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Transformational Leadership Skills and Correlates of Prison Warden Job Stress

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Job stress is related to poor job performance, dissatisfaction, and turnover for correctional officers in the workplace. Despite parallel implications for correctional administrators, an extension of the correctional officer job stress literature to prison wardens is virtually absent. Yet the dynamic correctional environment includes many added challenges for prison wardens that could lead to a stressful work experience. Similar to those of officers, coping mechanisms for prison wardens may include peer support, but the extent of a warden's transformational leadership skills could be related to a more positive work experience. results indicate that wardens who perceived themselves as having higher levels of transformational leadership capacity also experienced less job stress. Peer support was unrelated to job stress, but employee trust was a robust correlate. in addition, although corrections tenure was unrelated, a wider breadth of corrections experience (holding treatment and custody positions) was related to less stress.

Keywords: prison wardens; job stress; transformational leadership; corrections

Despite substantial growth of the U.S. correctional system, limited research exists on the leaders responsible for the effective and efficient functioning of correctional organizations. Typical organizational structures place correctional facility oversight in the hands of prison wardens, who must then be responsive to both internal and external constituencies. While ensuring the priority of a safe and secure prison environment for both staff and inmates, wardens must also respond to macro-level budget and legislative issues, human resource and staffing issues, facility functioning, and concerns of inmates and their families (Dennis, 1999; Ruddell & Norris, 2008). To be successful in these and other efforts, wardens must be effective leaders who can successfully convey and inspire their staff with a shared vision for their organization (Heaton & Atherton, 2008) without suffering negative affect from intensive job tasks. Yet the dynamic prison environment presents daily challenges for wardens as many wardens perceive that they are insufficiently prepared for their roles (McCampbell, 2002).

The administrative and correctional responsibilities of prison wardens are vast and include a wide array of components for which prison wardens are held accountable by correctional executives. in addition to carrying out the mission of the state, federal, or corporate entity (Ruddell & Norris, 2008), prison wardens also oversee a facility's order, safety, and the prevention of escapes and riots (Mears & Castro, 2006). According to Ruddell and Norris (2008), the job responsibilities identified by prison wardens as being a top priority include administering safety and security operations, managing human resources, managing critical incidents, managing the budget, fostering a healthy institutional environment, presiding over the physical plant, administering public relations, maintaining professional competence, executing the strategic planning process, and overseeing other tasks as assigned. Within each of these responsibilities exist a range of tasks including approving policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with safety and security operations, implementing emergency plans and monitoring emergency scenarios, providing quality inmate programs and support services, and monitoring and allocating scarce resources, to name just a few (Ruddell & Norris, 2008). Insight into promising management practices for prison wardens has been gained in a number of areas including overcrowding (Cox & Rhodes, 1990), prison gangs (marchese, 2009; Winterdyk & Ruddell, 2010), inmate amenities (Johnson, Bennett, & Flanagan, 1997), physical location of the warden's office (Smith, Lombardo, Ranson, & Sylvester, 1996), and managerial attitudes (Bennett & Johnson, 2000). less attention has been paid to the successful functioning of prison wardens insofar as identifying individual or organizational attributes related to positive work experiences and job-related stress (Cullen, Latessa, Kopache, Lombardo, & Burton, 1993; Flanagan, Johnson, & Bennett, 1996).

Only in related literature on correctional officers have researchers examined antecedents of job stress and related coping mechanisms. Yet, it remains unanswered whether this body of literature can be directly applied to the administrative echelon of correctional facilities. Job stress has typically been defined in the job stress literature as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (national institute for occupational Safety and Health, 1999, p. 6). For correctional officers, job

stress typically results from exposure to stressors that develop as a result of the prison environment and associated officer duties (Cullen, link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Lambert, 2004), but for prison wardens, correlates remain unconfirmed. This area of the literature has retained its importance over the past few decades since high levels of stress, especially when experienced in a prolonged or regular manner, can have damaging outcomes on individuals. These outcomes can have negative ramifications for both the organization and the individual officer. Among correctional officers, studies have demonstrated linkages between job stress and poor job performance, as well as increased levels of social problems, burnout, divorce, mental health problems, and illness (Cheek & miller, 1983; Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, tucker-Gail, & Baker, 2010; Salami, Ojokuku, & Ilesanmi, 2010; Woodruff, 1993). Given the important position of prison wardens in the successful everyday functioning of correctional facilities, a warden's inevitable exposure to job stress may have damaging effects on him or her, as well as the organization (Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Lambert, Hogan, & Griffin, 2007). For correctional officers, negative work experiences can result in high levels of turnover (Shaw, 2011). If this turnover effect extends to the leaders of an organization, who may possess significant organizational capital, the relationship will be equally disconcerting. As Shaw (2011) and others have suggested, continued proximal (e.g., safety, productivity, efficiency) and distal (e.g., organizational performance) impacts of job stress could cause eventual organizational disruption. Consequently, it is important for researchers to consider correlates of prison warden job stress as well as coping mechanisms that may offset job stress. Given the lack of research on prison warden job stress, this article begins with a review of the correctional officer job stress literature and proposes how this literature could be used for developing a theoretical base for prison warden job stress. Subsequently, the correctional job stress literature is advanced through a discussion of a survey that was conducted with a geographically diverse sample of wardens from across the United States. The survey examines individual characteristics of the prison warden with a focus on the impact of their perceived transformational leadership ability as well as aspects of the physical and social work environment as related to the warden's job stress.

