often ignored and informing policy makers on the direction that future CO basic training should take. If indeed the goal is to move the role of the CO away from brutish “hack” to a more professionalized human service, then the fundamental basic training that officers receive should be reflective of this desire.
Preliminary Findings

Findings from an analysis of basic training syllabi indicated that a small percentage of time is spend on culturally focused training. According to sample of basic training syllabi collected, the mean amount of total training time focused on cultural aspects was approximately 5%. Elements of training that focused on the physical handling of inmates accounted for the largest percentages of total training time. This suggests that current training emphasizes the officer’s ability to manage the inmate population through physical means rather than developing communication skills.

A survey was distributed to correctional officers working in state correctional facilities. There was a total of 418 responses out of a population of 1750 officers which represents approximately 23% of the research population. The survey was distributed via electronic format to officers working in the states of Georgia, Alabama, and Wyoming. Questions included in the survey collected data on officer’s insight on topics ranging from elements of their basic training they remembered the most to how culture affects conflicts in the prison system. The survey was comprised of 35 questions including ones that collected demographic data.

Data from the survey indicated that officers remembered that a large portion of their basic training was focused on use of force techniques. However, responses from officers also indicated that officers use communication skills much more frequently than use of force. The data also showed that the majority of respondents placed a moderate to high priority level on the need for cultural diversity training. A correlation matrix was formulated from a recent study by (Burton, Lux, et.al, 2018). In this study, elements of training were categorized into blocks. Data from this dissertation used a similar format by creating blocks of variables that focused on different aspects of the research topic and then testing these blocks with a set of variables that included
demographic data. Correlations between officers age, time in service, and education level showed a significant relationship with the importance of cultural diversity training.

Responses from a set of questions focused on how culture affects communication and conflict in the prison suggest that cultural differences play a larger role in conflicts between inmates rather than between officers and inmates. Officer’s responses suggested that culture is not a strong driver of conflict between officers and inmates, but that more cultural diversity training would decrease conflicts between officers and inmates and increase the effectiveness of communication between the two groups as well. Data from this section of the survey suggested that officers see the cultural differences as an issue for the inmates, but not for the officers. Conversely, officers’ responses suggest that having more cultural diversity training would improve communication and decrease conflict.

Policy Implications

Findings from this dissertation could be used to suggest future development of officer’s basic training programs. The current trend in corrections is to move the role of the officer away from a simple guard role to that of a human service professional. Data from the training syllabi shows that CO basic training programs continue to spend a large portion of time on physical manipulation skills. The amount of time spent on culturally focused training accounts for a small percent of training. This trend seems to be contradictory to the desired trajectory of evolving the role of COs.

Possible policy implications could suggest that changes to the current basic training format to include more cultural training would offer the skills which COs indicated that they use more frequently and want more of. It would be very challenging to have classes that cover every type of culture that a CO may encounter while working in the prison system. However, training
could be developed that would shift officer’s perception away from thinking of the inmate population as one unified inmate culture to a mindset that is aware that cultural differences exist within the prison population. Better understanding the diversity of the inmate population could create an environment more conducive meeting the four goals of corrections.

**Outline of the Dissertation**

The next chapter of this dissertation will examine the current body of literature on how culture is perceived in the prison setting. Chapter three will explain the methodology employed to conduct the formulation, collection, and analyzation of data for this dissertation. Following the methodology, chapter four will focus on the data collected from the basic training syllabi. This chapter will display tables that show the total hours training elements and conclusions that can be drawn from these numbers. Chapter five will show the results of the survey data, analysis of the data, and conclusions from this dataset. The final chapter will include a summary of the dissertation, detail possible policy implications, and make suggestions for further research.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter will examine the current body of literature dealing with the current frame of prison culture. Seminal pieces of work have been used to frame inmate culture as a unified group. This dissertation does not seek to discount earlier works, but to expand on the idea of culture in the study of penology. In addition, the theories that this dissertation employs to explain the links between the data and research questions will be explored. Deprivation and Importation, cultural context, social learning, and conflict resolution theories have been selected to explain how the data collected in this dissertation links to the research questions and sub-questions. Correctional Officers (CO) are on the front lines of maintaining order in the prison system. However, a review of the literature reveals that there are four goals in corrections that officer are charged with achieving. Thus, this dissertation examines COs perceptions on the training and if the current level of cultural training is effective.

Traditional Views of Prison Culture

When culture is applied to research in the field of penology, it is commonly framed using the definition described in Donald Clemmer’s work from 1940. Clemmer coined the term prisonization, which describes how the prison environment shapes an inmate’s societal norms and values (1940). This suggests that the experience of incarceration fosters an inmate culture that is counter to the norms of civil society. Later works begin to shift focus from the prison environment to the inmate. Sykes’ work describes the pains of imprisonment through his deprivation model (1958). The first of Sykes’ pains is the deprivation of liberty, which cuts the ties to family, and kin that the inmate once had (1958). This leaves the inmate with a void of
identity in their new environment. A later work by Thomas, (1977) suggests that through the importation model, inmates bring into the prison system cultural elements that then become part of Clemmer’s inmate culture.

In 1940, Donald Clemmer published a book that would be the seminal piece in understating the creation of an inmate culture. Clemmer argues that the prison is a unique community and like most communities the prison social relations, communications, and other social process (Clemmer, 1940). The idea that prisons are counterintuitive to their mission was also an argument of Clemmer (1940). Prisonization is a term that Clemmer coined as the mechanism by which inmates adapt to prison life (1940). A person entering the prison system for the first time must learn “hard and fast” how to adapt to their new world. Clemmer distinguishes the differences between assimilation and prisonization by comparing a man coming into the prison system to an immigrant entering into a new country. If the man were simply to assimilate into his new land, he would blend in and melt away into the larger pool of his new society. The man that assimilates can do so without taking on the characteristics of his new surroundings. However, prisonization forces the person to take on the persona of an inmate (Clemmer, 1940). Even if a new inmate is reluctant to use the newly learned language of prison slang, it is safe to say that for sheer survival purposes that person knows the meaning of prison slang (Clemmer, 1940). Prison has its own inmate code that is widely known, but not written down. Clemmer states that this inmate culture is developed within the prison society and is counter to normal outside accepted society. Nonetheless, the closed society of the prison confines has its own mores and folkways. Learning and adapting to the prison society becomes a matter of survival. The Clemmer idea of prison culture frames inmates as a singular group whose norms and values
are in contrast to civil society. This limits the impact that cultural differences have on prison research.

**Deprivation and Importation**

Another touchstone in prison research is Sykes’ work on the pains of imprisonment that inmates experience. This begins to shift the thinking of prison culture as being a product of the prison environment itself, to taking into account the deprivations that are experienced by the inmates. The first of Sykes’ deprivations is the deprivation of liberty (1958). Sykes argued that the world of the inmates he studied was “shrunken down to thirteen acres” (Sykes, 1958 p. 65). The loss of liberty the inmate experience is not limited to the loss of physical freedom of movement, but also the loss of connection with friends and family (Sykes, 1958). Inmates do have the ability to receive visits and correspond through mail with family and friends. However, Sykes noted that over a one year period, 41% of inmates in his study did not receive visitation (Sykes,1958). This loss of connection with the outside world then leaves a void of self-identity.

Clemmer’s work on prisonization sets the foundation on how the prison dynamic reinforces an overall inmate culture. Sykes’ work then begins to focus in on the inmates themselves. This is evident by Sykes description of inmate argot roles (1958). Sykes describes how inmates play various social roles within the larger inmate group as a response to the problems of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958 p. 86). This would suggest that deprivations could lead to deeper self-identification as inmates.

However, the deprivation model is only one side of the coin. Scholars such as Thomas (1977) and Irwin & Cressey (1962) suggested that inmates entering the prison system bring culture with them. Cultural norms are brought into the prison and become part of the inmate’s new environment as a means of adaptation and survival (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). Clemmer’s
ideas talk about the prison experience on a macro level. Sykes’ work shifts the focus from the greater inmate population to that of individual inmate groups. The importation model then focuses in further by taking into account the cultural artifacts that inmates bring into the prison system. The deprivation and pains of imprisonment that inmates experience could then reinforce outside cultural identity as a survival tactic or means of adapting to the new environment of prison. Fleisher and Decker state, “That inmates form groups based on the need for identity, belonging, personal interests, and race/ethnicity conforms to well-known processes in all human groups, and such behavior inside a prison should not be a surprise” (Fleisher & Decker, 2001 p. 6).

The literature also suggests that correctional officers also import cultural elements into the prison setting. The role in which a CO is orientated can be influenced by importation (Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991). A paper by Hemmens and Stohr, (2001) suggests that higher security prisons are more closed off from society and could reinforce subcultural values that are brought into the prison. Hemmens and Stohr also write that age, sex, education, and experience in the job impact which of Skyes’ officer roles a CO orientates with (2001). This means that factors from the CO’s background could influence how the officer will carry out his or her duties and if the officer has a predisposition to be more punitive or more rehabilitative oriented.

In summary, importation theory suggests that the pains of imprisonment force an inmate to adapt to not only the greater inmate group, but also join a subgroup that is based on cultural difference that the inmate imports from the outside. The inmate’s need for belonging, identity, and protection could then work to intensify an inmate’s self-identity. For example, Fleisher and Decker suggest that protection is a major factor in an inmate’s decision to join a prison gang
A new inmate would then seek to join a gang that best aligns with the inmate’s cultural background. La Nuestra Familia is a gang that was formed by Hispanic inmates from Northern California which had a more agricultural background (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). The formation of this gang was based on the need for protection from the urban-based Mexican Mafia out of Los Angeles (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). In this case, it was not the inmate’s ethnicity, but their cultural background that dictated which gang the inmate would, and could, join. Being part of a gang that is based on cultural commonalities could then reinforce, or strengthen, the inmate’s sense of cultural identity. This would then bring into question, which should be the focal point of researching culture in the prison context. Should the individual inmate’s culture be considered or the traditional framework of a combined inmate culture?

**Challenges to the Traditional Approach**

In each of these cases, the focus is on the criminal culture. As will be discussed below, this ignores the idea of culture from a more anthropological or traditional meaning of the word. Also, the time period in which these works were written had a much different prison population than in recent years. Thus, much of the seminal scholarship on the subject is dated. However, current literature continues to use the same frame of prison culture when examining different aspects of research. For example, work done by Drum, (2017), Shuford, (2018), Hugges, (2012), and Trammell, (2012) investigate different elements of penology, but each of these use the frame of culture as to mean the overall prison culture. Topics range from prison education to how religious programs affects the prison. The growing diversity in the prison population would suggest that a refined definition of culture would be more applicable to the current prison population.
This research will focus on culture in the anthropological sense of the word and not the Clemmer frame of “prison culture”. After a rigorous examination of the literature, it has become apparent that there is no single accepted definition of culture. The task of defining culture is made more complex by different fields of study having various definitions of the term (Baldwin, 2006). Anthropology, sociology, communications, and psychology are just a few disciplines that have a multitude of ways to defining culture. A work by Alfred Smith in 1966 suggest that culture is a code that is shared and learned through communication. Another work by Asunción-Lande describes culture as shared and learned behaviors that are passed down generationally (1975). Additionally, Barnett and Kinkaid argue that culture is centered on extrinsic and intrinsic factors (1983). This framework suggests that items created by a culture, such as food, tools, and clothing, are as important to defining culture as the intangible elements of beliefs, religion, and societal norms. Dougherty suggests that culture is a system of symbols that run parallel with a group’s language (1985). Dougherty’s rather simplistic definition is in contrast with DeVito’s work from 1991. DeVito states that culture is, “the relatively specialized lifestyle of a group of people consisting of their values, beliefs, artifacts, ways of behaving, and ways of communicating that is passed on from one generation to the next. Included in culture would be everything that members of a social group have produced and developed their language, modes of thinking, art, laws, and religion.” (DeVito, 1991, p. 431). This definition seems to try to encompass many elements of a civilization. A final example of the varying definitions of culture comes from Samovar and Porter’s work that also casts a wide net in trying to define culture. Samovar and Porter suggest that culture is “the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the
universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of
generations through individual and group striving” (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 8).

One reason for this diversity is that culture can be examined at different levels. A bit of
commonality exists between the different definitions of culture in that there are elements of a
societal group that is passed from person to person. The dissention in defining culture seems to
be what is included in these elements of society. Some of the examples above cast a wide net in
trying to capture all elements of a society in defining culture. Others use a more simplistic
definition. This would suggest that scope is the key factor in defining culture. Brislin and
Yoshida, (1993) suggest that culture is examined at different levels based on the focus of the
research. In other words, culture is like looking through a microscope. Focusing in and out
reveals different layers at which an object can be studied. For example, Agwuele’s, (2016) work
suggests that the collection of demographic information on job applications and census surveys
collect data based on different focus levels. A survey question labeled “race” may include
options of “white”, “black”, “African-American”, “Asian”, “Pacific Islander”, “Hispanic” or
“Native American”. Agwuele would say that this list of choices represents “race” as color,
culture, geography, and origin (2016). This is because each of the options focuses in and out on
different levels. The option of “white” could encapsulate many different cultures while the
choice “Pacific Islander” would represent a more refined framework. Therefore, this dissertation
will shift the focus from the Clemmer framework of inmate culture to a level that will examine
culture within the prison from a more anthropological standpoint.

This research will be focusing on a level that frames culture in what is known as the
Boasian definition. Franz Boas developed the idea of Cultural Relativism, which says that
culture is relative to a person’s beliefs and activities (Boas, 1940). Boas’ idea moved the study
of culture away from the evolutionists view of culture which long dominate the field of anthropology (Avruch, 1998). Cultural Relativism also brought about Ethnocentrism, which means that a person thinks his or her own culture is above or superior to another (Fettner, 2002). These two elements of Boas’ frame of culture speak to the subject of culture and conflict in the prison system. The Black, White, Hispanic, and other categories does little to describe culture, or ethnicity for that matter. Demographic categories covey a mix of a person’s color, origin, or geography (Agwuele, 2016). Following these categories would be placing person from Brazil in the same category as a person from Mexico based on the Hispanic label. Even individuals from the same state can have very different cultural identities. This can be seen in the case of prions gangs that are comprised of people from Mexican Americans living in California. The two prevailing Mexican gangs are the Mexican Mafia (La Eme) and La Nuestra Familia (“our family”) (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). Membership is split between Surenos, or people from southern California, and Nortenos, people from northern California (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). Both groups are comprised of people with similar ethnic backgrounds, but are very different culturally. Clemmer’s framework of prison culture offers a similar problem of including a wide range of cultures into one inmate culture. Applying the Boasian idea of culture to the prison system allows for a more broad explanation of culture, and speaks to how ethnocentrism can be a factor in cultural conflict.

Two recent articles point to the importance of cultural diversity training in the prison system. One was a short review in American Jails magazine and offered a collection of cultural points that should be further studied (Lawrence, Priest, Delaney & Bynum, 2015). The second,

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1 The term ‘culture’ will be used to mean the anthropological frame as discussed in the review of the literature. Inmate culture will be used when referencing the inmate population as a single group.
and more developed article dove deeper into the subject of cultural diversity training in the prison system. Carl ToersBijns’ article argues that cultural diversity and cultural sensitivity is vital in the modern prison system (2012). He goes on to state that ignoring the element of culture in the prison system can actually undermine the mission of the correctional system (ToerBijns, 2012). The part of the article that stood out the most was the very short editor’s note that explained that Mr. ToersBijns worked in the prison system for over 25 years and held many different ranks and positions (ToerBijns, 2012). Applying a more anthropological view of culture could allow for better understanding and communication in the prison system. The Clemmer idea of inmate culture seems to be dismissive to the individualism of the prison population. Moving the focus inward could move the study of penology to a ground less covered by scholars.

High and Low Context Cultures

Edward Hall’s work on cultural communications is another point at which ideas from disciplines outside of penology can be applied to examining conflicts in prisons. Hall’s *The Silent Language*, (1959) describes the intricacies of how cultures communicate through nonverbal methods. Comparisons are made between communication styles of people from Hispanic, Asian, and American cultures (Hall, 1959). In these comparisons, Hall points out that there can be difficulty in communications when there is little understanding of non verbal cultural cues. Missing social cues can lead to not only a breakdown in communication, but could be detrimental to a person trying to obtain a diplomatic goal. Hall states that some military leaders had a fear of being assigned to certain countries because not being cognizant of a culture’s nonverbal communication had proven to be career ending (Hall, 1959, p17).

Hall developed his idea further in a later work, *Beyond Culture* (1989). This book introduces the idea of high and low cultural context. High context cultures use more nonverbal
elements in communicating than cultures labeled as low. (Hall, 1989). Conversely, low context cultures rely on verbal methods to convey ideas and communicate (Hall, 1989). The level of one’s cultural context can be represented as a point on a spectrum. The lower context cultures would include Germany, Scandinavia, and American (Neese, 2016). While the opposite end of this spectrum would include cultures from Asia and Africa (Neese, 2016). High context cultures can include a wide range of nonverbal nuances to communicate. Interaction between people from the opposite ends of this spectrum can be difficult if there is little understanding of the various contexts.

