

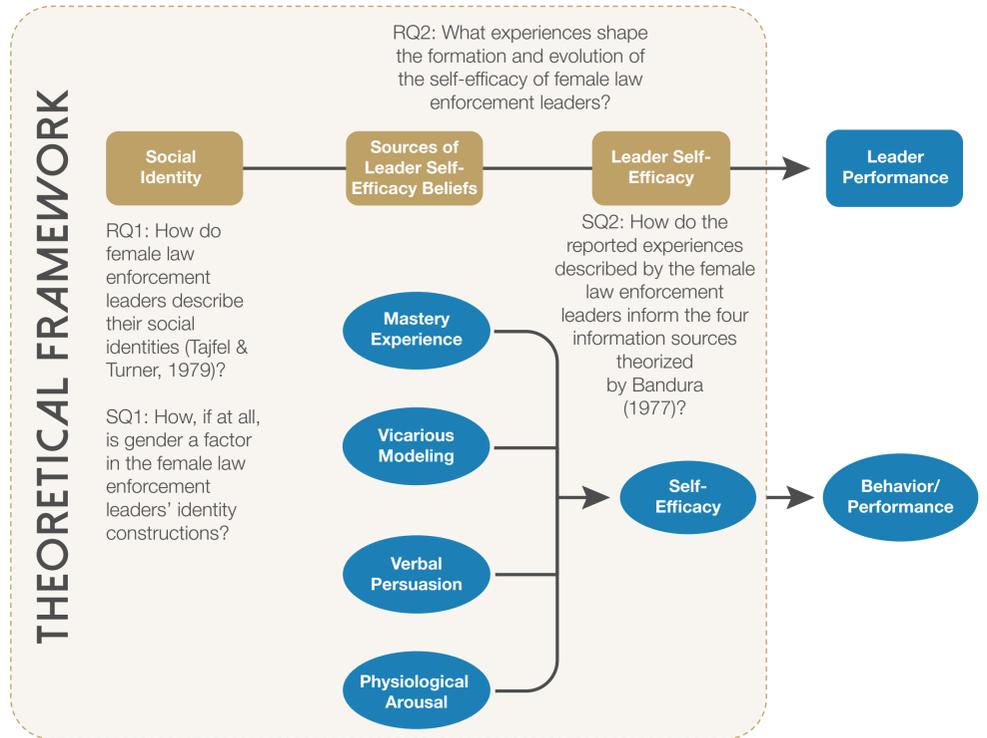
PROTECTING AND SERVING HER WAY



A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY OF FEMALE LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS' SOCIAL IDENTITY AND LEADER SELF-EFFICACY

| PURPOSES | WHO | HOW | WHEN |
|---|--|--|--|
| (1) To better understand how female law enforcement leaders described the construction of their social identities and (2) influences on their leader self-efficacy (or confidence, to lead) | Sixteen (16) leaders at Lieutenant rank or above (or equivalent) in federal, state, county, and city law enforcement organizations | Qualitative research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) using semistructured 60- to 90-minute individual in-person interviews | Interviews took place September and October 2017. Dissertation defense completed May 21, 2018. |

A belief is not merely an idea the mind possesses; it is an idea that possesses the mind.



RESULTS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS



THEME 1

GENDER BIAS

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis is that gender bias constrained the women's acceptance, inclusion, and effectiveness as law enforcement leaders.

FINDING 1

Participants believe women have a greater burden to balance personal and professional choices because they remain the primary caregivers for their families and this higher burden has adverse consequences on women's interest in a career in law enforcement and their interest in promoting to leadership positions.

FINDING 4

Participants believe women have a higher burden to prove competence and worth against male standards early in their careers. However, age and experience tend to relax these perceptions.

FINDING 5

Participants indicated the promotion process can adversely impact women's self-efficacy by raising questions about the degree to which promotions are merit based.

FINDING 6

Participants believe women feel a greater burden to maintain professional and personal boundaries. This higher burden results in their forming support and social relationships outside of their current organizations.

THEME 2

FEMININE INFLUENCES

The second theme that emerged was that women have a positive influence on organizational culture and organizational performance outcomes.

FINDING 2

When describing differences between men and women, the participants generally described women more favorably than men and used more feminine characteristics (Bem, 1974) when describing their leadership styles.

FINDING 3

Participants espoused beliefs that women bring unique skills, attitudes, and perspectives that improve organizational outcomes.

FINDING 9

Participants described their self-efficacy as most strongly influenced by their successes on the job.

THEME 3

FEMALE INTERACTIONS

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis described the impact of interactions with other women.

FINDING 7

Participants feel the climate in which female law enforcement lead has become increasingly more inclusive and professional, but more work remains to be done.

FINDING 11

Participants see mentors as role models who enhanced their self-efficacy by modeling effective behavior, offering constructive feedback, and serving as evidence of the possible.

FINDING 14

Participants believe women sometimes create for one another, while there is a strong desire to experience more support and encouragement from women in the organization.

THEME 4

SUPPORT NETWORKS

The final theme emerging from the data analysis is that support networks build confidence. The essence of this theme is the importance of community – both in terms of the participants' sense of belonging and as a source of confidence.

FINDING 8

Participants believe that peer support affords women a sense of belonging and provides access to support from colleagues who understand the challenges of being a law enforcement leader.

FINDING 10

Participants identified family as an integral element of their support networks with positive influences on their self-perceptions of competence, capability, and self-efficacy.

FINDING 12

Participants believe sponsors and supervisors enhanced their social identity and self-efficacy by providing exposure and supporting advancement into leadership positions.

FINDING 13

Participants described support from subordinates as validating and their self-efficacy.

CONTACT

Patrina M. Clark, EdD
 patrina@pivotalpractices.com

(301) 220-3179
 www.linkedin.com/in/patrinaclark