Literature Review

As noted earlier, the consequences of job stress can be damaging to both an individual employee and the correctional organization as a whole (Cheek & miller, 1983; lambert et al., 2007; Woodruff, 1993). Although extensive research in this arena has been con- ducted in other occupational fields, within corrections the job stress literature has primarily focused on custodial staff, such as correctional or detention officers and to a more limited extent noncustodial correctional treatment staff (see Armstrong & Griffin, 2004). Insufficient attention has been paid to prison wardens and job stress, with a very limited literature that has focused on job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996). existing studies have demonstrated that correctional officers report high levels of job stress in part because of individual perceptions of their work environment, which is contemporaneously influenced by their personal characteristics (Hurst & Hurst, 1997; Mitchell, Mackenzie, Gover, & Styve, 2001). Given the demanding responsibilities of prison wardens, including maintaining a safe and secure prison environment, managing staff resources, disciplinary incidents and grievance processes, fiscal constraints, upholding public relations, and maintaining professionalism (Ruddell & Norris, 2008), it is reasonable to anticipate that high levels of job stress exist among prison wardens.

Job stress levels among prison wardens are a unique concern because the everyday operations of prisons and their environment could be negatively affected by a warden who experiences significant job stress. If high job stress levels are the norm, prison wardens may be unduly exposed to higher risks of poor decision making, job performance, or turnover (Chen, 2009; Hulsheger, lang, & Maier, 2010). Although turnover is not always a drawback (i.e., some degree of staff turnover can be healthy; see Dalton & Todor, 1993), when it occurs during a period of organizational change or fiscal conservation, it can be internally damaging to an organization. Given the absence of research on correctional administrators, it remains unknown whether the existing correctional officer stress literature can be directly applied to this segment of the correctional workforce.

Some researchers might argue that prison wardens may not experience

significant levels of job stress comparable to their subordinates. reasonable explanations related to this perspective include the possibility that individuals who attain warden status possess unique characteristics or qualities such as an increased ability to successfully employ adaptive coping methods or personal resiliency (Siu et al., 2009). Alternatively, individuals in executive-level positions such as prison wardens may have differential expectations or cognitive appraisals of the correctional environment itself (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). in the first perspective, it could be argued that attrition of correctional staff members who perceive significant job stress in the correctional environment has already occurred. Stated another way, individuals who perceive the correctional environment as stressful may not seek or receive career advancement opportunities or may be "washed out" at an earlier career point prior to appointment as a warden. in the second perspective, individuals who do successfully navigate the career path to warden status may have an increased awareness and/or expectation of job stress that typically accompanies administrative roles. Thses individuals may have a distinct cognitive appraisal of the correctional environment. Working conditions perceived as negative or threatening and thus stressful by correctional officers are alternatively viewed by prison wardens as challenging. in discussing variation in cognitive appraisals, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued a cognitive appraisal that views circumstances as challenging is similar to a situation viewed as threatening in that both require the mobilization of individual coping efforts. A challenging scenario is distinguished by the individual's interpretation of the scenario as holding the "potential for gain or growth inherent in an encounter . . . characterized by pleasurable emotions such as eagerness, excitement, and exhilaration" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 33). thus, distinct cognitive appraisal processes of correctional work environments between prison wardens and correctional officers may render prior models of job stress developed primarily with correctional officers inapplicable to this segment of the correctional workforce. in turn, the identification of additional correlates of prison warden job stress would be needed. The next section of this article reviews the existing literature on job stress among correctional officers.