The link to this idea and this research is that the prison system is designed on a very low context level. The system is designed and maintained by rigid rules, regulations, and SOPs that are displayed in writing and conveyed verbally. Also, the majority of the officers and staff come from what Hall describes as an Anglo American culture that would fall on the low end of Neese’s spectrum (Hall, 1959), (Neese, 2016). However, based on the demographic data from the Bureau of Justice and Statistics (BJS), the prison population includes individuals that come from a mix of both high and low culture context. According to BJS statistics, the category for race includes white, black, Hispanic, and other (Carson, 2017). The 2016 BJS dataset on inmate demographics indicates that the prison population, at that time, was 1,563,662 persons held in state and federal facilities (Carson, 2017). In the notes section of this dataset are letter identifiers, which show that categories of white and other include American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; and persons of two or more races (Carson, 2017). The combined percentage of these two categories represents 42% of the prison population. People from these ethnic backgrounds are more likely to have a high cultural context (Neese, 2016). The limited categorization of demographic data adds to the need for expanding
the frame of culture when studying the prison system. The governmental agency that is charged with collecting and analyzing prison data not only has a very narrow categorization of demographics, but also admits, in its notes, that the data collection lumps many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds into one of the four categories. Not considering, or training for, the cultural nuances of the prison population could be counterproductive in reaching the goals of corrections. This disparity can lead to situations of conflict due to the lack of understanding of a person’s cultural context. For example, Hall points out that the acceptable distance at which one interacts with another varies in different cultures (Hall, 1959). People from Latin America tend to have a shorter interaction distance than North Americans (Hall, 1959). Without understanding cultural context, an American CO may construed a Latino inmate’s tendency to closely approach the officer as a threat. However, the inmate is from a culture where being in close proximity to a person that he is speaking to is considered the norm.

It would not be logical, nor practical, to instruct officers on every cultural norm or context. However, simply including training that teaches the difference between high and low context cultures could make the officer aware that not all acceptable interactions are based on his or her on cultural norms. This is an example of a broad topic that could be included in training which would add to the officer’s skill set while not overloading the officer with intricate cultural details. This dissertation is focused on officers’ perception of their basic training regime and the skills they use from their training. Data from the pilot study for this dissertation indicates that officers utilize communication skills more frequently than use of force. Thus, better understanding the cultural diversity of the inmate population could decrease the instances of use of force situations even further by reinforcing the CO’s communication skills.
Conflict Resolution and Social Learning Theory

One of the theories that will be applied to this research is Avruch’s work on conflict resolution. Avruch’s argument is that culture is ever changing and also is based on one’s perception (Avruch, 1998). Avruch uses Cohen’s idea of a Model C practitioner to support the idea that a person skilled in multiple facets of cultural diversity will be much more effective as an negotiator (Avruch, 1998). Applying Avruch’s argument to the context of this research shows the flaw in only focusing on the Clemmer definition of prison culture. To be effective communicators in the prison setting, officers should have training that is more robust on the topic of cultural diversity, which would move the officer toward a Model C practitioner.

Cohen’s Model “C” practitioner is described as a “culturally sensitive negotiator” (Avruch, 1998 p. 104). This model describes a person that does not have an encompassing knowledge of one area or culture, but rather a basic understanding of cultural differences and nuances (Cohen, 1993). Avruch offers an example of a westerner entering into a negotiation with in Indonesia does not need to know every tenant of Indonesian Islam, but understanding that Indonesia is a different place with different cultural norms (Avruch, 1998). A model “C” practitioner would be more effective in communication by understanding that he or she is in a foreign land with different customs and would have learned enough beforehand to not violate a cultural norm. Applying the macro to the micro one could replace the western negotiator with a new correctional officer and Indonesia with the prison. An effective communicator would be the one that comes into the prison aware that the inmates are individuals with a variety of cultural backgrounds that may be different from the officer’s own. Expanding the basic training program could help shift new officers to perform their duties more in line with Cohen’s Model “C”.
Social learning theory is another part of this research project. This theory argued new behaviors can be learned through direct experience or observing behavior of other people (Bandura, 1971). Social learning is a vital part of the prison experience for both officers and inmates. For officers, social learning is at the core of training. Once an officer has completed his or her basic training, the officer is then assigned to a field training officer (FTO). The new officer is assigned to “shadow” his FTO for a period of time to learn the ways of the prison. This type of training combines the two fundamental mechanisms of social learning, direct and vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1971). Direct reinforcement is when a behavior results in either a positive or negative outcome for the person displaying the behavior. Vicarious reinforcement is when one sees a behavior result in a positive or negative outcome in other people’s actions (Bandura, 1971). New officers learn “what” an officer is during basic training, but learn “how” to be an officer during their time with their FTO.

Inmates are subject to social learning theory to a greater extent. One of the duties of a shift Officer in Charge (OIC), is to facilitate an orientation to newly arriving inmates. During this researcher’s time working in the prison system, new inmate orientation instructions were designed to convey a large amount of information in a short period of time. Incoming inmates were told basic standard operating procedures (SOPs) and informed of how to seek help. Social learning taught them much more. By watching others and experiencing things directly, new inmates learned the important elements of prison life. For example, in the first few days of being assigned to the prison, inmates would learn which officers were helpful, which officers to avoid, and which group of inmates held sway over the dorms. Much of the basic survival knowledge inmates acquired was gained through social learning. The impact of social learning could then be used to the advantage of prison staff. Officers not only are enforcers of rules, but could also
serve as an inmates’ model for behavior. An officer that has developed skills in communicating with people of different cultures could then pass these skill sets to inmates through either direct or vicarious reinforcement. Conversely, an officer that had little cultural training during their BCOT program may have difficulty carrying out their job duties due to poor communication and conflicts with inmates of various cultures.

To try to get a sense of how officers felt about cultural training in the prison system, a pilot study was completed consisting of a survey that was distributed to a population of 730 officers working in state correctional facilities. A total of 90 surveys were collected. The pilot survey indicated that the officers would like to have more training in communications. Also, examples have been provided of how social learning is currently a part of the prison system. Therefore, following a logical progression, there is a high probability that officers displaying well developed cultural communication skills would, in essence, pass the skills along to the inmate population. Both of the direct and vicarious reinforcement would come into play because inmates would have direct interactions and would observe other people’s interactions with officers. If then an officer displayed Cohen’s Model C behavior, which results in a positive outcome, then social learning theory would say the inmate would have learned “new patterns of behavior” (Bandura, 1971, pg.3 ). In this case, both the officer and inmate gain benefit. More training focused on cultural diversity and communication could potentially better equip and officer to identify and mitigate prison conflicts that are culturally based.

**Preliminary Data**

This expanded view of prison culture originated from ex-practitioners in the prison system. Data from the pilot survey indicated that the majority of the officers learned more about
their job duties from their Field Training Officer (FTO). This also suggests that the theory of social learning has an impact within the prison setting.

The lack of attention of cultural difference does not begin or end at the officer level. In trying to gather demographic data for this project, it is surprising to find that even moderately detailed demographic information on the inmate population does not exist at the federal level. The Bureau of Justice and Statistics only has four categories for demographic of race. Black, white, Hispanic, and other are the labels under which the US prison population must fall (Carson & Anderson, 2016). The Federal Bureau of Prisons has a bit more expanded categories in the form of Asian, Black, White, and Native American (BOP Statistics, 2017). During my time as an officer many different cultures of inmates fell into the same categories as described by the federal government. Many inmates that would be categorized as “black” did not identify with others in the same group. Several of the black inmates considered themselves Trinidadian, Nigerian, or Honduran, for example. Similarly, inmates that were considered Hispanic had very different cultures and were from very different parts of South and Central America. Limiting the understanding of a large prison population is detrimental to both the mission of the prisons and the rehabilitation of the inmates.

The initial collection of training syllabus indicated that the amount of time spent on cultural diversity and communications is much less than time spend on use of force and physical confrontation elements. Data from the pilot survey indicated that officers remembered training focused on defensive tactics (DTs) more than any other training element. An analysis of the training syllabus shows that DTs holds the largest percentage of time during training at just over 40%. While less 2% of time was spent on topics that focused on cultural diversity and cross-cultural communications. These findings suggest two important elements of this research, the
more time spent of a subject increases retention, and that officers learned most of their
communication and cultural diversity skills from FTOs. Training is an essential part of a
correctional officer’s career. Developing training programs that move the role of the CO from an
officer to a human service professional could allow the officer to manage a more peaceful
facility, which would assist COs in meeting the goals of corrections.

**Goals of Corrections**

The prevailing body of literature suggests that there are four goals of corrections that are
commonly espoused. Incapacitation, retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation are the goals to
which the prison system work. The goals of punishment has developed over time changing with
social norms (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Early houses of incarceration were focused on
punishment, but as society developed reformers recommended changes that focused on a more
rehabilitative model. The goal of incapacitation is met by simply locking the inmate in a cell
separating him or her from society. The fact that the US incarcerates more people than any other
county in the world would suggest that the goal of incapacitation is readily met (Kifer,
Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Retribution could be seen as society’s way of getting even with the
inmate. Incarceration is society’s way of punishing a person for violating Hobbes’ social contract
(1651). This display of punishment leads to the third goal of corrections, deterrence. This goal
has to facets, general and specific (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). An example of general
deterrence is the mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years for a crime such as drug trafficking.
This sentence is meant to send a message to society that violating a law will carry with it a
determinate amount of time. Specific deterrence is focused on an individual. An example of this
would be the three strike laws of the 1990s. An offender would be warned that being found
guilty of a third major crime would result in a life sentence. In both these cases, the threat of
incarceration is displayed as a warning to others that violation of society’s law will result in punishment. The final goal of incarceration is rehabilitation. This idea of rehabilitating a criminal, so that he or she can reenter society, has its beginnings in the reformatory era of 1870 to 1910 (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Before this time, rehabilitation consisted of the separate and silent conditions of the Eastern State Penitentiary. In this system, inmates were given a Bible to while confined in their cell (Woodham, 2008). During the reform era rehabilitation moved beyond inward religious reflection. Prions of the reform era sought to give inmates work skills needed to obtain a good trade once released (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). The modern prison system has evolved this fourth goal even further by adding cognitive restructuring, substance abuse, anger management, and educational programs (Phelps, 2011).

The goal of incapacitation, retribution, and deterrence are innate with a person being locked in the confines of a prison. Officers meet these goals by simply showing up for work and keeping the inmates from escaping. However, the fourth goal is where training is vital. The modern role of the CO is one that not only keeps inmates incarcerated, but also helps facilitate rehabilitation (Kifer, Hemmens, & Stohr, 2003). Therefore, training should be reflective of this shift to move the inmate officer paradigm to more of a provider client framework. A crucial step in servicing a population is knowing the clients. In the Clemmer frame, the clients, or inmates, are the prison population. Using a more anthropological frame in examining the various cultures of the prison population could allow officers to better understand who their clients are and how better the serve them. Changes in the amount of cultural training offered could move officers forward in reaching the four goals of corrections.

In summary, the existing body of research uses a definition of prison culture that assumes that all inmates are part of one group culture, as suggested by Clemmer. In addition, the
deprivation of relationships and family would suggest that inmates then import their cultural values inside the prison (Skyes, 1958). These two seminal pieces of work illustrate how the study of culture in the prison system is dependent on the level of examination. They also give examples of the difference in inmate culture and the culture of the inmate. Correctional officer training programs that include only a small amount of cultural diversity training could be falling victim to viewing inmate culture as a single group. The lack of consideration of the cultural diversity of the inmate population could perpetuate conflicts that arise between groups of inmates of differing cultural backgrounds.

The problem with the current body of research is that the majority of work done focuses in the prison culture for a lens that is too broad. Narrowing this framework to look at the various culture at work in the prison setting could expand the nature of research in penology. Inmate culture, as described by Clemmer, paints a picture of the prison being a community and that the officers and staff are cultures operating within this space (1940). A small portion of the literature supports the idea that a more broad understanding of culture, in the prison context, needs to be addressed (ToerBjins, 2012; Lawrence, Priest, Delaney & Bynum, 2015). Data from the pilot study suggests that further examination of the amount of cultural training compulsory to basic training is needed. Expanding research to include the culture of the inmates could then lend insight to developing programs that could move correctional officers toward becoming in line with Cohen’s model “C” practitioner. Arming COs with an expanded skill set in cultural understating could allow for officers to implement conflict resolution methods which could then be adapted by inmates through the tenets social learning theory. A prison setting that experiences a decrease in conflict could create an environment that is more conducive to reaching the fourth goal of corrections.
Rethinking the study of culture in the prison setting could be an important step in meeting the goals of corrections and add to the current body of work in penology. Therefore, this dissertation asks, to what extent does the current level of cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program affects an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict? The method by which this question is examined COs perceptions on culture, what role culture plays in prison conflict, the level of use and retention of cultural skills COs received during their basic training, and what priority level officers would place on cultural diversity training. This dissertation’s hypotheses will focus on the relationship between the amount of training time spent on cultural diversity and the officer’s daily routine. In addition, the level of exposure to diverse cultures, prior to working in the prison system, may impact the officer perception of importance in cultural training. The process for collecting and testing data for the dissertation will be explained in the methodology section.
Introduction

This chapter will detail the methods that were employed in examining the research questions. Guidance on the development of this methodology was drawn from the prevailing bodies of literature on culture, incarceration, and theory. The data for this dissertation consists of two primary components. First, training syllabi from a sample of state correctional department’s basic training programs was obtained. This step was important in examining the amount of time mandated for different training elements, and to identify disparities and commonalities that existed. The second portion of the data was collected through a survey that was distributed to a sample of correctional officers (COs) working in state correctional facilities. This data was analyzed to test the hypotheses. This methodology was based on existing literature and findings from a pilot study completed prior to this dissertation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

One goal is to assess the effectiveness of the current level of cultural training in basic training programs for correctional officers. A second goal is whether this training offers the necessary skills that would help COs identify and manage conflicts that arise from cultural differences. To explore these questions, a review of prior literature was completed to establish a foundation on how culture is framed in the prison setting. The idea of a unified prison culture dominates the body of research with only a very few authors looking at culture from a standpoint that considers inmate culture. A study done by Hemmens and Stohr (2001) focused on policy and distributed a survey to department heads at a sample of correctional agencies. However, by the nature of their jobs, frontline officers spend much more time in direct contact with inmates
than do directors and department heads. Officers who are charged with maintaining order, while striving to meet the goals of corrections, could offer a more insightful assessment of training and how that training relates to the job. Therefore, these questions focused on the subject of culture in the prison system and distributed the research survey to currently employed correctional officers.

The seminal work that framed the term culture in the context of an “inmate culture” was Clemmer (1940). Clemmer’s work is the cornerstone of a vast amount of correctional research and his work on inmate culture is widely accepted. In 1958 Sykes’ book, *The Society of Captives*, clearly takes the Clemmer idea of prison culture and uses this idea to frame the prison system as a society in microcosm. The concept of inmate culture that these two works put forth has reverberated through the study of penology. However, the use Clemmer’s inmate culture as the sole context in which studies are conducted is limiting to the greater body of research. Expanding and examining the definition of culture, in the prison context, could move field of penology into new ground. Combining interdisciplinary theories and a more developed notion of culture led this research to the following questions:

RQ: To what extent does cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program affect an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict?

Sub-questions of this dissertation include:

SRQ1: To what extent is correctional officers’ perceptions of conflict in prisons culturally linked?

SRQ2: How are correctional officers currently trained in cultural diversity and communication?
SRQ3: How does frequency and duration of cultural diversity training affect an officers’ confidence in their ability to recognize and manage cultural diversity?

SRQ4: How does a correctional officer’s exposure to cultural diversity relate to their ability to communicate with culturally diverse inmates?

SRQ5: How do Correctional Officers perceive the need for cultural diversity and communication training?

This research also examined two hypotheses that are based on the research questions. The hypotheses of this dissertation are presented to speak to how training impacts officers’ job duties. Findings from testing the hypotheses could indicate that an expanded and more developed BCOT program could increase an officer’s cultural awareness.

H1: The percentage of training devoted to cultural diversity and interpersonal communication affects officers’ retention of cultural focused training.

H2: Officers’ exposure to diverse culture is related to their perceived importance of cultural diversity training.

Research Design

Research for this dissertation was designed to examine the level of cultural training in the current Correctional Officer Basic Training Programs and how this level of training impacts an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate conflicts that are culturally based. To achieve this, training syllabi were collected from a sample of state correctional agencies. Also, a survey was distributed to COs working in state correctional facilities. Interest in examining the syllabi data
focused on seeing if there were disparities between BCOT training elements, and if training focused more on hands on approaches or communication skills. Outcomes of interest, from the survey data, were officers responses to CO’s training retention, which skills they used the most, and which skills they wanted more. Additionally, it examined if correlations existed between demographic variables and variables from the survey questions.

This method offered a cross-sectional examination of current basic training and officers’ perceptions. Using both survey and syllabi data offered a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data from the survey was coded and tested by quantitatively. The quantitative nature of the training syllabi offered detail and insight into the outcomes of the survey data. The method of using mixed methods to conduct this research was derived from looking at previous studies that focus on correctional officers.

The first point of interest was the limited amount of research that focuses on COs outside of examining stress and burnout. Valentine, Oehme, and Martin (2010), focused on domestic violence stated that “there are no known previous studies regarding correctional officers and domestic violence” (p. 532). Much of the work in penology seemed to revolve around the inmates and their conditions of confinement. Similar to Valentine, Oehme, and Martin, this research forged new ground in prison research. More specifically, research that focused on correctional officers. Further investigation revealed that in studies such as Dial’s book on CO stress (2010) and Valentine, Oehme, and Martin’s research on CO family violence (2012) used a combination of examining training with a survey. In its basic form this method looked at what training was and how officers perceived the training. This dissertation asked a similar question, but the focus was on cultural training. Therefore, it followed a similar method to obtain and test data.
Training Syllabi

To examine the amount of cultural training that is currently included in state Basic Correctional Officer Training (BCOT) a sample of syllabi was collected for analysis. This method was chosen because it was a way to gather a cross-section of current training. The syllabus collected in the pilot study was formatted in a manner that indicated the title of training elements, a brief description, and the number of hours spent on each class. A sample of syllabi collected followed a similar layout. This offered data that could be analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively. The method of interviewing or surveying training directors was not chosen, largely due to the risk of training personnel skewing their responses in a way that is favorable for their department. For example, a training officer could give answers that would try to decrease disparities between training topics. By collecting the training syllabi, data was drawn from an unbiased source.

An email was drafted that included a message asking for participation, the dissertation proposal, a copy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval form, and contact information of the dissertation chair. This message was sent to a random sample of 25 states asking to provide their BCOT syllabus for this dissertation. An interesting mix of responses were received. Some states responded quickly and provided the requested syllabus. Others states were more reluctant and asked for an IRB to be submitted through their state agency. When requested, the corresponding state’s IRB was submitted. These states provided the requested material after approval of their local IRB was granted. Some states, including Louisiana, Ohio, and California responded with messages indicating that the requested information could not be provided due to confidentiality.
Out of the 25 requests, nine states agreed to provide the requested syllabi. These states were Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming. A study done by Burton, Lux, Cullen, Miller, and Burton (2018) examined correctional officer (CO) training by surveying training academy directors. The data collected was then categorized into four blocks or themes that were the subject of the study. For the purpose of this dissertation, 19 variables were created to represent the elements of training that relative to this research (Table 1). This approach was used as a way to utilize data points from the different training syllabi and combine the data into variables that would best display the number of hours spent on training elements.

Variables were coded to identify the data points gathered from the state’s Department of Corrections Training syllabus. Each state had variations in how they labelled different training elements. For example, different syllabi included classes called SSGT Vanguard, Defensive Tactics, and CRDT. The course description of these classes indicated that they were very similar. Each of these classes taught cadets a variety of hand-to-hand or close quarter defensive skills. Therefore, the training hours spent on this example of classes was placed in variable DEFTAC. These variations could be a result of each state developing their own BCOT. Even though the training programs had variations in topic titles and duration, these programs were similar in overall content. The purpose of these variables was to standardize data collection from the different training programs. The variables display numeric values that represented the number of hours spent on a training topic. The following table includes the code, name, and definition of each variable.
Data gathered from the training syllabi was used to create a dataset that was then examined. The total number of training hours for each program was recorded and then the
percentage of time spent on each of the variables were calculated. Overall training time and percentages were used to evaluate the state’s propensity toward cultural training and training that focused on physical intervention. Data from the training syllabi were used as independent variables in testing hypotheses and to give detail to conclusions. The results of the syllabi data collection is displayed in the data analysis chapter.

**Officer’s Survey Design**

A survey of correctional officers was developed for the purpose of collecting data on the level of cultural based training officers had during their basic training program, how officers perceive cultural differences impact prison conflict, what skills they retained and utilized from basic training, and what priority they placed on the need for cultural training. The method of using a survey to gather data from correctional officers is often used in the current body of literature. Studies done by Dial (2010), Valentine, Oehme, and Martin (2012), and Burton, Lux, Cullen, Miller, and Burton, (2018) are just few examples of research that used surveys. The survey method was chosen due to the difficulty of direct access to COs. Dial highlights this by explaining that officers took part in her survey during the CO’s in-service training (2010). This was the best time to administer her survey because it did not interfere with the officers’ daily duties. Daily had the advantage of working in the prison system and thus had access. However, online surveys was the method employed by the other researchers previously mentioned. Using an online survey for this dissertation allowed access to officers in different states and increased the sample size. Interviews with local COs would have resulted in a much lower sample size due to time constraints and facility accessibility.

The survey was comprised of 10 questions that collected demographic data and 25 questions that collected data on the dissertation topic. The survey was created and distributed
using Qualtrics software. Variables were created with no individually identifying factors. In addition, Internet Protocol (IP) addresses were not collected. These steps were taken to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Demographic data was collected on officer’s age (Q2.1), gender (Q2.2), state or employment (Q2.3), rank (Q2.4), ethnicity (Q2.5), overseas work experience (Q43), military service (2.6), education (Q2.7), number of languages they spoke (Q2.8), and the diversity of the area officers grew up in (Q42). Responses for the age variable were categorized in age ranges of 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56- and up. The lower limit of this range was selected due to the minimum age requirement of working in corrections. The 56 and up limit was offered as an option because some officers work beyond retirement age. The variable of gender included options of male, female, or unspecified. Officers indicated the state in which they worked by selecting their state from a drop down list. Responses for the variable of rank were CO, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Warden or Deputy Warden. Choices for the variable of race were Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, White/Caucasian, or Other. Variables that collected data on overseas work experience and military experience were dichotomous. Options for education level were High School or GED, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, or Ph.D. The variable for language skills was dichotomous, but also included a space to indicate which secondary language officers spoke. The final demographic variable asked officers about the diversity of the area in which they grew up. This question offered a scale of 1-5, 1 meaning not diverse and 5 meaning very diverse.

Remaining questions were arranged in blocks. The theme for the first block of questions collected data on officers’ experience during BCOT. Questions in this block included:

- (Q2.11) How many years have you worked as a Correctional Officer (CO)?
- (Q37) How many years ago did you complete your basic training program?
- (Q3.5) On a scale of 1-5, 1 being low and 5 meaning high, how well did you adapt to your basic training?
- (Q47) On a scale of 1-5, 1 meaning easy and 5 meaning hard, what level of difficulty would you rank your basic training program?
- (Q3.8) Correctional Officer Basic Training fully prepared me for my job duties
- (Q39) How many hours of required annual in service training do you complete each year?
- (Q41) How many hours of annual training do you complete that is not required by your agency?
- (Q40) How often does your annual in service training include training on cultural diversity?
- (Q3.12) Which phrase best describes your preconceptions of working in the prison system?
- (Q3.1) What was the main reason that motivated you to become a Correctional Officer (CO)?
- (Q3.7) From the list below, select three topics that you remember the most from your Correctional Officer Basic Training.
- (Q3.10) From the list below, select three elements of your Correctional Officer Basic Training that you use most frequently while at work.
- (Q3.9) From the list below, select three topics you would have liked to have learned more about during your Correctional Officer Basic Training

Responses for question (Q2.11) were categorized to represent the number of years an officer had worked in the prison system. Participants had the option of choosing less than 1 year, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 or more. The upper range was selected because several department have a 20-year retirement plan. Question (Q37) asked officers how long ago they completed their BCOT. This was designed as a separate question from (Q2.11) because there were sometimes a gap in time between when a person was hired by a department of corrections (DOC) and when the person entered BCOT. This gap in time was usually spent working in a central control room, tower, or shadowing a certified officer. Responses for this question were grouped 0-4, 5-10, 11-
More than 17 years ago. Questions (Q39) and (Q41) asked COs about the time they spend on in-service training. These questions were designed to gather data on how many hours of in-service training they were required to complete (Q39) versus how many hours COs participate that were not required (Q41). For both questions response choices were offered in time ranges representing numbers of hours, 0-20, 21-40, 41-60, More than 60. Question (Q40) was designed with responses on a five point scale ranging from 1- never to 5-Always. Response options for question (Q3.12) collected data on the preconceptions officers had before working in the prison system. The response options were:

- I will have the opportunity to help people;
- I will be protecting society;
- I am going into a dangerous place;
- I will make inmates comply with rules;
- I will have the opportunity to punish inmates for their crimes;
- I had no preconceptions of working in the prison system.

Question (Q3.1) collected data on officers’ motivations in becoming a CO. response options for this question were:

- I aspired to be a career Correctional Officer;
- I saw it as an entry into Law Enforcement;
- I wanted the opportunity to help people;
- It was a job I took until something better came along;
- Other.

Answer options for both (Q3.12) and (Q3.1) were developed based on a pilot study and experience working in corrections. Questions (Q3.7), (Q3.10), and (Q3.9) asked COs about BCOT elements of training they remembered, used the most frequently, and wanted more of. These questions asked participants to select three elements of training from a list of 10. These training elements were:
- Defensive Tactics;
- Pat down and search procedures;
- First aid;
- Interpersonal Communications;
- Count procedure;
- Cultural Diversity;
- Physical Training (PT);
- Report Writing;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

An additional option of “Other” was given for the participant to write in training elements that were not represented in the list of options. The options were created by examining the sample of training syllabi and extracting commonalities. Each of the training elements appeared in the sample of training syllabi. Syllabi had different names of these classes, but descriptions of these classes showed they were very similar in content.

The second block of questions had a theme that collected data on officers interaction with inmates and how cultural training affected communication and conflict in the prison. Questions in this block included:

- (Q3.25) On a scale of 1-5, how difficult is it for you to communicate with inmates from different cultures? For the purpose of this survey, culture is defined as the ethnic background of a person including language, heritage, race, religion, and country of origin.

- (Q3.14) How many times in a week do you engage in conversation with inmates on topics that do not relate to your duties?
- (Q3.13) When an inmate approaches you with a question or issue, how do you typically respond?

- (Q3.20.a) What is the average number of Disciplinary Reports (DR) you write in a month?

- (Q3.20.b) How many times have you used informal means of punishment instead of writing a Disciplinary Reports (DR) for a minor rules violation?

- (Q3.20.c) How many use of force situations have you been involved in during your career as a Correctional Officer?

- (Q3.24) How often do you have difficulty communicating with inmates of a different culture? For the purpose of this survey, culture is defined as the ethnic background of a person including language, heritage, race, religion, and country of origin.

- (Q34) How well did BCOT prepare you for identifying and mitigating cultural conflicts?

- (Q44.a) Conflicts in the prison are due to gambling.

- (Q44.b) Conflicts in the prison are due to contraband cell phones.

- (Q44.c) Conflicts in the prison are due to gang activity.

- (Q44.d) Conflicts in the prison are due to a struggle for control by various groups.

- (Q3.19) Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement. The inmate population of my prison is culturally diverse.

- (Q3.27) What impact does culture have on conflicts in the prison?

- (3.31) What level of priority would you put on cross-cultural communication? Cross-cultural communication training develops skills on effective communication between people of different cultural backgrounds.
- (Q45) What level of priority would you put on cultural diversity training? Cultural diversity training focuses on gaining knowledge of various cultures’ aspects, and how to identify them.

Question (Q3.20) was designed in a matrix format. This question contained three variables that focused on the interaction between officer and inmate. Officers were asked the frequency they write disciplinary reports (DRs), how many times officers use informal punishment, and their number of use of force incidents. The response categories were broken down into number ranges indicating the frequency of the event in question. These groups were 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and more than 20.

Question (Q3.27) was also displayed in a matrix format. The question asked officers to indicate their level of agreement on a five point scale. This matrix included variables that indicated officers level of agreement on, how culture impacts conflicts between COs and inmates and between different groups of inmates, if cultural training improved communication between COs and inmates, and if cultural diversity training would decrease conflicts.

Question (Q3.14) collected data on how many times during a work week that officers engaged inmates in conversation that was outside of prison related issues. Participants had the option of selecting 0, 1-3, 4-7, 8-11, more than 11. Data collated from question (Q3.13) indicated how officers responded to a question or issue brought to them by an inmate. Response options for this question were, Formal, Informal, Authoritarian, Arbitrary, and Dismissive.

Question (Q3.24) asked COs about the frequency they had difficulty communicating with inmates from different cultural backgrounds. The response options for this question were displayed on a scale ranging from 1- always to 5- never.
Question (Q44) was formatted in a matrix that had responses arranged in five-point scale with 1 meaning strongly agree to 5 meaning strongly disagree. This question included four topics which offices indicated their level of agreement. These statements were:

- Conflicts in the prison are due to gambling;
- Conflicts in the prison are due to contraband cell phones;
- Conflicts in the prison are due to gang activity;
- Conflicts in the prison are due to a struggle for control by various groups.

Question (Q3.19) asked officers about the diversity of the prison population where they worked. Officers were asked to select their level of agreement with the statement “The inmate population of my prison is culturally diverse”. Officers could select one response on a five point scale of 1 meaning strongly agree to 5 meaning strongly disagree.

Questions (Q3.31) and (Q45) collected data on the priority level COs would place on cross-cultural communication and cultural diversity training. For both questions, officers could respond on a five-point scale 1 meaning high priority and 5 meaning No priority at all.

The purpose of this block system was to collect data on the officers’ training experience. It then examined how their experience affected their view on culture in the prison system. Data from these blocks were the major points of comparison when testing the research questions.

**Survey Distribution**

Emails requesting participation were sent to four state correctional agencies. Recruitment letters were sent to the director of facilities in the states of Georgia, Alabama, Colorado, and Wyoming. These states were selected to examine a comparison between states in the eastern and western U.S. and to include states that had populations that would increase the chance of COs encountering different cultures. The demographics of Wyoming and Colorado indicated that they
had higher populations of Native Americans, Whites, and Hispanics than Georgia and Alabama. However, Georgia and Alabama had more African Americans and Asians (Census Bureau, 2018)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population estimates, July 1, 2018, (V2018)</th>
<th>Wyoming</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
<th>Alabama</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone, percent</td>
<td>92.80%</td>
<td>87.30%</td>
<td>69.20%</td>
<td>60.80%</td>
<td>76.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American alone, percent</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>26.80%</td>
<td>32.20%</td>
<td>13.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone, percent</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races, percent</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino, percent</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>21.50%</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>68.30%</td>
<td>65.60%</td>
<td>52.80%</td>
<td>60.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment emails included the IRB approval, dissertation proposal, a copy of the survey, and contact information for the researcher. Three states, Georgia (GA), Alabama (AL), and Wyoming (WY), responded with a request that a research application be completed for their agency’s internal IRB. Colorado declined the request for participation. After submitting the research applications approval was granted for GA, AL, and WY. The survey was distributed via an email that included, a message that explained the survey and instructions, the electronic signed consent form, and a link to the Qualtrics survey. This email was sent to the point of contact (POC) in each of the participating states. The POC then distributed the email through
their department’s email list serve. Participants were given a time frame of four weeks to complete the survey. Reminder emails were sent after weeks one and week three. After the four week period concluded, survey data was downloaded and stored on an external drive. The data was then analyzed and used to examine research questions and hypotheses.

Survey Data Testing

The first examination of survey data was done by creating a correlation matrix. A correlation matrix tested a set of variables identified as the “WHO” with variables that related to officers perceptions of training, culture, and interaction with inmates. This method produced a table that showed the level of correlation between the different variables. The goal of this test was to see if any of the “WHO” variables had correlations with the selected dependent variables. Based on the number of variables, using a matrix was more efficient and offered a better visualization.

The independent variables selected for this matrix were selected from the survey’s demographic data. This set of variables included:

- (TIME) - Years of employment as a Correctional Officer
- (AGE) – Age of Correctional Officer
- (GENDER) – Gender of the Correctional Officer
- (RANK) – Rank of the Correctional Officer
- (ETHNICITY) – Ethnicity of the Correctional Officer
- (OS WORK) – Officers’ experience working overseas with non-US citizens prior to becoming a Correctional Officer
- (MILITARY) – Indicated if officer was in the military
- (EDUCATION) – Indicated the level of education officers had completed
- (BILINGUAL) – Indicated if the officer spoke more than one language
- (STATE) – Indicated the state in which the officer was employed
Variables for race and education level were recoded into a dichotomous value. For education 1= college degree and 0= no college degree. Race was re-coded White =1 and Non-White = 0. Recoding race was due to the small amounts of other races that responded. Making them dichotomous decreased the margin of error due to small values of non-white or non-black races in this variable. Data on education was similar in that there was little distribution between the levels of education. Therefore, education was re-coded dichotomously. These variables were selected to represent the sample of officers. This set was labeled “WHO”. These “WHO” variables were then tested with groups of dependent variables that represented different themes drawn from the survey. The themes and their respective variables were:

- Perceptions of Culture
  - (Q44.d), (Q3.19),(Q3.27.a), (Q3.27.b)
- Perceptions of Training
  - (Q3.5),(Q3.8),(Q34.a),(Q34.b),(Q47)
- Interaction with Inmate
  - (Q3.25),(Q3.24),(Q3.13),(Q3.20.a),(Q3.20.b),(Q3.20.c),(Q3.14)
- Remembered Elements of Training
  - (Q3.7) Options 1-11
    - RM-Defensive Tactics
    - RM-Pat down and search procedures
    - RM-First aid
    - RM-Interpersonal Communications
    - RM-Count procedure
    - RM-Cultural Diversity
    - RM-Physical Training (PT)
    - RM-Report Writing
    - RM-Grievance Procedure
    - RM-Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
    - RM-Other
- Elements of TRN COs Use
  o (3.10) Options 1-11
    ▪ UM-Defensive Tactics
    ▪ UM-Pat down and search procedures
    ▪ UM-First aid
    ▪ UM-Interpersonal Communications
    ▪ UM-Count procedure
    ▪ UM-Cultural Diversity
    ▪ UM-Physical Training (PT)
    ▪ UM-Report Writing
    ▪ UM-Grievance Procedure
    ▪ UM-Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
    ▪ UM-Other

- Elements of TRN COs Want to Improve
  o (Q3.9) Options 1-11
    ▪ LN-Defensive Tactics
    ▪ LN-Pat down and search procedures
    ▪ LN-First aid
    ▪ LN-Interpersonal Communications
    ▪ LN-Count procedure
    ▪ LN-Cultural Diversity
    ▪ LN-Physical Training (PT)
    ▪ LN-Report Writing
    ▪ LN-Grievance Procedure
    ▪ LN-Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
    ▪ LN-Other

- Need for Training
  (Q3.27.c),(Q3.27.d),(Q3.31),(Q45)
Three of the themes examined relied on data from set of questions that were focused on officers’ training. New variables were created for questions (Q3.7), (Q3.9), and (Q3.10). These questions asked officers to pick three BCOT training elements that they remembered, wanted more of, and used. Officers could select three of the 11 training elements that were discussed earlier in this chapter. These responses were recoded into dichotomous values. This created 11 new variables for (Q3.7), (Q3.9), and (Q3.10). This was done so that the data from these questions could be tested quantitatively. These new 33 variables were then included in the bivariate correlation matrix.