Correlates of Correctional Officer Job Stress

Factors previously examined in the correctional officer job stress literature have included individual-level attributes (e.g., gender, race, age, education level, tenure status, and position) as well as organizational or workplace characteristics (e.g., organizational justice, conditions of confinement, work roles, organizational and coworker support, quality of supervision; see Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985; Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; lambert, 2004; lambert et al., 2007; lambert, Hogan, Camp, & Ventura, 2006; lambert, Paoline, & Hogan, 2006; Mitchell, Mackenzie, Styve, & Gover, 2004; Triplett, Mullings, & Scarborough, 1999). Although some studies have concurrently examined job stress and job satisfaction (lambert et al., 2007; lambert, Hogan, et al., 2006), the distinct influence of the two concepts has been difficult to disentangle. As a result, this study singularly focuses on job stress as an initial exploration of prison warden work experiences to the exclusion of job satisfaction.

Within the correctional officer job stress literature, a number of inconsistencies in determining individual attributes that correlate with job stress persist. Specifically, the racial background of an officer has been found both to influence as well as to be unrelated to correctional officer job stress. For example, lambert et al. (2007) found correctional officers who were White reported significantly higher job stress (also see Cullen et al., 1985), yet Armstrong and Griffin (2004) found no significant relationship between officer race and job stress (see also lambert, Altheimer, & Hogan, 2010). Gender has been a more consistent indicator of job stress, although interactive effects influenced by perceptions of the prison environment have also been found. Specifically, female officers as compared to male officers have tended to report significantly more job stress (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985; lambert et al., 2007). regarding interaction effects, T riplett and colleagues (1999) found female correctional officers experienced greater work–home conflict, higher levels of contact with prisoners, and an increased perception of job dangerous- ness. in turn, these factors were positively correlated with job stress. in comparison, for male officers factors such as tenure, quantitative work overload, and perceived job dangerousness were related to higher levels of job stress.

It is interesting that although officers with greater tenure or time on the job have

been found to have higher levels of job stress (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985; lambert et al., 2007), beyond years of correctional experience a more textured assessment of prior experience has not been explored. Prior literature has argued that important differences in job stress may exist, as well as distinct perspectives between custodial and treatment staff (see Armstrong & Griffin, 2004), and these differences may affect how a person experiences subsequent roles. Prison wardens may be promoted from either type of experiential background; thus, type of prior experience is an important extension in the measurement of the tenure variable. For example, wardens with a treatment background may be better suited to aid in the development of rehabilitative programming and evidence-based practices, thereby becoming less frustrated with these types of necessary initiatives. Conversely, wardens promoting from the security side of correctional personnel might better relate to and be prepared to lead their facility in areas of institutional safety and security. Finally, an individual with experience in both the correctional treatment and security sec- tors may be best able to contextualize and lead the facility in its dual (and sometimes conflicting) mission of ensuring officer, inmate, and community safety through security measures while also improving future community safety through offender rehabilitation efforts. referring back to the common definition of job stress as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (national institute for occupational Safety and Health, 1999, p. 6), it follows that the better equipped an individual is based on his or her prior experience, the less job stress he or she will report. in the current study, prior experience in corrections is expanded beyond measuring tenure alone to include the *type* of prior work experience in corrections.

In addition to individual characteristics and prior experiences, social aspects related to the correctional work environment have also been linked to correctional officer stress (see, e.g., Mitchell et al., 2004). researchers have found work experiences such as supervisory, organizational, or peer support to significantly affect perceptions of correctional officer job stress (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cheeseman, Kim, L ambert, & Hogan, 2011; Cullen et al., 1985; Dowden & Tellier, 2004; lambert et al., 2007). Although the correctional officer job stress literature discusses correctional orientation

and role problems as they pertain to interactions with inmates and consequent job stress, a prison warden's interactions are more commonly with his or her subordinates. more appropriately then, work environment measures would focus on peer support that is both internal and external to the organization and perceived relationships with their subordinates supervised through their role as prison warden. Although correctional officers' job stress may be affected by the (lack of) support of a direct supervisor, prison wardens may be affected by the support from, or trust of, their subordinates. Wardens who perceive that others within their organization support them and "have their back" would be expected to have diminished perceptions of job stress. Thus, consideration of a warden's perceived relationship with their subordinates regarding trustworthiness is important (Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010; Vigoda- Gadot & Talmud, 2010). Similar to this, if prison wardens have a supportive family or social structure outside of the workplace through which they are able to discuss job-related concerns, it would be anticipated that these wardens would report lower job stress.

Other attributes of the correctional work environment examined in the correctional officer job stress literature have included perceptions of danger and physical characteristics of prisons themselves (Mitchell et al., 2004). Studies have found that officers who perceived their job as dangerous (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985; Triplett et al., 1999) or were employed at a higher security level prison (Cullen et al., 1985) perceived higher levels of job stress. Physical facility characteristics that affect job stress may extend to the inmate gender composition, such that male facilities typically experience higher levels of institutional violence as compared to other facilities, posing an added stressor for correctional staff members employed there (Lahm, 2009). Although the perspectives and daily routines of prison wardens differ from a typical custodial corrections officer, the correctional environment itself remains the same. Moreover, incidents that occur under the purview of the prison warden must also be dealt with by that warden. Thus, the well-being of and threats present for correctional officers will also affect the daily activities of the prison warden. Furthermore, the more complex the prison facility and population housed, the more complex the management responsibilities.