Other variables from the survey were examined by using bivariate correlations, Chi-square, and descriptive analysis. Bivariate correlations were used to examine the statistical significance between independent (IV) and dependent (DV) variables. This test was used in the previously explained matrix, RQ3, RQ4, and H2. Chi-square test was used to test whether the relationships between categorical variables was independent. A crosstab was created which used investigate H1 by using the IV of ‘state’ and three DV of training elements that COs remembered. Research questions RQ1, RQ2, and RQ5 were examined by running descriptive statistics on variables from the survey data.

Summary

The basis of this dissertation was to examine current BCOT programs and how their training impacts and officer’s ability to deal with cultural conflicts. The current body of literature suggested that when culture was applied to the context of prison research, it focused more on the culture of the prison population as a whole. Therefore, this dissertation focused the lens of culture toward a more ethno-cultural meaning of the term.
The guiding theory of the prison culture developed from the works of Clemmer (1940) and Sykes (1958). As the demographics of the prison system changed, more recent research began to look at culture in the prison system from a more anthropological view (ToerBijns, 2012). This shift in the prison cultural context suggested that the starting point to understanding how officers dealt with culture in the prison context was based on their training. If training were shifted away from thinking of the inmate population as a whole to a collection of diverse cultures, then this would move the officer to becoming more in line with being what Avruch called a Model C practitioner (1998), as explained in chapter 2.

The need to examine training led to the collection of training syllabi. Data from the sample of syllabi indicted the disparities between training elements. The second part of this research was to see how officers perceived their BCOT. The results of the data collected from the training syllabi and survey are detailed in the following chapters.
Chapter 4

BCOT Syllabi Data

This chapter covers data collected from a sample of state correctional agency’s basic correctional officers training (BCOT) syllabi. A request for the syllabi was sent to a random sample of 25 agencies. The request included a copy of the dissertation proposal, Kennesaw State’s IRB approval form, and contact information for this dissertation’s chair. A total of nine agencies agreed to provide the syllabi. However, due to formatting variances only eight of the syllabi were used in the data set. The time spent on training classes were then coded into variables explained in Chapter 3.

A surface level review was done to examine consistencies and disparities between the training curriculums. This was done by looking at total training hours, class titles, descriptions, and class hour breakdowns of each state’s syllabus. Eight of the nine syllabi were drafted in a similar format. These syllabi included the name of the classes, a brief description of the class, and a number value indicating the number of hours dedicated to each class. This format was similar for training syllabi from Alabama (AL), Arizona (AZ), Arkansas (AR), Georgia (GA), North Carolina (NC), Tennessee (TN), Texas (TX), and Wyoming (WY). The training syllabus provided by Mississippi (MS) was formatted in a calendar layout. There were no descriptions of classes and the time spent on these classes were not detailed. The time that was spent on their classes was formatted in chronological time blocks. However, it did not indicate if these time blocks were the total time spent on the individual class or if these blocks included breaks, lunches, and exam times. Due to the vagueness of the MS syllabus, it was omitted from the data set. Calculating the times on a best guess situation risked creating erroneous data. Therefore, out of the nine syllabi collected, eight were coded and used in the BCOT data set. The total number
of training hours each BCOT included ranged from 160 to 511.5 hours. They also ranged in time periods between 5 to 10 weeks. Table 3 indicated the total number of training hours for each state.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>AZ</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>TN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>480.00</td>
<td>280.00</td>
<td>511.50</td>
<td>240.00</td>
<td>160.00</td>
<td>240.00</td>
<td>240.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were coded into variables that represented a block of training. The syllabi contained similar training elements, but sometimes labeled them in different ways, as described in the methodology chapter. Due to the variance in total training time, variable percentages were calculated. Table 4 showed the total number of hours dedicated to the respective variables and the percent of total training time dedicated to the variable.

Development of BCOT Syllabi

Conclusions on how the states in the sample developed their training is based on interviews with training officers and speculation priori knowledge. Calls were placed to training departments of states in the sample to gain insight on how the syllabi were developed. Three of the eight agreed to discuss this matter under the promise of anonymity. Therefore, their names and the states they worked for were excluded. The general consensus was that the current format of their syllabi was built on earlier versions and developed over time. Basically, their training programs were seldom revamped, but rather tweaked. Thus, the format of training is a result of a reaction to a change in policy or a change in administration. Evidence of a national standard for the development of states’ BCOT programs could not be found. This suggested that department of corrections (DOC) could have developed their BCOT based on looking at programs from
other states. Each DOC would then alter the BCOT program to best fit their needs. This could also explain the similarities in content. Based on these commonalities, variables were created that represented different blocks of training themes. The number of hours, percentages, and examination of each theme variable was discussed in the following sections.
Table 4

**BCOT Training Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>AZ</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>TN</th>
<th>TX</th>
<th>WY</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CADORE</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>49.50</td>
<td>152.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>538.50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
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Total Hrs. 480.00 280.00 511.50 240.00 160.00 240.00 240.00 360.00 2511.50 313.93
Cadet Orientation (CADORE)

The first variable indicated in Table 4 is Cadet Orientation (CADORE). This variable included training elements that focused on diagnostic issues of BCOT. Examples of training elements in this variable included filling out induction paperwork, key control, count procedures, uniform inspections, and reviewing and signing post orders. It was expected that this variable would have some of the highest amounts of training time, due to its inclusiveness. However, the data was not consistent with this hypothesis. The training hours for this variable ranged from 18 in NC to 152 in AR. Agencies in the sample spent an average of 67.31 hours on topics related to variable CADORE. The variance in this variable was interesting. At first glance, it would seem that the difference in total training time would explain the range in this variable. North Carolina had the lowest amount of hours for CADORE and the lowest amount of total training time with 160. However, Texas had the lowest percent of training time dedicated to CADORE at 3% at 76 hours, but with a total training time of 240. Tennessee had a total training time of 240 hours, 68 of which were dedicated to CADORE. This accounted for 28% of TN’s total training time. The states of AL, AZ, and GA spent a similar percentage of training time on CADORE. Arkansas had the most training hours, at 152 hours, which was the highest percentage at 29%. This agency also has the most total training hours at 511.5 hours. The amount of time spent on this variable were on average higher than most other variables, but the variance in the range was predictable. This variance could be explained due to states developing their training independently. Also, some states require a pre-service training in which much of the diagnostic paperwork is completed.
Cultural Diversity (CULDIV)

The variable Cultural Diversity (CULDIV) included training that focuses on cultural, ethnic, or religious diversity of the inmate population. The range of training hours for this variable was 0 to 10 hours. Texas’ training syllabus included no training that coded into this variable. Conversely, Arkansas dedicated 16 hours of training that focused specifically on cultural diversity. Arkansas had the most total training hours at 511.5. However, the percent of training time AR spent on CULDIV was 3%, which was 16 hours of total training. Both AR and NC spent 3% of training time on elements that fit within the CULDIV variable. For AR, this was 16 hours and for NC it was 5 hours. The states of TN and WY spent 2%, six hours for TN and 10 hours for WY, of training time on CULDIV. Alabama dedicated 8 hours to CULDIV at 1% of total training time. Georgia and Arizona had a total of two hours of training time on CULDIV, which was less than 1% of their BCOT. Combining the CULDIV scores of all states in the sample indicated that there was a total of 49 hours spent on cultural diversity training. This is 2% of the total training time for all eight states. Taken holistically, the dedication to cultural diversity training at an aggregate rate of only 2% of training time is indicative of a lack of emphasis in this area.

Effects of Incarcerations (EFINC)

Effects of Incarceration (EFINC) is the name of the third variable. This variable included training that focused on institutionalization, an inmate’s ability to manipulate officers, security threat groups (STGs) and legal rights of the inmates. This variable was designed to capture data on training that deals with how incarceration affects the inmate. States at the top end of the range for this variable were WY and AR with 36 hours each. Arizona occupied the low end range with 10 hours. Alabama included 24 hours of training that was coded in the EFINC variable, which
CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRAINING IN CORRECTIONAL OFFICER BASIC TRAINING

was 5% of their program. The states of GA, NC, and TN, spent 15 hours of training on this variable and had somewhat similar percentages. Georgia and Tennessee’s 15 hours of EFINC was 6% of training. North Carolina’s 15 hours was 9%. Texas’ 14 hours for variable EFINC was 5% of their total training. Overall, EFINC accounted for a total of 165 hours of training. This was 6% of total training time for all eight states. Data in this variable indicated less variance in the percent of training even though hours ranged from 36 to 14. The similarity in the percentage of training time could be due to the nature of the training involved in this variable. Several of the classes coded into this variable addressed legal liability issues. For example, the grievance process was included in this variable. Each state had variations of the process, but all included some form of the process generally. Violating the grievance procedure could leave the officer, institution, or state government vulnerable for legal action. Looking at this variable qualitatively would suggest that the similarities between the states’ training is due to making sure officers’ legal liabilities are covered.

Cross Cultural Communication (CULCOM)

Training that was coded into *Cross Cultural Communication* (CULCOM) dealt with developing skills in communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds. This variable differs from Interpersonal Communications (INTCOM) due to the difference in the goal of the training. Training included in CULCOM was focused specifically on communication skills used between people of different cultures. Conversely, training coded into INTCOM dealt with communication techniques that focused on projection, speech structure, and the proper manner in making and handling request. The data for this variable was a bit bleak. The states of GA, NC, TN, and TX had no training that coded into this variable. Wyoming’s BCOT offered 1 hour of training in CULCOM. This was .02% of Wyoming’s total training hours. Alabama and Arkansas
devoted much more training hours to CULCOM in comparison to the rest of the sample. Arkansas spent 16 hours on CULCOM, but only accounted for 3% of their BCOT. Alabama had a similar value for this variable with 15 hours, which was also 3% of their total training. Arizona spent 1% of training time to CULCOM at 5 hours. When looking at all the states in the sample, CULCOM represents only 1% of total training. This was troubling in that even when combined with cultural diversity on the aggregate, less than five percent of training time involved culture.

**Interpersonal Communication (INTCOM)**

The variable *Interpersonal Communications* (INTCOM) included training on officers’ ability to communicate with inmates, staff, and public. This block with more focused on the mechanics of communicating effectively and listening skills. The range for this variable 74.25 to 5 hours. Arkansas scored at the top of the range with 74.25 hours accounting for 14% of their program. Texas was the lowest with 5 hours of training representing 2% of total training time. Wyoming had relatively high values for this variables with 47 hours at 13%. The states of GA, AZ, NC, and TN were similar with scores between these states ranging from 17 to 10. The percentages for these states were also close. The highest these four were NC with 9%, at 15 hours, and the lowest was Georgia with 4% at 10 hours. When looking at all states in the sample a total of 224.25 hours were spent on INTCOM. This number represents 6% of the combined training time. This training could easily incorporate cultural sensitivity in communications, should states pursue recommendations of this research. The aggregate score for this variable indicated that a relatively small amount of training time was spent on a skill that the survey data indicated was used most frequently.

**Communication Using Electronic Devices (COMDEV)**
Officers in the prison system use electronic devices of various forms to communicate. Radios, intercoms, telephones, and inter department computers are used in a wide range of ways to transfer information. Training on the ability to convey messages through electronic devises was included in the variable *Communication Using Electronic Devices* (COMDEV). Three of the states in the sample, GA, NC, and TX, offered no training for this variable. Others states included training on this topic, but it was a small amount overall. The state with the highest score in COMDEV was Arkansas with 4 hours. However, this represented only .07% of Arkansas’ training. Wyoming offered 1 hour of training on communication devices which was .02% of their BCOT. The states of AL, AZ, and TN each offered 2 hours of training for this variable. The percentage of training for these states were also less than 1%. The sum number of training hours for this variable was 11. This was .04% of training for the entire sample. Out of the 18 variables in this data set, COMDEV was second to last in both total number of training hours and percent of training. This could be due to officers learning proper operation of electronic equipment while on the job.

**De-escalation Communication (DESTRN)**

Variable *De-escalation Communication* (DESTRN) covered topics that dealt with intervening in riots, suicide attempts, detail work stoppages, and hostage situations. For this variable, AL had the highest amount of time for this training at 21 hours at 4% of BCOT. Next was Arizona. This department spent 19 hours on DESTRN which was 6% of their total training time. Tennessee had the lowest score in this variable with only 3.3 hours dedicated to this training. This was 1% of Tennessee’s total training. Georgia and North Carolina both 6 hours of training on this variable. Their percentages were also similar with GA at 2% and NC at 3% of their individual BCOT programs. Another group that had similar numbers were Arizona and
Texas. Arizona used 19 hours at 6% while TX used 14 hours at 5%. The state of Arkansas used 10 hours of training, which was only 1% of their BCOT. This was the first variable in the data set that AR did not have the highest number of hours. Data from Arkansas’ variables indicated that their training hours and percentage of training time decreased, in comparison to other states, when variables represented training that dealt with physical contact with inmates. This trend will be discussed further in the conclusion section of this chapter.

**Use of Force (USEFOR)**

*Use of Force* (USEFOR) included any training on the use of force continuum or physical manipulation of an inmate, including variables *Defensive Tactics* (DEFTAC), *Weapon Certification* (WEPCRT), and *Restraint Devise* (RETDEV). This variable was designed to capture that total number of hours that stats’ BCOT programs spend on training that focused physical contact between inmate and officer. The numbers for this variable were predicted to be high due to the fact that its value was summed with other variable totals. However, this variable was important in examining the research questions and hypothesis of this dissertation. Using variables DEFTAC, WEPCRT, and RETDEV alone did not offer a complete representation of BCOT elements that deal with physical contact between officers and inmates.

The range for this variable was AL with 168 to NC with 69 hours. Even though NC had the least amount of hours dedicated to USEFOR, their 69 hours represented 43% of their total program. Arizona spent 100.5 hours on USEFOR training, which was 35% of their total BCOT. Arkansas had a value of 104 for the USEFOR variable. This was 20% of AR’s program. The remaining states in the sample spent less than one hundred hours on training that coded into USEFOR with GA with 80, TN with 70.7, TX with 88.5, and WY with 95 hours. As expected, the values and percentages for this variable were higher than most other variables. However, an
unexpected finding was that Arkansas’ scores for USEFOR were lower in number and percentage than their score for CADORE. This would suggest that Arkansas’ training program focused less on the physical tactics than other states in the sample.

**Defensive Tactics (DEFTAC)**

The variable *Defensive Tactics* (DEFTAC) focused on training that dealt with empty-handed physical contact with inmates. Examples of this would be verbal judo, defense against edged weapons, and weapons retention. Wyoming had the highest score in this variable with 79 hours and Arkansas was lowest with 12 hours, which was 21% for WY and 2% for AR. Alabama was the second highest number of hours with 58, which was 12% of their training. The remaining states in the sample, AZ, GA, NC, TN, and TX, spent between 31 to 36 hours on DEFTAC in their individual BCOT programs. Arizona, Georgia, and Tennessee dedicated 36 hours to DEFTAC, which represented 12% of AZ’s training and 15% of GA and TN’s individual BCOT programs. Texas’ 34 hours of training time in DEFTAC was 14% of their total BCOT. North Carolina had a score of 31 for variable DEFTAC, but this amount was the second highest percentage at 19% of their BCOT. When looking at the sample as a whole, the mean score for the sample was 40.33 hours. The combined total training time in DEFTAC was 322.7 hours. This number represented 12% of the total training time when combing all the states in the sample. Both the individual scores and aggregate score indicated that, comparatively, a significant portion of BCOT was dedicated to skills that fell within the DEFTAC variable.

**Weapons Certification and Training (WEPCRT)**

Variable *Weapon Certification and Training* (WEPCRT) was created to capture data on training which focused on the use of weapons both lethal and less lethal. The data showed that relative to other training elements WEPCRT represented a significant portion of overall training
time. The states with the highest numbers were AR, with a total of 92 hours at 17%, and AL, with 90 hours at 18%. North Carolina had the highest percentage at 20% with a total number of hours at 32. The low end of this range was occupied by Wyoming with comparably low total hours of six, which was 1% of their total training. States that occupied the middle ranges of this variable were AZ, GA, TN, and TX. Texas used 38.5, which was 16% of their BCOT, and Arizona used 37.5 hours, which was 13% of their program. Georgia spent 44 hours on variable WEPCRT at 18% of their total training. Tennessee spent 27.5 hours at 11%. Across the sample, the percent of total time was relatively similar except for WY. Wyoming’s syllabus did not include certification training for firearms. Firearm certification and practicums were a substantial part of training for other states in the sample. A phone call was placed to the point of contact (POC) for this research to investigate the matter further. The POC indicated that WY’s firearm certification and practicums were done separately from their BCOT program. Documentation for their firearm certification was not requested in the research application. Therefore, the documents were not provided and the time allowed for WY’s firearm certification could not be included.

**Restraint Devices (RETDEV)**

Training that included the use of restraint devices was the focus of variable *Restraint Device (RETDEV)*. The range for this variable was AL with 16 hours at 3% of training to AR and GA with 0 hours. Arizona spent 15 hours on RETDEV at 5% and WY spent 10 hours at 2%. North Carolina and TX each used 3% of training time on RETDEV. Their training hours for this variable were NC, 6 and TX,7.5. Tennessee spent 6.5 hours at 2% of total training time. Overall, the sample spent a total of 61 hours on RETDEV with a mean score of 7.62 hours. This represented 2% of total training time for the sample. The lack of dedicated training hours for AR
and GA were investigated further because the use of restraint devices are common practice for transporting inmates and restraining inmates that pose a threat to staff or themselves. A call was placed to the training department POC at the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC). The training POC revealed that handcuffing training is included in the defensive tactics class. Calls to AR’s training personnel were not returned. Based on the information received from the GDC training POC supported the decision in creating the variable USEFOR. Adding variables that dealt with any physical contact with inmates into one variable would capture training hours that may be misconstrued due to their title and description.