Although these organizational attributes are expected to influence prison warden

job stress, additional factors should also be considered. one potential correlate that is not directly addressed by the existing literature is the orientation of the prison warden in his or her role as the institution's leader. to better understand the potential protective factor of leadership style against a prison warden's experience of job stress, this study explores the varying levels of an effective leadership style called transformational leadership as relating to levels of prison warden job stress. Given that transformational leadership is an accepted standard of effective leadership, this study did not compare alternative leadership styles and instead relied on a comparison of the relative transformational leadership abilities between individuals.

Transformational Leadership as a Protective Factor Against Job Stress

Research has consistently found that correctional officers who perceived the supervision they receive to be of high quality also tended to report lower levels of job stress (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985; Waters, 1999). Despite the importance of supervision quality from the perspective of the correctional officer, good quality leadership is not necessarily an innate attribute of all prison wardens. According to Heaton and Atherton (2008), "[B]ecoming a leader in any organization usually involves a process of years of personal and professional development" (p. 14). moreover, Heaton and Atherton (2008) suggested that a successful leader must understand the challenges confronting staff, maintain good relationships with coworkers, have a balanced life and good personal health, be energetic, have an appropriate emotional outlet, effectively communicate the purpose of the correctional organization to stakeholders, be a mediator, clearly articulate performance expectations, and be invested in their relationships with staff members. the organizational literature on leadership suggests a "transformational leader" exhibits these characteristics.

Transformational leaders are individuals who aim to increase their organization's awareness of appropriate tasks and further motivate organization members to perform beyond basic expectations (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 2004). A growing body of research on transformational leadership supports the suggestion that a transformational

leadership style has a direct, positive impact on performance outcomes and the behavior or experiences of subordinates (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007). For example, Mullen, Kelloway, and Teed (2011) examined transformational leadership as compared to an alternative form of passive or uninvolved leadership, which is "generally considered to be the most ineffective styles of leadership" (p. 42). their results demonstrated that subordinates of safety managers who consistently displayed transformational leadership skills engaged in higher levels of safety compliance and safety participation. in addition, using an experimental design, Bono and Ilies (2006) found that "charismatic leaders enable their followers to experience positive emotions" (p. 331). Sosik and Godshalk (2000) specifically found that transformational leadership led to less job stress as a result of the increased mentoring received by subordinates. Thus, from existing literature, it appears as if transformational leadership can affect both individual well-being of subordinates in the organization as well as performance outcomes. This twofold effect of transformational leadership on performance outcomes as well as individuals was evident in Chin's (2007) meta-analysis of 28 independent studies of transformational school leadership. in the study, Chin examined the effects of transformational leadership on teachers, finding that higher levels of transformational leadership coincided with higher rates of teacher job satisfaction, school effective- ness as perceived by the teachers, and student achievement.

Although the direct effects of exhibiting transformational leadership on subordinates are well researched, the relationship between transformational leadership skills and the leader's well-being is less clear. in the limited existing research, a study by ram and Prebhakar (2010) found that within a sample of managers from the telecom industry, the greater the extent to which managers reported having transformational leadership skills the lower the levels of reported job stress. Yet the mechanism through which this reduction in job stress is achieved is not explained. Arguably, those who engage in a transformational leadership style experience more successful organizational functioning overall (i.e., a reduced role stressor) and potentially more support from their subordinates, thereby individually reporting lower levels of job stress. Alternatively, leaders who are less stressed in their daily routines may be

more apt to engage in characteristics typical of transformational leadership, including conveying optimism, expressing confidence that goals will be achieved, and so forth. As a first step, however, it must first be considered whether transformational leadership is significantly related to job stress within a prison warden population.

The current study extends the literature through an examination of the work experiences of prison wardens—the leaders of the institutional corrections environment. Heretofore, limited research has examined the work experiences of prison wardens, the individual and organizational determinants of prison warden job stress, and the role of leadership style in formulating a low-stress environment in the workplace. Implications from this study could be used to guide the selection and professional development of leaders within the institutional corrections environment.