**Report Writing (REPWRT)**

The variable for *Report Writing* (REPWRT) dealt with training that focused on officer documentation of various reports excluding the *Prison Rape Elimination Act* (PREA). The range for this variable was AR at 51 hours to NC with two. Arkansas’ 51 hours represented 9% of their training while NC’s two hours represented 1% of their BCOT program. Wyoming had a variable score of 41 hours, which was 11% of their training. For variable REPWRT, WY had the highest percentage in the sample. Alabama spent 6% of their training time on REPWRT, which was 31 hours of training. Arizona also dedicated 6% of their training to report writing, but it had a total number of hours of 18. Georgia had a variable score of 10 hours at 4% of training. Similar to NC, Texas used only 1% of training on REPWRT at 3 hours. Tennessee spent 7.5 hours on report writing which accounted for 3% of their training. The mean score for the sample was six. The total number of hours for the sample was 163.5. The aggregate percentage for the sample was 6% of overall training time. The reason PREA was excluded from this variable was that PREA is a federally mandated procedure. According to the PREA coordinator at Carroll County
Prison, in Carrollton, GA, PREA is a block of training that often taught independently of other report writing modules.

**Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREATN)**

In 2003, President Bush signed into law the *Prison Rape Elimination Act* (PREA) (Jenness & Smyth, 2011). The purpose of this act was track the occurrences of sexual assaults that occur in federal, state, and local correctional facilities (Jenness & Smyth, 2011). Facilities were now required to have staff trained as PREA coordinators. Frontline COs were trained on the reporting and documentation of occurrences of sexual assault (Jenness & Smyth, 2011). Variable PREATN was created to represent training that deals with PREA. In the sample of syllabi three states, AZ, AR, and NC scored 0 for this variable. Other states in the sample had relatively low numbers in comparison to other variables. The highest was TX at 6.5 hours at 2% of their training. Georgia, Wyoming, and Tennessee each had a score of two and the percent of training time for these three states were less than 1%. Alabama used a total of four hours for the PREATN variable, which was approximately .08% of their training. According to the PREA coordinator at Carroll County Prison, officers and staff that were designated as PREA coordinators were are officers of higher rank. This would explain the low number of hours of training in BCOT programs. When an officer finished BCOT they are most times placed in an entry level rank. As an officers rank increases, their responsibility to PREA reporting and procedure becomes more involved. The PREA coordinator also stated that most of the PREA training for officers was done through in-service training, which is held annually.

**Health and Wellness (HELWEL)**

The variable *Health and Wellness* (HELWEL) included training that dealt with physical and mental health protocol. This variable focused on the officer’s ability to respond to medical
and mental health issues that occur in the facility. This training included first aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certifications. Arkansas had the highest value for this variable at 42.25 hours, which was 8% of their training. North Carolina had the lowest score at eight hours, which was 5% of their BCOT. Alabama and Arizona had the same percentage of time dedicated to HELWEL at 5%. However, AL used 26 hours of training on HELWEL and AZ used 15.5 hours. Georgia and Texas were close in both hours and percentage. Georgia scored 27 hours at 11% of training and Texas scored 25 hours at 10% of their BCOT. Tennessee had a value of 20 hours, which was 8% for training time for HELWEL. Finally, WY had a value of 27 hours at 7% of their total BCOT. The collective sample spent a total of 190.75 hours on training that coded into the HELWEL variable. This was 7% of the total training time. On average, agencies in the sample spent 23.84 hours on first aid, well checks, and mental health training. The aggregate score indicated that a moderate amount of total training time was dedicated to skills that coded into variable HELWEL.

**Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)**

Training that dealt with the handling of chemicals that required a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) was coded in to the variable Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT). This variable was included in the data set due to three of the states having training on this topic. However, five of the states included no training on the topic of HAZMAT. Tennessee, Alabama, and Arizona included a small amount of training focused on HAZMAT. Alabama and Arizona each had value of two for this variable, which was less than 1% of their training. Tennessee spent one hour on this topic which also represented less than one percent of total training. The total time for the sample was 5 hours at .01% of training. This was the smallest value in both number of hours and percentage of any variable in the data set. Despite the
low value for this variable, it was included in the data set to ensure all training themes and hours were accounted for. Leaving this data out would have risked miscalculations in examining the total number of hours for the sample and research questions.

**Physical Training (PHYTRN)**

The variable *Physical Training* (PHYTRN) focused on officers’ physical fitness, PT testing and drill. The training syllabi of the sample indicated that states had various PT requirements. Two states, Arkansas and Texas did not have training that coded into this variable. For these states, passing PT exams were a prerequisite to hiring and therefore did not have dedicated classes that would code into variable PHYTRN. For the states that included PHYTRN elements, the range for this variable was from AL’s 44 hours to WY’s seven. Alabama’s value of 44 represented 9% of their total training. Wyoming’s 7 hours was 1%. Georgia had a value of 23 for PHYTRN, which was 9% of their BCOT. North Carolina spent 5% of training on PHYTRN with a total of 8 hours. Tennessee spent 3% of their BCOT on PHYTRN with a total of 9 hours.

**Graduation Program (GRDPRO)**

A graduation ceremony was included in all of the BCOT programs in the sample. Seven out of the eight states had training time dedicated to graduation. Variable *Graduation Program* (GRDPRO) focused on training time devoted to the officers’ graduation ceremony. Arkansas’ BCOT had no time allotment for graduation practice. Alabama had a value of 10 hours for variable GRDPRO. This was 2% of AL’s training time. Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas each had values of four hours for this variable. For Georgia and Texas, this was 1% of their training time, but for NC it was 2% of their total BCOT. Similar to other states, AZ and TN spent 1% of their BCOT on GRDPRO with AZ using 3 hours and TN 2.5 hours. Of the states that included training time for GRDPRO, WY had the least amount at 2 hours, which was .05% of their total
training. For the entire sample, a total of 29.5 hours was dedicated to GRDPRO. This was 1% of total training time. It was disconcerting that some states, such as AL, spent more time on graduation programs than on cultural training. The aggregate scores for this variable indicated a similar finding. Even though this variable’s aggregate percentage score was 1%, it was a higher percentage time than COMDVE, PREATN, and HAZMAT.

**Contraband Search (CONSER)**

The variable *Contraband Search* (CONSER) included training that involved searching an inmate’s person, living quarters or property for contraband. Searches for contraband are often conducted on a daily basis in the prison system. This procedure is done to protect staff, officers, and inmates from dangerous items that are smuggled into or manufactured inside the prison. The state of Georgia had the highest value for this variable at 24 hours and the highest percentage rate at 10% of their total BCOT. Arkansas had the lowest score with six, which was 1% of their BCOT program. Alabama used 19 hours on CONSER at 3% of training time. Tennessee spent 17 hours on training coded into this variable at 7% of total training time. North Carolina and Wyoming had equal values of 10 hours for CONSER. However, for NC this was 6% of their training and for WY it was 2%. Arizona and Texas had the same the percentage scores of 3%, but different values for CONSER. Texas spent 8 hours on this training and Arizona 9 hours. The total amount of time for the sample was 103 hours. This was 4% of combined training time. The mean score for this variable was 12.87.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this data was to examine the time differences that agencies spent on different training elements. More specifically, this data set examined discrepancies the programs had between training elements that dealt with the physical manipulation of inmates versus
training that would enable officers to manage situations by less physical methods. The previous sections of this chapter highlighted the data of each variable. In this section, conclusions were drawn from comparing the variables and relating them to the research question.

Shifting the focus of comparison from variables to the states resulted in interesting findings. The total amount of time for the sample was 2511.5 hours of training. Several of the states and relativity similar amounts of total time. Three of the states GA, TN, and TX had total training hours of 240. Arkansas had the most hours with 511.5 and NC the least with 160. The mean for this sample was 313.9 and the median was 260. At first there seemed to be a similarity between states in the southeast. However, when Alabama’s syllabus was received this assumption was challenged. Alabama had a total of 480 hours which was double the time of GA, TN, and TX.

One of the states had an unexpected shift in variable percentage. Arkansas had the most total training hours. Several of the variables indicated that AR had both the highest value and percentages. However, for the block of variables that focused on use of force topics, AR had a decrease in percentage compared to other states. Arkansas’ trend was converse to other states in the sample which showed an increase in percentage time on use of force related variables. In other words, AR had high values for non-combative training and decreased values in use of force training. Texas was the state that showed a trend that was more disconcerting in relation to the basis of this dissertation. Data for this state showed comparably low values for non-combative variables and an increase in use of force variables. This would suggest that their training had more focus on physical aspects than cultural. Other states in the sample showed an increase in values when it came to use of force variables. However, TX had the highest increase while AR indicated a decrease.
One of the most obvious steps was to compare the variables across the sample. Two variables stand out as having the most total hours and percentage of training. However, this finding was expected due to how these two variables were created. Variable USEFOR had the most training hours with 775.7 and accounted for 30% of training for the combined sample. This variable’s number was high because its data included the values of three other variables, DEFTAC, WEPCRT, and RETDEV. This was done to assure that training that focuses on physical manipulation of inmates was accounted for. For example, in the GA syllabus handcuffing training was included in a class titled Defensive Tactics. This class also included training on arm bars, take downs, and edged weapon defense. However, other syllabi had classes dedicated to handcuffing. Therefore, due to labeling discrepancies, the variable USEFOR included all.

The second variable that was expected to have a high value was CADORE. This variable included all the training time that was spent on the diagnostic processing of cadets and procedural content. According to the syllabi in the sample, a relatively large portion time was spent on elements that fit within this variable. This suggests that one goal of BCOT was to expose officers to the mundane nature of working in a correctional facility. Just a few examples of training that coded into this variable were in-processing paperwork, key control, perimeter car (PCar) training, inmate count procedure, and uniform inspection. Therefore, the inclusive nature of variables CADORE and USEFOR resulted in the top two highest values. The next step of this examination was to look at variables that were not as inclusive.

This dissertation focused on the amount of training that officers receive in cultural diversity. For the entire sample, a total of 49 hours was focused on cultural diversity. This was 2% for the sample. Aggregate totals for the sample indicated that the mean for the sample was
146.3 and a median of 103 hours. The number for CULDIV was well below the median and average for all states. Variable CULCOM had a value that was even less than CULDIV. The score for CULCOM was 37 hours, which was 1% of total training time. If CULCOM and CULDIV were combined, their score would be 86 hours at a total of 3% of training time for the sample. The data from the individual states also indicated a disparity. The states of AZ and GA had only two hours dedicated to cultural diversity. For GA the two hours was .08% of their total training time and for AZ it was .07% of their BCOT program. Texas had zero training elements that were coded into CULDIV. Thus, data from both the aggregate and individual states indicated that cultural diversity training elements are not a significant part of the BCOT programs represented in the sample.

Comparing the time spent on cultural elements to training that dealt with physical manipulation showed a large disparity. The variable for DEFTAC had a total number of hours at 322.7 hours and 12% of training. This one variable alone had a score 3.7 times higher number of hours than CULDIV and CULCOM combined. Variable WEPCRT showed an even higher difference in value than CULDIV and CULCOM combined. The WEPCRT value alone was 367.5 hours at 14% of total training time. This number of hours was four times greater than the combined values of CULDIV and CULCOM.

The comparison of data from all of the variables in the sample suggested that the main focus of BCOT programs were cadet orientation and training on using physical force, including use of deadly force. All other variables seemed to be secondary, rather than a focus of developing officers’ skills. Based on the variables, one conclusion was that BCOT is more about liability than actual preparation. The two areas that had the most focus were the areas in which
officers signed documents and received certifications. Classes that did not result in officers’ certification in a documented skill, such as firearm qualification, consistently had lower values.

The limitation to this data set is generalizability. A comparison of all 50 states’ training syllabi would have been more comprehensive. However, based on the responses to request for training syllabi, obtaining a copy of all 50 would be improbable. The POC in Louisiana indicated that they could not supply a copy of their training syllabus even through an open records request due to security reasons. The sample collected represents only 16% of state BCOT syllabi. However, in this sample, variables had data that was close in value. This could suggest that even though no national standard could be found, there is some overall similarity to BCOT programs.

Analysis of the BCOT training data consisted of collecting a sample of training syllabi from state correctional agencies. The hours that were spent on each training element were coded into variables that represented training themes. Some of the syllabi in the sample had different total training hour amounts. Therefore, the percentage were calculated for each variable of the individual state’s BCOT. This was offered a better representation of the discrepancies that existed between syllabi in the sample. Also, the total number of hours was calculated for the total sample. Aggregate totals and percentages were used in comparison to the individual states’ data. Overall, data from the sample of training syllabi indicated a large disparity between training that focused on cultural elements and ones that focus on use of force. The next step was to examine how this data relates to the findings from the survey data, which is covered in the next chapter.
Chapter 5

Survey Data

Survey data collected from a random sample of correctional officers was reviewed for presentation in this chapter. The method of using a survey was selected based on the research question’s focus on officers’ perception of training. An online survey was distributed to a sample of Correctional Officers (CO) working in Georgia, Alabama, and Wyoming. The survey included 35 questions. Ten questions collected demographic data. This survey was developed by means explained in chapter 3. An email was sent via each departments’ internal listserv. This email included an informed consent form, a message explaining the purpose of the survey, and a link to a Qualtrics survey. Out of a population of 1,750 officers, a total of 418 responses were collected. The sample of participants represented 23% of the population. Respondents were given a four-week period to take part in the survey. Reminder emails were sent at the end of week two and three.

A bivariate correlation matrix was used to examine this data. A set of variables labeled “WHO” represented officer’s demographics. These were placed in a matrix with variables that focused on BCOT and the officers’ perceptions of culture. Further testing was done by examining variables that related to sub-questions and hypothesis. The underlying focus of this dissertation was to measure how the level of cultural training officers receive impacted their work. Therefore, the focus of the analysis was to statistically test their responses and examine links between officers’ responses, and variables that focused on training and cultural elements. The following tables indicate the results.

Correlation Matrix
The first set of variables tested in the correlation matrix was for WHO and those that measured CO’s perceptions of culture. The first perception variable indicated CO’s level of agreement with how conflicts in the prison were based on groups’ competition for control. An example of this was explained as being comprised of two Security Threat Groups (STGs), or gangs, that struggled for informal control of a dorm, cellblock, contraband, or inside drug trade. The second variable represented officer perceptions of culturally diversity in their prison populations. Data in the last two variables of this matrix focused on the impact culture had on conflicts between COs and inmates, and also between inmates and other inmates. Following the thematic method used by Burton, Lux, Cullen, Miller, and Burton (2018), this matrix examined the theme of officers’ perceptions of culture with their demographic data. The results of this matrix is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables and Perception of Culture Variables</th>
<th>Perceptions of Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Q44.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>-0.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS Work</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q44.d - Conflict is due to struggle for control.
Q3.19 - Perceived diversity level of inmate population.
Q3.27.a - Conflict between inmates and officers is culturally based.
Q3.27.b - Conflict between inmate groups is culturally based.
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Variable Q3.27.a represented data on officers’ perception of how culture affected conflicts between COs and inmates. This variable had correlations with four of the WHO variables including AGE, RANK, OS WORK and EDUCATION. Variables EDUCATION and RANK showed significance at the .01 level. The table above shows that these two variables correlated with variable Q3.27.a at a 99% confidence level. Variables in Table 5 with correlation levels that did not meet at least the .05 level, meant that the relationship between the two variables was not statistically significant. The variable OS WORK collected data on officers’ overseas work experience prior to becoming a correctional officer. This was a dichotomous variable with 1 = yes and 2 = no. Even though the output showed a negative correlation, this data indicated a correlation between officers that had prior overseas experience and their perception that culture affected conflicts between officers and inmates.

Other notable correlations were found with demographic data and variables Q3.19 and Q3.27.b. There was statistical significance between variable Q3.27.b and OS WORK at the .05 level. In addition, variables RANK and STATE correlated with Q3.19 at the .05 level. Variable Q3.19 included a 5-point scale of agreement with 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Therefore, the negative correlation meant that there was significance between the level of officers’ rank and their perception that the prison population was diverse. The state variable showed significance with variable Q3.19. This correlation implied that there was statistical significance between how officers working in Wyoming perceived their prison population as more homogeneous than other states. This finding was supported by census data of the state. The U.S. Census Bureau indicated that Wyoming is 92.8% white. All other races combined account for only 7.2% of Wyoming’s total population of 577,737 (Census Bureau, 2018). Calculating this
out showed that only 40,441 in the state of Wyoming were not considered white. Therefore, there was a strong chance of having a homogeneous prison population.

Conclusions drawn from this matrix indicated that COs that were older in age, higher ranking, more educated, and had prior overseas work experience tended to have a higher level of awareness of cultural diversity in the prison system. The two with the highest level of correlation were rank and education. This finding was logical link because of the educational requirements for ascending the rank structure. The link between education and awareness of cultural diversity could be due to an officers’ course work or interaction with culturally diverse people on campuses. Correlations in this matrix were consistent with the conflict resolution theory detailed in chapter two. Avruch’s Model C practitioner was a person that had a basic understanding of cultural differences and nuances through experience and training. Thus, an officer that had gained knowledge and experience through age, education, and overseas experience would be more aware of cultural diversity in their prison. The theory also suggested that these officers would be more effective at identifying and negotiating with people of different cultures.