Method

Participants

The sample utilized in this study is composed of correctional administrators in the position of warden. Participants of a semiannual Warden Peer interaction Program were targeted for participation. the Warden Peer interaction Program is offered within a university set- ting on an annual basis as a professional development opportunity for wardens. Participation in this professional development opportunity is voluntary, yet the program attracts numerous correctional administrators from across the country. this program is a valuable net- working experience, and each administrator delivers a presentation to peers regarding a current best practice or practices from his or her facility (Serio, 2009).[1] Frequented by both senior wardens as well as newly appointed wardens, the program has received positive feedback from practitioners over the years. Program participants from the prior 5-year period were contacted via workplace email with a description of the general purpose of the current study and a request to complete an online survey about their work experiences.[2] Participants were assured of anonymity. A follow-up email reminder was sent to participants 2 weeks after the initial email request to encourage completion of the survey. no specific incentives were offered for survey completion aside from a copy of the results.

Of the 233 prior program participants who were contacted successfully, 103

wardens (44.2%) completed the survey.[3] These 103 wardens were employed at 29 different state-run adult correctional facilities in the United States. The typical survey participant was a 49-year-old Caucasian male who held significant prior experience in corrections ($M \square$ 24.01 years of experience). most of the participants were well educated, with more than 70% of the participants possessing a bachelor's degree. The vast majority of participants had some level of prior experience in a custodial (correctional officer) position, although one third indicated they had experience in a treatment position within the correctional environment as well. Typically, participants were responsible for an adult facility or facilities that housed male inmates (84.2%) as compared to female (3.9%) or both male and female (11.7%) inmate populations. Facility security levels ranged from minimum (including work release programs) to maximum. Prison wardens had oversight of between 153 and 6,000 inmates within their facilities.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of interest in this study was job stress. Job stress was measured using six items previously used by Armstrong and Griffin (2004) in correctional officer job stress research. As noted earlier, the organizational literature tends to examine job stress in terms of responses that occur as a result of the requirements of the job or job tasks. Similar to Armstrong and Griffin (2004), we based the six job stress items on a 5-point likert-type scale to measure perceptions of stress emanating from their work experience (α = .88). The response set allowed participants to indicate the extent to which they *strongly agreed* to *strongly disagreed* that their job made them feel frustrated or angry, tense or uptight, upset, experience a lack of calmness, or feel under a lot of pressure. Specific questions and factor scores are noted in the appendix. Questions were coded such that higher scale scores indicated a higher perception of job stress. Job stress scale scores ranged from 6 to 29, with an average score of 15.5.

Independent Variables

The primary independent variable of interest in this study was the level of perceived transformational leadership skills. nine questions from the multifactor leadership

Questionnaire (mIQ 5X-Short, Self) were used to measure the extent to which participants perceived that continuum (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Higher scale scores indicated perceptions of greater levels of transformational leadership. Statements addressed motivational aspects of leader- ship abilities including the participant's perceived ability to craft and exhibit a vision of the future to his or her staff, express confidence that goals will be achieved, and successfully analyze problems, among other attributes (α = .88).[4] Factor scores for each of the 9 items (listed by coded numerical indicator only) are indicated in the appendix. They exhibited transformational leadership skills on a *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* continuum (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Higher scale scores indicated perceptions of greater levels of transformational leadership. Statements addressed motivational aspects of leader- ship abilities including the participant's perceived ability to craft and exhibit a vision of the future to his or her staff, express confidence that goals will be achieved, and successfully analyze problems, among other attributes (α = .88).[4] Factor scores for each of the 9 items (listed by coded numerical indicator only) are indicated in the appendix.

Individual participant characteristics measured in the study included gender, race, education level, and type and length of prior work experience (see table 1 for the coding scheme of the variables).[5] dichotomous indicators included gender, wherein male was included as the response category (coded as 1) and female was included as the contrast group (coded as 0). Although race and ethnicity were originally collected in a more diverse manner (see table 1), given the relatively small number of non-White participants, all non- White participants were combined and compared to participants who were White for the analysis that follows. Participants who were White were included as the response category (coded as 1), whereas participants who were non-White formed the contrast group (coded as 0). Similar to this, education level was dichotomized into bachelor's degree or higher, to include graduate work (coded as 1), and contrasted with less than a bachelor's degree (coded as 0), which typically was an associate's degree or some college work. type of prior correctional experience was measured through two variables, a dichotomous measurement of prior experience as a custodial correctional officer (yes or no) and a dichotomous measurement of prior experience as correctional treatment personnel (yes or no). Corrections tenure was

Table 1: Characteristics of Participating Wardens (*N* = 103)

Demographic Characteristic	*Coding Used in Multivariate Analysis*	*%*			
Caucasian	White = 1	66.0			
African American	Non-White = 0	24.3			
Hispanic	Non-White = 0	9.7			
Gender	Male = 1, Female = 0	77.2			
Education level					
Less than bachelor's degree	Yes = 1	28.2			
Bachelor's degree or higher	Yes = 1	71.8			
Worked as custodial staff (CO)	Yes = 1	77.7			
Worked as treatment staff	Yes = 1	30.1			
		M	SD	*Min*	*Max*	Mdn
Age (years)		49.0	6.5	28	64	48.5
Corrections tenure (years)		24.0	5.6	7	37	24
Transformational leadership		4.1	0.5	2.5	5.0	4.1
Work environment		(%)			
Facility security level					
Minimum	1	25.0			
Medium	2	41.0			
Maximum/close custody	3	34.0			
Facility gender composition	Male only = 1; Female or Coed = 0	82.5			
		M	SD	*Min*	*Max*	Mdn
Lack of external peer support		4.3	2.1	1	7	5
Internal peer support		3.1	2.0	1	7	2
Employee trust		11.5	1.9	6	14	12
Facility capacity		1,465.9	1,180.6	153	6,000	1,162

measured by the number of years previously worked in corrections. total years of

correctional experience was chosen as the measure of tenure to retain comparability with prior studies of correctional officer literature and incorporate the suggestion of previous research in this area (see lambert, Altheimer, & Hogan, 2010).

Work environment characteristics measured in this study included both physical and social aspects of the correctional facility where the participant was the warden. Physical characteristics included the security level of the facility, facility inmate composition, and facility capacity. Security level was coded such that more secure correctional facilities were assigned higher numeric values ranging from 1 (*minimum*) through 3 (*maximum/close custody*). When wardens had oversight of multiple units with differing security levels, the highest level of security was recorded. Facility inmate composition was measured based on gender of the inmates housed in the facility, specifically, whether the facility housed male offenders as compared to other populations (female or coed populations). Capacity of the facility was measured by the number of inmates the facility was meant to house. in the limited instances where wardens had oversight of multiple housing structures, the combined capacity of the structures was calculated to quantify the extent of inmate oversight.

Social aspects of the correctional work environment included internal peer support, lack of external peer support, and employee trust. internal peer support was measured by agreement with the statement, "there are many people on my staff with whom I can openly discuss the problems of my job." Higher scores indicated a greater level of perceived internal peer support. lack of external peer support was measured by agreement with the statement, "there are few people outside of the institution with whom I can talk about my job." Higher scores indicated a perceived lack of external peer support. Both items included a 7-point response option set that ranged from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*. These measures of peer support have been previously utilized in the correctional officer stress literature (Cullen et al., 1985; Flanagan et al., 1996). employee trust was a two-item summative scale based on a 7-point response set that measured the level of trust the warden perceived they had in their subordinate employee population. options ranged from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*, with higher scale scores indicating that the prison warden had greater trust in his or her staff. the specific items included "I can generally trust my

staff to handle matters when i am away from the institution" and "no matter how explicit i make my directives, staff always find a way to get around them." The latter question was a reversal that was recorded prior to scale summation.

Results

Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficient matrix indicating the correlational relationships between all variables included in this analysis. As indicated in table 2, although a number of statistically significant relationships were evident, no significant col- linearity between variables was found. of specific interest to this study is the indication of statistically significant correlations below the .05 significance level between job stress and transformational leadership, facility capacity, facility security level, and employee trust.

Results from the ordinary least squares multiple regression analysis are displayed in table 3. Based on the variables included in this model, 34% of the variance in the dependent variable, job stress, was explained. As indicated, prison wardens who perceived that they exhibited transformational leadership skills experienced significantly lower job stress. Wardens who felt they demonstrated fewer aspects of a transformational leadership style, such as enthusiasm about what needs to be accomplished in their facility and the importance of a strong sense of purpose, in addition to concepts noted earlier, reported significantly higher levels of job stress. This analysis also controlled for a variety of individual and work environment variables, some of which were also found to be significantly related to prison warden job stress.

In assessing the relationship between individual characteristics and prison warden job stress, the demographic characteristics of race, gender, and education level all lacked statistically significant relationships with job stress. It is interesting that although correctional tenure is typically important in the correctional officer job stress literature, it was not significantly related to prison warden job stress in this study. on the other hand, the *type* of prior correctional work experience did have a statistically significant relationship with prison warden job stress such that wardens who had previously worked in a custodial role experienced less job stress as a prison warden as

compared to wardens who did not possess this type of former corrections experience. Moreover, prison wardens who had worked in a treatment position within corrections reported a lower level of job stress as compared to wardens who did not possess prior correctional treatment experience. Post hoc analysis further clarified that prison wardens with combined experience as *both* a custodial role and as a treatment provider were the least stressed of all the prison wardens.[6]