**Officers’ Perceptions of Training**

Results for the matrix that tested the WHO set of variables with survey variables that focused on officers’ perception of training is displayed in table six. The selected survey variables asked officers how they adapted to BCOT Q3.5, what level of preparedness BCOT afforded them Q3.8, and if BCOT gave them skills to identify and manage conflicts in prison which had cultural undertones Q34.a and Q34.b. This theme was selected to examine what officers thought about BCOT and its effectiveness.
The notable variables found in table six were OS WORK and MILITARY. These variables had correlations at the .01 level. Other variables, EDUCATION, STATE, RANK, and CHILDHOOD, showed statistical significance at the .05 level. The variable for MILITARY was negatively correlated with adaptation to BCOT, but a positive correlation Q47, the perceived difficulty level of BCOT. This data suggested that people with prior military experience indicated that they did not adapt well to BCOT, but indicated that the training was relatively easy. This finding was consistent with experience interacting with COs that were former military. They did not adapt well because BCOT operated on a paramilitary design, which lacked the complete structure and discipline of formal military training. However, officers indicated that BCOT was not difficult to complete.
Variable OS WORK had statistical significance with all but one of the perception variables. This output showed linearity between OCs with no prior overseas work and variables, Q34.a, Q34.b, and Q47. These three variables dealt with the level BCOT prepared them to identify and manage cultural conflict and the difficulty of BCOT. This indicated that officers who had no overseas work experience found greater value in their BCOT cultural training, but found their BCOT to be more difficult.

The conclusions gathered from this output again pointed to experience. Officers with prior military experience seemed to have an overall lower perception of BCOT. An unexpected finding was the correlation between EDUCATION and ADAPTATION to BCOT. After considering the amount of class time involved in BCOT programs, it became apparent that the BCOT environment was thought of more as classes with intermittent periods of paramilitary training rather than paramilitary training with supplemental classes. This could have also explained the negative correlation between Military and variable Q3.5, which measured how well cadets adapted to BCOT. The relation between OS WORK and Q34.b was also unexpected. The assumption for this variable was that COs with prior overseas experience would recognize the need for cultural diversity training. Their lack of value could be due to their experience. Meaning, that officers felt that their experience taught them more about cultural diversity than formal in class training could accomplish.

Interaction with Inmates

In order to evaluate COs interactions with inmates, WHO variables were tested with variables that focused on COs’ prior recorded interactions with inmates. This theme included data from interaction variables that related to how many disciplinary reports (DRs) an officer wrote, what level of formality COs responded to inmate requests, the number of use of force
incidents officers were involved in, and what level of difficulty COs had in communicating with inmates of different cultures. Table 7 includes variables that gave insight regarding which demographic traits were correlated with punitiveness.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables and Interaction with Inmates</th>
<th>Interaction with Inmate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Q3.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.140*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>0.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0.084</td>
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<td>Childhood</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
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<tr>
<td>OS Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>.118*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3.25 – Difficulty Level of Communicating with Inmates of Different Culture
Q3.24 – Frequency of Difficulty Communicating With Inmates of Different Culture
Q3.13 – Level of Formality in Interaction with Inmates
Q3.20.a – Number of DRs
Q3.20.b – Use of Informal Punishment
Q3.20.c – Number of Use of Force Incidence
Q3.14 – Informal Conversation with Inmates
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data collected from the BCOT syllabi indicated that a considerable percentage of training was focused on skills that involved physical manipulation inmates. Therefore, it was no surprise that the interaction variable had the most correlations with use of force variable Q3.20.c.

Variable Q3.20.c indicated the number of use of force incidents the CO had been involved in during his or her career. TIME, GENDER, RANK, and ETHNICITY were correlated with Q3.20.c at the .01 level. The variable AGE was significant at the .05 level. The variable
GENDER was coded 1 = male, 2 = female, and 3 = unspecified. The correlation between GENDER and Q3.20.c was negative. This was expected due to the majority of COs being male and that female officers were often assigned to secure posts such as guard towers and control rooms.

An unexpected finding was the amount of statistical significance in the INTERACTION variable that indicated how many times COs used informal means of punishment. Variable Q3.20.b showed significant relationships with four WHO variables. Variable Q3.20.b measured how many times officers used informal means of punishment for rule violations. TIME, GENDER, and OS WORK had significance levels of .05. Ethnicity correlated at a .01 level. The negative direction of correlation between ENDER and Q3.20.b was due to the coding of the GENDER variable. Outputs for variables Q3.20.b and Q3.20.c indicated that white male COs of higher rank tended to be involved in more use of force incidents, but also frequently employ informal means of punishment for rule violations. It was expected that COs who had more use of force incidents would be more prone to sticking strictly to SOP. This assumption was based on the use of force continuum that was taught in BCOT. This continuum indicated the level of force that officers could employ to gain control of a situation. This continuum ranged from officer’s presences at the low end to use of deadly force at the high end. Points in between included verbal commands, physical restraint, and use of less lethal devices, such as Tasers and chemical agents. Officers that follow procedure more strictly would offer little room for communication or dialog between going from one point of the continuum to another. However, the data did not support this hypothesis.

Another interesting finding was that there was little correlation between WHO variables and Q3.14. Variable Q3.14 measured the number of times an officer engaged inmates in
conversations that were informal. An assumption made by looking at the correlations of variable Q3.20.b was that since officers tended to use informal means of punishment, then they would also engage inmates in informal conversation. The only demographic variables that showed statistical significance with Q3.14 was Gender and Ethnicity. The assumption was that more of the WHO variables would have a significant relationship with Q3.14, but again the data did not support this.

The conclusion of this matrix was that COs' interactions with inmates seem to run hot or cold. In simple terms, COs interactions with inmates were limited, unless it was a use of force situation. This assumption was consistent when compared to data from the training syllabi. As stated before, the largest portions of training time focused on elements coded as use of force. Elements that focused on communication and cultural understanding made up small percentages of overall training time. Thus, it could be concluded that COs applied their skillset consistent with their training, or at least what they recalled from training, which is detailed in the next section.

**Remembered Elements of Training**

Data included in Table 8 indicated Pearson Correlations between variables indicating CO demographics and variables that represented different BCOT elements. As discussed in Chapter 3, survey question Q3.7 asked to officers about training elements they remembered the most. This question was then coded into 11 variables that represented CO responses. This was done so that data from the variable could be tested quantitatively.

Data collected from the training syllabi indicated that training elements that represented the largest portions of BCOT were ones that focused on use of force. The smallest portions of BCOT were PREA and Cultural Diversity. Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) training
included officers’ protocol when an inmate reports that he or she is a victim of a sexual crime. This law was enacted in 2003 at the federal level and thus applies to all state facilities. Variables that had correlations at the .05 and .01 level were consistent with training elements that accounted for larger percentages of overall BCOT. Topics such as defensive tactics, report writing, pat down searches, and interpersonal communications accounted for the majority of training. Each of these had the highest number of correlations. Conversely, the training element that accounted for the least percentage of training time was PREA. The output in Table 8 showed negative correlations for this variable. The theme of this matrix was to test training elements that COs remember the most. Data in the correlation matrix supported the variance in training elements from the sample of BCOT syllabi. The data was limited due to only having three states participate in the study, but the variance was consistent across the sample.
### Table 8

**Demographic Variables and Training Elements Remembered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>0.096</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
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<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>-1.188**</td>
<td>0.013</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.069</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
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<td>-0.047</td>
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<td>-0.040</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>-1.228**</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.160**</td>
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<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>-1.207**</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>0.025</td>
<td>.131**</td>
<td>.114*</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>.195**</td>
<td>-0.040</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-0.033</td>
<td>.146*</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-1.51**</td>
<td>-1.32*</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS Work</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>-1.30*</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>-1.14*</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.028</td>
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<td>-0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>.139**</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>.125*</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>.151**</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>0.065</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-0.043</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-1.161**</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.121*</td>
<td>.215**</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>.227**</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>.130**</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RM - DT** - Defensive Tactics  
**RM - PD** - Pat down and search procedures  
**RM - FA** - First aid  
**RM - IC** - Interpersonal Communications  
**RM - CP** - Count procedure  
**RM - CD** - Cultural Diversity  
**RM - PT** - Physical Training  
**RM - RW** - Report Writing  
**RM - GP** - Grievance Procedure  
**RM - PA** - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)  
**RM - OT** - Other  

**.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
In Chapter 2, the four goals of corrections were discussed. Based on the breakdown of the training syllabi and correlations form the matrix, it seemed that current BCOT training and the elements that COs remember the most are counterintuitive to the four goals of corrections. The outputs for this matrix painted a picture of consistency. It was logical seeing that topics covered the most had the highest correlations. Therefore, this suggested that modifying BCOT so that there was an increase in cultural training would result in higher correlations for cultural elements remembered. However, just because a training element was remembered did not mean that it was used on a daily basis. Those skills are outlined in the next section.

**Elements of Training Most Used**

This matrix was created to examine correlations between demographic data and training elements that officers used most frequently. This was the second step in examining links between COs and their BCOT program. Based on prior experience working in the prison system, an officer’s day was routine. Officers were assigned a post that ranged from working in a control room to an outside detail officer. Each of these posts had their own orders which were written SOPs that informed the officer of their responsibilities. Officers were also required to review and sign their post orders every quarter. However, post orders did not indicate which skills the officer should use in carrying out their duties. The survey included a question that allowed officers to indicate which skills they used most frequently. The previous table indicated which skills officers remembered the most. It was expected that there would have been similar correlations between skills COs remembered and skills used. However, data in Table 9 did not support this assumption.

An important finding was the shift in correlations between Table 8 and Table 9. Variables that accounted for higher percentage time of training had higher correlations with data in Table 8.
However, Table 9 indicated a drop in correlations with variable UM – DT which represented use of force skills. Variables with the (UM) designation indicated skills that officers indicated that they used most frequently. Therefore, variable UM-DT included data on how often COs indicated they used defensive tactics (DT) skills. The only demographic variable that correlated with UM – DT at the .05 level was TIME. This indicated a linear relation between the number of years working in corrections with the number of respondents that selected UM – DT.

Significance between these variables was logical because an officer that was on the job longer had more opportunities to be involved with use of force situations. In contrast, Table 8 showed that UM – DT had high correlation values with almost half of the demographic variables.

Variable UM – CD represented cultural diversity training. Correlations for this variable were low in Table 8. However, in Table 9 the correlation levels were much higher. The GENDER variable in Table 9 had a significance level of .05. Based the coding of these two variables, the upward slope of linearity suggested that there was a significant relationship between female officers and their use of cultural diversity skills. The overall scores for use of force variables decreased between the two tables while scores for cultural diversity increased. The variable that had consistent scores between the two tables was UM – IC. This variable had high correlations levels with several of the demographic variables. It was interesting to see that demographic variables OS WORK and MILITARY had negative correlations with UM – IC. This suggested that there were strong correlations between interpersonal communication and people with prior military experience and overseas work. This was consistent for both Table 9 and Table 8.
### Table 9

**Demographic Variables and Training Elements Used Most**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>UM - DT</th>
<th>UM - PD</th>
<th>UM - FA</th>
<th>UM - IC</th>
<th>UM - CP</th>
<th>UM - CD</th>
<th>UM - PT</th>
<th>UM - RW</th>
<th>UM - GP</th>
<th>UM - PA</th>
<th>UM - OT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.105*</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>.106*</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>.123**</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-0.079</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>-0.028</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-0.043</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.124*</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
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<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>-0.117*</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.118*</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>-0.047</td>
<td>.148**</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
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<td>0.073</td>
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<td>0.038</td>
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<td>-0.055</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
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<td>OS Work</td>
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<td>0.025</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>-0.134*</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.084</td>
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<td>0.069</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
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<td>Military</td>
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<td>-0.138*</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
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<td>0.058</td>
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<td>0.057</td>
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<td>.140**</td>
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<td>.157**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-0.069</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
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<td>.361**</td>
<td>.341**</td>
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<td>-0.045</td>
<td>.248**</td>
<td>.103*</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UM – DT - Defensive Tactics
UM – PD - Pat down and search procedures
UM – FA - First aid
UM – IC - Interpersonal Communications
UM – CP - Count procedure
UM – CD - Cultural Diversity
UM – PT - Physical Training
UM – RW - Report Writing
UM – GP - Grievance Procedure
UM – PA - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
UM – OT - Other

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
The correlations in Table 9 indicated that there were significance between demographic variables and training elements that officers used most frequently. However, comparing Table 9 with Table 8 indicated a shift in correlations. This shift was an unexpected, but interesting finding. A discrepancy between what officers remembered and what they used was found. This suggested a disconnect between skills that were taught at BCOT and skills that were used most frequently. Since the data indicated a shift in significance between what officers remembered and what they used, the logical progression was to ask officers which skills they wanted, which is covered in the next section.

**Elements of Training Officers Wanted to Improve**

Elements of training that COs wanted to improve was the focus of the matrix displayed in Table 10. The overall purpose was to examine links between what elements of BCOT officers remembered, used, and wanted to improve. Data in this matrix was compared with results from Table 8 and Table 9. Expected findings for this matrix included correlations similar to ones found in Table 9. It seemed a logical progression that COs would want more training on skills they used more frequently. However, the shift in correlations away from training involving use of force continued. The shift toward the desire for more training in communication and cultural diversity was consistent with recent literature, such as Lawrence, Priest, Delaney & Bynum (2015) and Toerbijns (2012), all of whom indicated a growing need for more cultural diversity training.
### Table 10

**Demographic Variables and Training Elements Officers Want**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Time</td>
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<td>-0.018</td>
<td>-0.063</td>
<td>.129*</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>.190**</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>.168**</td>
<td>0.065</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.112</td>
<td>.135*</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>.123*</td>
<td>-.128*</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>-.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-0.100</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>.130*</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>.165**</td>
<td>-.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>.153**</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
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<td>.158**</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>.141**</td>
<td>.101*</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>.117*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.054</td>
<td>-.114*</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>-.135*</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS Work</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>-0.080</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.058</td>
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<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.025</td>
<td>.180**</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>.212**</td>
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<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>.100*</td>
<td>0.081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
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<td>-0.022</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>.124*</td>
<td>-.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>.099*</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>.210**</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>.238**</td>
<td>.162**</td>
<td>.131**</td>
<td>.170**</td>
<td>.113*</td>
<td>0.088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LN – DT - Defensive Tactics
LN – PD - Pat down and search procedures
LN – FA- First aid
LN – IC - Interpersonal Communications
LN – CP - Count procedure
LN – CD - Cultural Diversity
LN – PT - Physical Training
LN – RW - Report Writing
LN – GP - Grievance Procedure
LN – PA - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
LN – OT - Other

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**
Cultural diversity training was at the center of this design and methodology. Based on recent literature and experience working in the prison system, it was hypothesized that there would be correlations between demographic data and the desire for more training in cultural diversity. The data in Table 10 supports this assumption. As the theme of the matrices in Tables 8-10 moved from training COs remembered to what they wanted, significant correlations between variables also shifted from use of force skills to skills that are less physically interactive. Moreover, the variable that had the highest number of significant correlations in Table 10 was LN–CD. Variables with the (LN) destination represented elements of training that COs wanted to improve. Therefore, LN-CD meant they wanted a more developed cultural diversity training element in BCOT. This variable showed statistical significance with three variables at the .05 level and the .01 level with three others.

Variables that had the strongest correlations with LN–CD were TIME, EDUCATION, and STATE. The linear trajectory of these correlations suggested that there was a significant relationship between training elements COs wanted and the COs' time working in corrections, education, and the state in which they worked. The other variables that had high correlation levels with LN–CD were AGE, GENDER, and CHILDHOOD. The variable Childhood was coded on a scale with 1 meaning less diverse and 5 meaning more diverse. Therefore, the negative correlation meant that there was significance between COs that grew up in homogenous neighborhoods and the desire for more cultural diversity training.

Examination of the matrices from Tables 8-10 indicated some expected outcomes, but also showed consistencies with more recent literature, which is practitioner driven, and with decades of experience working in the prison system. In each of the tables, EDUCATION and TIME correlated at high levels. This suggested that there is some underlying causation that COs
who have more time on the jobs and higher education levels tend to use and desire training that focuses less on use of force. If TIME were replaced by RANK then a possible link could have been the COs with more education hold higher rank. However, RANK did not show the significance levels of TIME.

Beyond the individual variables, comparing the Tables 8-10 offered a somewhat unexpected shift. It was suspected that in Table 8 there would be correlations with training elements, which syllabi data indicated, accounted for larger portions of training. The assumption for Table 9 was that correlations would be similar to Table 8 due to the distribution of training time. However, the data indicated a shift from what officers remembered to what they used. Even though officers remembered more defensive tactics skills, they used communication more frequently. Furthermore, yet another shift was found in testing correlations in what COs wanted to improve. Correlations were higher for cultural diversity in Table 10. This shift was supported in the pre-coded survey results. When officers were asked to select the skill they remembered the most, Defensive Tactics accounted for 24% of total responses. When given the same choices but asked what skills they used the most, the response rate for Defensive Tactics dropped to only 2.8% of total responses. In addition, the change in selection percentage for Cultural Diversity went from 2.3% of elements remembered to 15% of elements needing improvement.

**Priority for Additional Cultural Training**

The previous three matrices examined skills of BCOT that COs remembered, used, and wanted to improve. This final correlation matrix examined correlations between the priority officers put on additional cultural training. Variables consisted of demographic data and tested with variables that represented COs’ perceptions of training priority and effectiveness. Since officers indicated that cultural diversity and communication were the skills they wanted more of,
it was expected that there would be correlations between priority level and effectiveness. Also, the priority level was expected to be high based more recent research that suggested a trend toward moving COs away from a “hack” role to one that is more professional. In addition to moving the role of the CO to a human service professional role, the limited amount of practitioner research suggested the need for more cultural diversity training in corrections was important due to the change in prison population demographics. The data in Table 11 supported the assumption and was consistent with the literature.