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	1	2	3	4	5 / 8	6 / 9	7	10	11 / 12 / 13
1. Stress									
2. Transformational leadership	−.24*								
3. Caucasian	.10	−.15							
4. Gender	−.12	−.13	−.09						
5. Education level	.00	−.10	.05	−.14					
6. Corrections tenure	−.01	−.08	−.09	.08	.10				
7. Worked as custodial staff (CO)	−.15	−.04	−.14	.27*	−.34*				
8. Worked as treatment staff	−.10	−.20*	.07	−.06	.18	−.04	−.41*		
9. Facility capacity	.29*	−.02	.02	.04	−.13 / −.01	−.01	−.03		
10. Facility security level	.16	−.13	.20	−.10	−.01 / .01	.07 / .40*	.06		
11. Facility gender composition	−.18	.08	.16	.28*	−.17 / .08	.11 / −.00	.06	−.25*	
12. Lack of external peer support	.16	−.03	.06	−.10	.06 / −.00	−.05 / .19	−.01	.10	.01
13. Internal peer support	−.18	.18	−.02	.28*	−.07 / −.01	.15 / −.01	.09	.14	.04 / −.33*
14. Employee trust	−.29*	−.06	.08	.09	.04 / −.04	.03 / −.04	.19	−.10	.03 / −.18 / −.07

*p < .05.

Table 3: Multivariate Regression of Prison Warden Job Stress on Transformational leadership and Individual and Workplace Characteristics

Variable	B	SE	□
Transformational leadership	−0.46	0.18	−.27*
Caucasian	0.14	0.20	.08
Gender (male □ 1)	−0.05	0.24	−.02
Education level	−0.11	0.21	−.05
Corrections tenure	−0.00	0.02	−.01
Worked as custodial staff (CO)	−0.55	0.26	−.25*
Worked as treatment staff	−0.46	0.22	−.23*
Facility capacity	0.00	0.00	.26*
Facility security level	−0.02	0.11	−.02
Facility gender composition	−0.36	0.29	−.13
Lack of external peer support	0.01	0.05	.01
Internal peer support	−0.03	0.05	−.06
Employee trust	−0.14	0.05	−.29*
R^2	.34		
F	3.20		
df	93		
p	<.01		

*$p < .05$.

As one may expect with regard to the influence of the physical characteristics of the correctional work environment, prison warden job stress was significantly related to facility characteristics insofar as those prison wardens who were in charge of prisons with a higher inmate capacity were significantly more stressed as compared to wardens with oversight of facilities with fewer inmates. No other physical aspect of the correctional facility including security level and inmate gender composition was significantly related to prison warden job stress. in contrast to findings in the correctional officer literature, not all social aspects of the correctional work environment were robust predictors of job stress. Specifically, both internal peer support and lack of external peer support were not significantly related to prison warden job stress. Conversely, the level of trust that a prison war- den perceived he or she had with his or her subordinate staff was strongly related to his or her level of job stress. The more a prison warden felt he or she could trust his or her staff to maintain the facility without being present and did not attempt to circumvent his or her directives, the less job stress was reported.

Discussion

      As noted at the outset of this article, a substantial amount of peer-reviewed literature pertaining to the correlates of correctional officer stress exists; however, there is a paucity of parallel research that focuses on prison wardens. Given the demanding responsibilities of prison wardens, including maintaining safe and secure prisons, managing human resources, disciplinary incidents, fiscal constraints, upholding public relations, and maintaining professionalism (Ruddell & Norris, 2008), job stress among correctional administrators is anticipated. yet heretofore it remained unknown whether similar correlates of job stress existed for prison warden as has been found in the correctional officer population. It is not surprising that the results demonstrated that the typical responsibility of prison war- dens resulted in job stress among participating wardens. Although a direct statistical comparison is not appropriate given methodological differences, it is interesting to note that the wardens tended to have similar levels of job stress as compared to studies of correctional officers when identical measures were used. Using the exact same scale items, Armstrong and Griffin (2004) found correctional officers in their sample reported an average job stress score of 15.0. in comparison, the prison wardens in this study reported an average job stress score of 15.5.

      The wardens' own approach to their job, as a manifestation of their leadership style, demonstrated an important relationship with job stress, though the temporal sequencing of these factors remains unknown because of the cross-sectional nature of this study. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders "stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" (p. 3). Transformational leaders have the ability to unite the follower, leader, and organization, not only to achieve the goals of the organization but also to mold followers into future leaders. Earlier, transformational leaders were described as individuals who are motivational, able to craft and exhibit a vision of the future with their staff, express confidence that goals will be achieved, and successfully analyze problems. This study finds that prison wardens who perceive that they exhibit these leadership traits also experienced less job stress. As noted, it remains unclear whether the self-perceived demonstration of trans- formational leadership leads to less

job stress, low job stress leads to the development and display of transformation leadership, or the two are merely correlated resulting from an unmeasured latent characteristic of the individual.