Table 11

Priority for Cultural Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>Q3.27.c</th>
<th>Q3.27.d</th>
<th>Q3.31</th>
<th>Q45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>-.175**</td>
<td>-.205**</td>
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<td>-.108</td>
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Q3.27.c – Cultural Diversity Training Would Decrease Conflict
Q3.27.d – Cultural Diversity Training Would Increase Communication Effectiveness
Q3.31 – Priority of Cultural Communication Training
Q45 – Priority of Cultural Diversity Training

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables in Table 11 that indicated significance levels of .05 or .01 were EDUCATION, AGE, GENDER, ETHNICITY, and RANK. The most significant correlations were between WHO variables and variables Q3.31 and Q45. Variable Q3.31 indicated the priority COs placed on cultural communication training. The variable Q45 indicted the level of priority COs placed on cultural diversity training. Selecting these variables indicated officers’ recognition of the
importance of cultural training. Also, how additional training could affect their management of the prison population. The negative direction of the correlation was due to the coding of the survey variables. For Q3.31 and Q45, data was recorded on a five-point scale with one being high priority and five being no priority at all. Variables AGE, GENDER, and RANK had a negative correlation with Q3.31 and Q45 at a .01 level. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between COs that were older, held higher ranks, and had college degrees. Additionally, data from the survey indicated that 51.5% of responses for question Q45 placed a moderate to high priority on cultural diversity training. Also, 50.3% of responses for Q3.31 placed a moderate to high priority on the need for cultural communication training. Data from both sources supported the assumption that COs recognize the importance of cultural training.

An important finding was the strong correlation between RANK and Q3.27.d. This question asked officers if cultural diversity training would increase communication effectiveness. The .01 level of significance between the two variables suggested a statistical relationship between COs of higher rank and their perception that cultural diversity training increase communication. This finding supported the arguments made by current, but limited, research on the need for cultural training. It was interesting to find that literature from practitioners, such as ToerBijns, a former deputy warden, was consistent with findings in (Table 11).

Summary

In all, officers that had been on the job longer, held higher ranks, and that were more educated indicted that although they remembered use of force training the most, they utilized it less. In addition, these officers not only recognized the importance of cultural diversity training, they indicated additional training would be beneficial. Data in these matrices related to directly to the research by indicating COs with more time on the job perceived a greater need for cultural
diversity training. Conversely, COs with less time, and thus had more recently completed BCOT, viewed cultural diversity training to be less important. Therefore, the data indicated that time on the job affected a COs ability to deal with cultural based conflicts more than training they received during BCOT.

This related to the overall research question by addressing the extent at which cultural diversity training affects officers’ ability. Findings in Table 5 showed that overall experience of the officer had more of an impact on their perceptions of culture than their training. This suggested the time working in the prison system and experiences prior to prison employment were more affective that BCOT cultural training. The next step in this research was to examine the sub questions and hypotheses. This was done by using data from the BCOT syllabi, the survey, and results from the correlation matrices. The following chapter explains how the results of these analyses answered these questions and subsequently offers conclusions and potential policy implications.
Chapter 6

Introduction

The prior analyses focused on key points of this research:

1) The examination of the syllabi data indicated a disparity in the number of hours spent on training topics.

2) The examination of survey data using correlation matrices in Chapter 5 indicated officers’ perceptions of the training they received during their BCOT program.

The research question for this dissertation asked; “To what extent does cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program affect an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict?” The context of this question was based on the changing demographics of the prison population, a desire to move officers from hack to service professionals, the limitation of early views of culture in prisons, and how officers’ basic training addresses cultural diversity. Therefore, a set of sub questions were created to investigate the greater research question. Sub questions of this dissertation included:

SRQ1: To what extent is correctional officers’ perceptions of conflict in prisons culturally linked?

SRQ2: How are correctional officers currently trained in cultural diversity and communication?

SRQ3: How does frequency and duration of cultural diversity training affect an officers’ confidence in their ability to recognize and manage cultural diversity?

SRQ4: How does a correctional officer’s exposure to cultural diversity relate to their ability to communicate with culturally diverse inmates?
SRQ5: How do Correctional Officers perceive the need for cultural diversity and communication training?

These questions were used to focus in on elements of the research question. The main points of the research question were officer training and cultural diversity. Therefore, the sub questions asked for officers’ insight on how culture impacts prison conflict, the effectiveness of current cultural training, and the need officers have for more developed training. To examine these questions data was used from the officer survey and the sample of training syllabi. Having used both sets of data revealed two main point, how officers are trained and effectiveness of the training. This chapter combines results from previous chapters to examine research questions and hypotheses and offers conclusions. Those conclusions are then summarized and then used to suggest policy implications and how the future progression in this line of research could be conducted.

Cultural Linked to Conflict

The first sub-question for this dissertation was; “To what extent are correctional officers’ perceptions of conflict in prisons culturally linked?” (SRQ1). Since the question focused on officer response, data from the officer survey was used. A block of survey questions was designed to address this point of the dissertation. The survey asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with four statements. A five-point scale was used as response options. The scale ranged from 1= (Strongly disagree) to 5= (Strongly agree). The midpoint of the scale was 3= (Neither agree or disagree). The data collected from these responses were used to create four variables. Variable Q3.27.a included data on officers’ response to the statement, “Conflict between officers and inmates are due to cultural differences”. The next was variable Q3.27.b. The statement in this variable was “Conflicts between inmates and other inmates are due to
cultural differences”. Variable Q3.27.c indicated officers’ response to the statement “Cross cultural communication and diversity training would decrease the occurrence of violent conflicts between officers and inmate”. Finally, the statement for variable Q3.27.d was “Cultural diversity training would make communication between officers and inmates more effective”. Descriptive statistics of each variable were used to examine this question. The purpose of this method was to see how officers responded to the statements and what insight the data offered to the sub-question.

For variable Q3.27.a, officers had a mean score of 2.41. This indicated that officers tended to disagree with the statement that conflicts between officer and inmates were culturally linked. The response score for this variable highlighted this tendency, with only eight officers responding with 5 = strongly agree. Also, the most selected response for this variable was strongly disagree at a total of 91 responses. The data for this variable was well below expectations.

The mean score for variable Q3.27.b was 2.88. Scores for this variable indicated if officers thought that culture played more of a role in conflicts between inmates. Even though the mean for this variable was toward the lower end of the scale, the increase in the mean indicated a shift up the scale. This shift was also apparent in the selection scores. The most selected point of the scale was 4 = somewhat agree. The number of selections for 1 = strongly disagree was 41. Therefore, the trend for variable Q3.27.a and Q3.27.b still leaned toward lower scores. However, there was a shift upwards. This indicated that officers perceived cultural differences to play a role in inmate conflicts, but not between officers and inmates.

The next variable examined was Q3.27.c. This variable dealt with officers’ perceptions on if cultural diversity training would decrease conflicts between officers and inmates.
Descriptive statistics indicated a mean score of 2.74 for this variable. This indicated that, on average, officers tended to disagree with the statement in this variable. However, the most selected response for this question was 3=Neither agree or disagree. In addition, even though the mean for the responses remained toward the disagreement side of the scale, there was a steady increase in the number of respondents that selected 5= Strongly agree.

The final variable selected to examine this sub-question was Q3.27.d. This variable indicated officers’ perception of how additional cultural diversity training would impact communication between officers and inmates. Results for this variable indicated a shift even further up the scale. For this variable, the most selected response was 4=Somewhat agree. This variable also had a higher number of 5=strongly agree than the previous variables in this section.

Examination of this set of variables was done to address SRQ1. Data from the individual variables indicated that officers’ tended to think that culture did not play a major role in prison conflict. The overall low raw ratings supported this hypothesis. However, comparing data from the variables showed that the level of agreement shifted when considered across multiple questions. Officers did not think that culture had a significant impact on prison conflict, but more training in cultural diversity would be beneficial. The latter portion of this finding was consistent with data from the correlation matrix in Chapter 5 that focused on elements of training that officers wanted to improve. In addition, data from the training syllabi indicated that cultural diversity was a subject matter that state BCOT spent little time on. Therefore, the low results for variables used to test SRQ1 could have been a result of the lack of cultural diversity in basic training. This suggests , that if officers that had been exposed to more cultural diversity training, they may have been better equipped to identify cultural elements of prison conflict and may have responded differently to variables Q3.27.a, Q3.27.b, Q3.27.c, and Q3.27.d. In summary, the
answer to SRQ1 was that officers perceived that culture was not a major factor in prison conflict. However, officers indicted cultural training would be beneficial. Moreover, the lack of cultural training indicated in the sample of syllabi could have inhibited officers’ skills in identifying cultural elements of conflicts.

Cultural Training

The second sub-question for this dissertation asked; “How are correctional officers currently trained in cultural diversity and communication?” (SRQ2). Variables selected to address this question were taken from the BCOT syllabi and the research survey. Data for syllabi variable CULDIV and CULCOM indicated the amount of time and the percentage of time spent on cultural training in current BCOT programs. Variable CULDIV represented cultural diversity and CULCOM cultural communication. Survey variable Q34.a included data on how well BCOT prepared officers to identify conflicts that were culturally based. Variable Q34.b indicated officers’ perceptions on how BCOT prepared them to manage conflict be cultural groups in the prison system. The last variable selected was Q40. This variable included data on the frequency cultural training is included in annual in-service training. Descriptive statistics were ran on variables Q40, Q34.a, and Q34.b. Data from the training syllabi was used qualitatively to highlight the analysis.

The focus of SRQ2 was how COs were trained. The first step was to refer back to the syllabi data. Variables CULDIV and CULCOM were created to encapsulate aspects of BCOT that focused on cultural training. The aggregate scores for these variables indicated that cultural training was a small portion of over training. Eight states were included in the syllabi sample with a combined total of 2,511.5 training hours. Of this, 49 hours were dedicated to training that coded into CULDIV, which was 1.9% of training time. In addition, 37 hours were dedicated to
CULCOM, which represented 1.4% of total training time. The combined total of cultural training in the BCOT sample was 86 hours. This number represented only 3% of aggregate training.

Examination of the syllabi data indicated that even after combining the two variables that focused on culture, their total training time represented a small portion of BCOT.

The analysis of the syllabi data established that there was little focus on cultural training in the sample of BCOT programs. Therefore, variables Q34.a and Q34.b related to the effectiveness of cultural training. Variable Q34.a asked officers how well BCOT prepared them to identify cultural elements of conflict. Variable Q34.b indicated how well BCOT trained officers to manage cultural conflicts. Respondents had the option of selecting an option on a five-point scale ranging from 1= “not at all” to 5 = “completely”. Descriptive analysis of these two variables indicated a mean score of 3.57 for Q34.a and 3.49 for Q34.b. This indicated that the average response to the effectiveness of cultural training leaned toward the unprepared side of the scale. On an ascending 1-5 scale, officers selected the midpoint of three the most frequently for both variables. Responses moved toward the low end of the scale with the second most selected score of two on a five-point scale. This resulted in 77.23% of responses Q34.a in the 1-3 range of the scale. This indicated that the majority of officers thought that BCOT offered them little preparation to identify cultural conflicts. In addition, 80% of responses to Q34.b were in the low range of the scale. Descriptive data showed that the mean and frequency for variables Q34.a and Q34.b indicated that BCOT did not prepare officers to identify or manage cultural conflict in prison. However, not all of CO training is encapsulated in BCOT. Officers often attended annual in-service training while employed in the prison system. Thus, the next variable tested included data on the frequency cultural training was included in annual training.
Variable Q40 asked officers, “How often does your annual in service training include training on cultural diversity?”. It was established in the syllabi data that cultural training accounted for a small portion of BCOT. Variable Q40 offered a five-point scale, with 1= “Never” to 5= “Always”, to the frequency at which cultural training was included in annual training. The mean score for this variable was 2.91. This indicated that the average responses were in the lower range of the scale. The score 2 = “Sometimes” had the highest frequency with 138. To get a better understanding of in-service training, a call was placed to the Field Training Officer (FTO) at prison in Carrollton, GA. The FTO was asked what kinds of training topics are usually included in annual training. He indicated that, for GA, officers are required to obtain 40 hrs of annual training. However, 20 of these hours were used in annual firearms recertification. The other half of the required training often changes due to changes to laws or SOP. The FTO summarized GA’s in-service training as a way to re-certify officers on skills they learned in BCOT and to convey changes in SOP. An example of this was when the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was signed into law in 2003. In-service training in 2004 included a large section covering the PREA law, according to the FTO. Information and the example provided by the FTO offered insight on the responses to variable Q40. The most selected response to Q40 was 2 = “Sometimes”. If changes to annual training is subject to the ebb and flow of policy changes then it was logical that COs would respond with “Sometimes”. However, it was important to note that half of in-service training was dedicated to weapon certification. Findings from investigation of this variable suggested that half of the in-service training was dedicated to weapons training. In addition, if changes were done to annual training, the changes were a section of the remaining 20 hours of training. Therefore, it was concluded that, cultural training would, at best, be a small percentage of annual training. The answer to SRQ2 is that officers
received a small amount of training in cultural diversity. Also, the amount they received was thought to be impactful on COs’ job duties.

**Skills in Identifying Cultural Conflict**

Examination of the next sub-question for this dissertation built upon findings from the previous section regarding sub-question 3 which asked; “How does frequency and duration of cultural diversity training affect an officers’ perceived confidence in their ability to recognize and manage cultural diversity?” In this section, a bivariate correlation was used to test significance between an independent variable Q40 and dependent variables Q34.a and Q34.b. The previous section looked at the variables independently and how they related to CO cultural training. This section tested the correlation between these variables as a group. The independent variable (IV) Q40, indicated how often annual training included cultural training. The dependent variables (DV) Q34.a and Q34.b, collected data on how well training prepared them to identify and manage conflicts that had cultural undertones. Therefore, this test indicated if there was a statistical relationship between an annual training and officers perceived preparedness levels.

Table 12

<table>
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<th>In-service and BCOT</th>
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<td>Q34.a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34.b</td>
<td>.246**</td>
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</table>

Q34.a – BCOT Preparedness to ID Conflicts with Cultural Origins
Q34.b – BCOT Preparedness to manage Cultural Conflicts
**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 12 indicated that there was statistical significance between the IV (Q40) and each DV (Q34.a), (Q34.b), at the .01 level. This positive correlation indicated an upward linear relationship between the variables. Based on the coding of the variables, this table suggested that COs who indicated that they receive more cultural training during annual service had an
increased perception of their ability to identify and manage cultural conflicts in prison. This finding supported the logical progress that training had an impact on officers’ skills set. The problem is that syllabi data indicated that cultural training represented a small portion of training. Therefore, the answer to (SRQ3) is that more cultural training increased officers’ perception of their ability to manage and identify cultural conflict.

**Exposure to Culture**

The survey for this dissertation included a question that asked officers about the diversity of the neighborhood in which they grew up. Exposure to cultural diversity and its effect on COs’ ability to communicate with people of different cultures was the focus of sub-question four. Sub-question four (SRQ4) asked; “How does a correctional officer’s exposure to cultural diversity relate to their ability to communicate with culturally diverse inmates?” Bivariate correlations were once again used to examine links between the COs’ exposure to culture and how the level of exposure influence their communication skills. The correlation in this examination consisted of two IVs and one DV. The IVs for this test were variables Q42, which asked about the diversity of the environment COs grew up in, and Q43, which asked if COs had prior experience working overseas. The DV for this correlation was Q3.24. This variable indicated the level of difficulty COs’ had in communicating with inmates of different cultures. This sub-question related to the research by examining if experience offered more skills in cultural communication than training.

Findings from this correlation indicated that a significant relationship existed between variables Q42, which indicated diversity of officers’ childhood environment, and Q3.24, which indicted communication difficulty, at the .05 level. However, there was no statistical significance found between variables Q43 and Q3.24. The relationship between variables Q42 and Q3.24 was
expected because the upward linear relationship between the two variables indicated that officers, which grew up in more diverse areas, had less trouble communicating with inmates of different cultures. This finding supported the assumption that officers with better communication skills tended to have gained the skills through experience rather than training. The data in Table 10, from Chapter 5, indicated a significant negative relationship between COs that came from more diverse neighborhoods and the priority for more cultural diversity training. Comparing the outputs from both Table 10 and the significance between Q42, which indicated diversity of officers’ childhood environment, and Q3.24, which measured the difficulty officers had in communicating with inmates of different cultures, showed consistency. This comparison indicated that officers from diverse areas had more developed communication skills with different cultures, and officers from less diverse areas placed a higher priority on the need for cultural training. Therefore, the answer to SRQ4 that exposure to cultural diversity prior to working in corrections increases their ability to communicate with inmates of different cultures. This point was evident in Chapter 5, where COs from more homogenous areas placed a higher priority on the need for more cultural training.

**Research Hypotheses**

This section of Chapter 6 examines two of the research hypotheses. Hypothesis one (H1) stated; “The percentage of training devoted to cultural diversity and interpersonal communication affects officers’ retention of cultural focused training”. Hypothesis two (H2) stated; Officers’ exposure to diverse culture is related to their perceived importance of cultural diversity training. Theses hypotheses related to this research question because they focused on training versus experience. The method used to examine H1 was Chi Square. For H2, correlations were ran between one IV and two DVs.
Hypothesis One. Variables selected to test H1 were IV that indicated the state in which officers worked (STATE) and DVs, Remembered Defensive Tactics (RM-DT), Remembered Cultural Diversity (RM-CD), and Remembered Interpersonal Communication (RM-IC). The first test was with IV STATE and DV RM-DT, which indicated how many officers remembered defensive tactics (DT) training from BCOT. This was selected to see if a link between the numbers of hours spent on a training topic and the retention of the selected topic existed. Therefore, the training topic that accounted for the most training time in each state was defensive tactics. The assumption for this first Chi square was that there was a significant relationship between increased training time and officer retention. The results of the Chi Square confirmed this assumption. The p-value for this test was less than .05. For this test, the null was rejected. This first Chi Square established that increased amounts of training led to retention.

The second Chi Square ran to examine H1 used DV (RM-CD). Variable RM-CD indicated the number of officers that remembered cultural diversity training from their BCOT program. Based on the low number of training hours indicated in the syllabi data, it was expected that there was a significant statistical relationship between states with higher total hours of cultural diversity training and officers that indicated they remembered cultural diversity training. However, the results of the Chi Square indicated that this assumption was not supported. The p-value between STATE and RM-CD was .384. This was well out of the range of significance. Therefore, it failed to reject the null. The outcome of this test could have been to the overall low number of training hours dedicated to cultural diversity. In other words, the amount of time spent on training that dealt with cultural diversity was so low that it had a low probability of being significant with any IV. Even though this test failed to reject the null, it supported the overall research assumption that the lack of cultural diversity training negativity affected retention.
Variables selected for the third Chi Square in this section were IV STATE and DV RM-IC. Variable STATE indicated the state in which officers worked and RM-IC represented officers’ retention of interpersonal communications training from BCOT. It has been established that the majority of BCOT focused on use of force tactics. However, data from Chapter 5 also indicated that communication skills were the skills COs most frequently used. Therefore, this Chi Square would test for a statistical significant relationship between the state in which officers worked and their retention of communication training. The results of the Chi Square indicated that there was a statistical significant relationship between STATE and RM-IC. Therefore, this test rejected the null. The three states included in the survey data had higher amounts of training that focused on interpersonal communications in comparison to states in the syllabi sample. Wyoming spent 47 hours of training on interpersonal communications. When compared with other states in the training syllabi sample, Wyoming was second only to Arkansas. However, Wyoming had the most hours devoted to interpersonal communications in relation to states in the survey sample. This result supported the assumption that more training led to greater retention rates.

In summary, the results from the analysis in this section supported H1. Two of the Chi Square tests indicated significant relationships between training elements that accounted for larger portions of BCOT programs. In addition, there was no relationship found between STATE and RM-CD. Even though the test failed to reject the null for the second Chi Square test, its results supported H1 in that the amount of training COs received affected their retention of cultural training. Findings in H1 related to the overall research question by implicating that the disparity of cultural based training in BCOT had a negative effect on COs ability to identify and mitigate prison cultural prison conflicts.
Hypothesis Two. This research hypothesis was tested using correlations between three variables. Hypothesis two (H2) stated; “Officers’ exposure to diverse culture is related to their perceived importance of cultural diversity training”. The variables that were selected to examine this hypothesis were IV Q42, which indicted diversity of the COs’ childhood neighborhoods, and DVs Q3.31 and Q45. Variable Q3.31 asked officers what level of priority they would put on cross-cultural communication training. In addition, variable Q45 included data on officers’ priority for cultural diversity training. The IV was correlated with each DV. The results of the Bivariate Correlations were that there was no correlations between the IV and the DVs at even the .05 level. This indicated no statistical significance between the variables. This was an unexpected finding. It was an assumption that officers that came from neighborhoods that were more diverse would have placed a higher priority of the need for cultural training. However, the data did not support this. The negative slope of the correlation was consistent with this assumption, but it did not reach a strong level of significance. This could have been due to COs that had exposure to cultural diversity prior to working in the prison system may have felt that their prior experience had given them a cultural skill set beyond what formal training could have provided.

Even though there was correlation between the tested variables and the outcome did not support the assumption for the statistical test, the data from theses test did support H2. The second research hypothesis proposed that exposure to culture affected the level of importance COs placed on cultural training. The lack of correlation suggested that a COs’ cultural experience did influence the perceived importance of cultural training, but in a way that was not expected. Data from Table 10 indicated a significant relationship between variable Q42 and LN-CD. Variable LN-CD included data on respondents’ desire to learn more developed cultural
diversity training. Variable Q42 measured the diversity level of officers’ childhood neighborhood. This suggested that officers that lived in less diverse areas saw the need for more training. This was consistent with the lack of correlation in tests for H2. Support for this hypothesis related to the overall research question by suggesting that COs cultural experiences affect their ability to mitigate and manage cultural conflicts more so than BCOT programs.

Conclusions

Data collected and analyzed for this dissertation was designed to answer the research question; (RQ) “To what extent does cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program affect an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict?”. This question was the result of problems that this researcher experienced during a decade long career in the prison system. Findings from the sub-questions indicated that officers with less cultural diversity experience prior to working in the prison system indicated less of a desire for more developed cultural training. However, the sub-questions also established that even though officers received a small portion of cultural training during their BCOT, this training was impactful on their daily operating duties. Therefore, analysis of the data and investigation of the sub-questions suggested that the extent of cultural training in current BCOT had marginal impact on officers’ ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict.

According to Sykes (1958), a prison can be viewed as a society in microcosm. The prison was an environment in which different groups interacted based on a pseudo-societal construct. Clemmer (1940) suggested that inmates created and operated in an inmate culture with its own rules and norms. These two seminal pieces of literature painted a picture of the people living and working in the prison confines are part of a sub-society. Their work became the framework that many researchers followed when researching culture in the prion context.
However, more recent work suggested that due to globalization, and immigration of refugees, the demographics of inmate populations changed (Lawrence, Delaney, & Bynum, 2015), (ToerBijns, 2012). The change in demographics meant that the lens through which culture is researched, in the prison context, needed to be refined. It was not to say that Clemmer and Sykes were wrong, but rather as time passed the populations, they were referring to, changed. This dissertation proposed moving the lens inward to examine the framework of culture in the prison to mean the inmates’ individual culture rather than a combined inmate group culture. Individual culture was important to understand because according to scholars Irwin & Cressey, (1962) inmates import elements of their pre-incarceration environment into the prison. Therefore, increased demographic diversity meant an increase in cultural diversity. Moreover, based on the current move toward criminal justice reform, the trend was to move the role of the CO from a brutish guard to a service role. The more professionalized role of CO was one that understands that value of communication and relied more on conflict management skills than use of force tactics. An important piece in conflict management literature by Avruch (1998) suggested that the most effective negotiator and communicator with people of different cultures is one that displayed skills of a Model C practitioner. A Model C practitioner is a person that is trained to have an understanding of a variety of cultures rather than having an encompassing knowledge of just one (Cohen, 1993). This point circled back to Clemmer in that, for years, research and policy were focused on the context of culture in the prison to mean an all encompassing inmate culture. This point was supported by the sample of training syllabi in that the small amount of that did focus on cultural diversity did so from a very generic frame. Avruch’s suggestions on effective conflict management were in contrast with data found in the sample of syllabi. Therefore, the change in prison demographics emphasized the importance of an anthropological understanding of culture.
in prisons. It was then then the purpose to examine how current training affected COs’ skill sets. Since the focus of this research was current training and how it affected COs, it was prudent that data needed to be collected from two sources. One would be training syllabi and the other, data from COs. This offered insight into how the officers are trained and how they perceived the effectiveness of training.

The first step was collecting a sample of BCOT syllabi to get an understanding of current training. Syllabi were then examined for consistencies and disparities. Data from the syllabi indicated that cultural diversity training represented a small portion of BCOT. Next, a survey was developed and distributed to a sample of COs working in state correctional facilities. Data from the survey was analyzed to assess topics of training that they remembered, used, wanted more of, and the priority they placed on cultural diversity training. Officers’ responses on training they remembered were consistent with data from the training syllabi. However, when it came to skills that COs used the most there was a disparity. Officers tended to uses skills that represented smaller portions of BCOT training such as cultural diversity and communications. Also, cultural skills scored high on questions that asked COs which skills they wanted more of. This finding suggested that the current format of training was counter to conflict resolution theory suggested by Avruch. However, the skills COs used and wanted more of were more in line with Avruch’s suggestion. Officers’ recognition of the need for more cultural training was also consistent with current literature that suggested the growing importance of cultural diversity training due to shifting inmate demographics.

An exploratory cross-sectional research model was used to examine the question; (RQ) “To what extent does cultural diversity training in Correctional Officers’ basic training program affect an officer’s ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict?” Based on analysis of the data,
the answer is that current BCOT had little effect on officers’ ability to identify and mitigate prison conflict. First, the syllabi indicated the cultural training represented small portions of overall training. The lack of training time on this topic limited COs development of cultural awareness skills. The correlation matrix in Chapter 5 indicated that officers remembered training topics that represented larger portions of BCOT. Second, the survey data indicted the when asked which skills officers would like to learn more of, cultural diversity and communications represented 31.81% of responses. The next highest percent in this question was grievance procedure at 13.6%. It seemed that COs that valued cultural diversity skills more were ones that had higher education levels, were older, and held higher rank. This suggested that COs that had recently completed BCOT held little less value on cultural training. Therefore, according to the data, it seemed experience had a more implicit effect on officers’ cultural skill set than training received during BCOT. The finding that experience develops an officer’s cultural skills is consistent with Cohen’s Model C because a person that had basic knowledge of multiple cultures was more effective at mitigation than a person that had vast knowledge. Therefore, Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory, discussed in Chapter 2, would say that COs learn more about culture through direct and vicarious experience with different cultures while on the job. An example of this was applying the same theory to the narrative in Chapter 1, which described a conflict situation that arose from a lack of cultural understanding with a Muslim inmate. The cultural lesson learned, because of that situation, was impactful enough that even though it took place in 2007, it served as an important part of this dissertation. Therefore, these findings suggested that current cultural training in BCOT programs have little impact. Several limitations must be considered when attempting to generalize these findings.

Limitations
Research for this dissertation included collecting a sample of BCOT training syllabi and distribution of a survey. The sample of BCOT syllabi was comprised of eight states. This was 16% of a national sample. Generalizability was a limitation due to not including all 50 states’ BCOT syllabi. The probability of collecting BCOT syllabi from all 50 states was low and well beyond the time constraints of this research. As indicated in Chapter 3, some states denied access to their training syllabus citing security reasons as their justification. After an extensive search, a collection of states’ BCOT training syllabi or curriculum could not be found. Therefore, the collection used in this dissertation was the largest and most comprehensive to date. The syllabi collected indicated similarities in topics, but variations in hours. This suggested that even though this dissertation’s collection only represented 16% of the total, there was a probability that other syllabi would follow a similar format in theme, but vary in the number of hours.

Sample size was also an issue for the survey. Three of 50 states agreed to take part in distribution of the survey. The population for the survey was 1,750 officers. A total of 418 officers took part in the survey. This sample represented 23% of the population, but represented a small portion of the total number of correctional officers working in the United States. The responses between the different states were relatively consistent. It was surprising to find the commonality in answers between COs working in different states. A larger sample would have been more representative of the CO population. However, since similarities were found between training syllabi and responses in the sample, it is suggested that other states that had similar BCOT formats would produce officers that would have responded in a similar fashion to COs in the sample.

The method by which this survey was distributed was limited in that there was no guarantee that only working COs participated in the study. Through coordination with point of
contacts at the sample states’ Departments of Corrections, the survey was distributed through the departments’ employee email list serve. This means that anyone with access to the employees’ email could have taken completed the survey. However, this method was used because the DOCs’ employee list-serve was the method of distributing official messages to COs. Therefore, there was a low probability that non-COs had access to listserv emails and unauthorized access to listserv emails would have been a violation of SOP. The tradeoff of using this method was that even though only CO participation could not be guaranteed, it did increase the sample size. Traditional mailed surveys was susceptible to the same validity threats. Anyone with access to an officer’s mailbox could have completed the form and returned it. This method would have required considerable funding for perhaps postage and possibly travel to conduct follow up interviews with a sample of officers across the country. This research project had very limited funding so these options were not included. One on one interviews would have guaranteed validity, but would have vastly limited the sample size due to time and access. Therefore, although not perfect, electronic distribution of the survey was the method used to increase sample size and thereby making the sample more representative of the population.

**Future Research**

Suggestions on future evolutions of this line of research should include a larger sample of BCOT syllabi. A mixed methods analysis of all 50 states’ BCOT programs would be insightful as to how the majority of prisons in the U.S. train their new officers. Also, expanding the sample size of the survey would allow for higher level satirical analysis. This would include obtaining participation form the largest correctional states of California, Texas, and New York. This would potentially increase the variance in responses from state to state. Considering the dichotomy of officer and inmate, this research focused on the CO side. Future lines of research could include
surveys or interviews with inmates. This could offer a comparison on how the anthropological frame of culture affects inmates. After all, the inmates are the full-time residence of prison systems. Data from expanded CO survey and an inmate survey could then be tested using a variety of methods. Findings would offer even more insight on the effectiveness of the current system, which would inform policy on how training can be modified to meet the needs of both the inmates and the officers.

Another expansion could explore international variations in correctional officers training. This would expand the scope dramatically, as many areas of the world are inherently more culturally diverse than many states in the U.S. It would also provide a contrast to the similarity in training across states in the U.S. with many much more punitive physically and others more punitive psychologically. Considering an example like the Middle East would be even more provocative considering not only the cultural diversity in the region, but also the vigor with which those cultural differences are defended physically, politically, and culturally. Prisons in Israel, for example, had to move away from a block system to physically housing those from competing groups in separate facilities. A region by region analysis could extend this research for decades and garner countless benefits to researchers and practitioners globally.

**Policy Implications**

The consistencies that were found between survey responses to cultural training, and literature from practitioners turned scholars, suggested a need in redesigned training. The sample of syllabi indicted that there was little variance between states’ BCOT content, but there were variations in the number of hours. In addition, interviews with training officers indicated that training changes were not a complete reassessment of the program. Instead, changes were implemented to reflect a policy change. In other words, the current form of BCOT has
experienced small changes over time. This point was highlighted, for Georgia’s BCOT, due this researcher having completed BCOT in 2001, and then obtaining and examining a copy of Georgia’s 2018 BCOT syllabus. There were very few changes made over 17 years. Therefore, the likelihood of a complete overhaul of BCOT was minimal. Policy recommendations was that the time that was spent on training models be shifted. Much of the use of force training and certifications were implemented for liability purposes. Also, use of force training was needed to offer COs skills to defend themselves. However, the percentage of training that focused on use of force represented the largest portions of BCOT. Shifting training to focus on cultural diversity and communication would offer COs conflict management skills that could decrease the COs’ use of force incidents.

Following suggestions from the data and literature, more developed cultural diversity training would include some surface level information on various cultures, which was suggested by Cohen’s Model C practitioner. This could be manifested in class presentations by people of various cultures. Many respondents indicated that they grew up in a homogenous neighborhood. The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had not worked overseas prior to working in the prison system. Guest presenters from different cultures could be some COs’ first interaction cultural diversity. Having a practice interaction in the controlled setting of a classroom would allow the COs to have a constructive first interaction. The prison demographics have become more diverse. Assessing this shift to guide training would be prudent. In addition, training could be focused on elements surrounding culture. The literature review in Chapter 2 discussed Hall’s (1976) idea of high and low cultural context. Officers could be offered training on how to identify high and low cultural context and how to operate at both levels. This training could be done through role-playing. Officers could be given roles to act out a designated high or low
cultural context. Then the class would respond by choosing if the role player was communicating through a high or low cultural context. The data indicated that experience was one of the major factors in an OCs’ development of cultural awareness. Therefore, a class on high and low cultural context could be designed to give cadets experience and identify context. This could be done by bringing cadets inside the prison, in supervised groups, to observe inmates through workarounds or while inmates are on the recreation yard. Then cadets would make notes on if they saw inmates, and officers, communicating through either high or low cultural context. Then cadets would write a report on their findings. This would give the experience inside the prison confines. Also, it would give a low risk method of evaluating prison communication for level of context. These skills are important and can be vital in mitigating conflict.

The literature review described the desire to move the role of the correctional officer to a more professionalized human service worker. If the goal is to create a provider client relationship between CO and inmate, then knowing ones customers is important. Chapter 2 detailed how the Bureau of Justice and Statistics categorized the demographics of the prison population. This limited view supports the commodification of the inmate population implying that there are only three types of inmates. Changing the way in which official statistics categorize the demographics of the prison population would allow for a more comprehensive representation of inmates. Moreover, this would give policymakers better understanding of who correctional clients are. In the advertising, great sums money and time are spent on collecting data, and identifying, target populations. Applying this to corrections would mean that understanding the clients, and changing services to meet their changing needs, would perpetuate the achievement of the goal of correlations.
This research could also apply to international policy. The method used in this research and the findings could benefit foreign correctional agencies in two ways. First, European countries have experienced changes in demographics due to refugee movement from the Middle East. Populations of migrants have moved into countries that have traditionally had homogenous ethnic populations. This research model could be used as a surface level examination of correctional training in other countries to indicate if levels of cultural training are congruent with changing prison populations. If similar disparities were found, this could be used to suggest changes to training that are relevant to the corresponding agency.

Second, suggestions for the development of training could be used to as a baseline in expanding cultural training to include conflict management skills. Radicalization of inmates seems to be more prevalent in European prisons due to the overrepresentation of inmates from Middle Eastern countries. Implementing more developed cultural training and conflict management skills could have a mitigating impact prison conflicts and radicalization. This research used social learning theory as a method by which cultural understanding and conflict management skills could be perpetuated throughout the prison populations.

In summary, recent literature indicated a growing need to recognize the importance of cultural diversity in the changing demographics of the prison. Responses from the sample of currently employed correctional officers were consistent with this section of literature. Therefore, both scholar and practitioners indicated a need for changes in training. This could come in the form of shifting training elements to put more focus on cultural diversity and communication skills. Also, expanding the demographic categories would give insight on how training and policy could be modified to keep up with the changes in the inmate population.
These suggestions could help move the role of CO from guard to human service worker and make reaching the four goals of corrections more obtainable.
References


Georgia Department of Corrections. (2017). *Basic Correctional Officer Training Syllabus.*