Prior literature does indicate that these leadership skills are important regardless of the causal or correlational relationship with job stress. Leadership skills are not just for the individual contentment or benefit of the prison warden, but also for the future of the correctional organization as a whole. Beyond motivational aspects, transformational leaders may have enduring impacts on correctional staff. Prior research has indicated that correctional officers who experienced greater levels of supervisory support had lower levels of job stress (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cullen et al., 1985). one possibility is that prison wardens who are transformational leaders and provide greater supervisory support enjoy the reciprocal effects of a less stressed work force. Given that previous research has found that correctional staff who experienced high levels of stress demonstrated decreased quality of job performance and greater levels of social problems, burnout, divorce, mental health problems, and illness (Cheek & miller, 1983; Griffin et al., 2010; Salami et al., 2010; Woodruff, 1993), a dearth of these factors among a warden's workforce would alleviate challenges in their role and likely associated job stress. Unfortunately, the mechanisms through which these leadership skills may have an effect were not considered as part of this study but should be considered in future research endeavors.

If such a causal relationship were found to exist in future research, it would underscore the need to address the perceived lack of preparedness by many prison wardens who are currently in this position (McCampbell, 2002). in most jurisdictions, warden preservice training focuses on the functioning of the prison itself, for example, human resources and safety protocols. it is less common that the personal growth or professional development of wardens is addressed. indeed, the importance of opportunities for in-service professional development may serve to offset a perceived lack of preparedness experienced by many prison wardens. in contrast, if future research determines that only a correlational and not a causal relationship exists, knowledge pertaining to personality traits or characteristics that are important in the hiring process of prison wardens, or promotion of correctional officers, could be gained.

It was somewhat surprising that results of this study demonstrated that demographic characteristics of the prison wardens were not significantly related to job stress. Specifically, the prison warden's race, gender, and education level were not significantly related to his or her job stress. despite the growing interest in the criminal justice literature examining work–family conflict and the potential for gender-based differences in job stress (Griffin, Armstrong, & Hepburn, 2005; lambert, Hogan, & Altheimer, 2010; Triplett et al., 1999), it appears based on this convenience sample that prison warden gender groups do not exhibit the same dynamics evident among correctional officers. The absence of a gendered effect could be an interesting direction for researchers to explore, along with including measures of the prison warden's marital status and number of children and measures of strain in the personal domain of the participant.

It was also interesting to note that although correctional tenure was not relevant to job stress, prison wardens who had prior experience as a correctional officer *and* prior experience in a treatment position perceived the lowest levels of job stress. Prison wardens who had no prior experience as a correctional officer or singular experience in either treatment or custody alone experienced greater levels of job stress. This interesting finding points to the importance of further accounting for breadth and depth of correctional experience beyond a quantitative account of employment length in the field of corrections as it pertains to the job stress literature.

In terms of the physical and social aspects of the correctional facility, it was clear the theoretical perspectives on correctional officer job stress did not fully apply to prison war- dens. A typical measure of internal peer support was virtually uncorrelated with prison warden job stress. Furthermore, a lack of external peer support was also unrelated to job stress. Groundbreaking, however, is the idea that the extent to which prison wardens felt they could trust their subordinates had a large impact on their job stress level. Although wardens are not viewed as needing peer-based support, a lack of employee trust appeared to be robustly associated with job stress. Although a causal assumption is not possible here, intuitively one might anticipate that a lack of trust is more likely to lead to job stress than the converse. This finding underscores the importance of relationship building between supervisors and subordinates that reaches

the very top levels of correctional administrators. Based on the literature discussed earlier, it is imperative that subordinates have confidence in their leader (Chin, 2007), and this study also finds that a leader must be able to trust his or her subordinates to diminish job stress.

Although this finding from measurement of the correctional work environment is important, additional research is needed to better capture a more varied perspective of this dimension as well as the correctional organization as a whole than was accomplished in this exploratory study. Prior literature has found role overload and role autonomy to be influential for correctional officer job stress. Alternative measures of these concepts and their potential parallels for correctional administrators should be considered. only with a more definitive understanding of ongoing organizational dynamics will correlates of prison warden job stress be better understood. For example, the current paradigm shift within the field of corrections toward evidence-based practices has dictated significant organizational change for some jurisdictions during a time of budgetary constraints (Armstrong, 2012; Mackenzie, 2005). For some wardens, a dynamic work environment presents an enjoyable challenge, but for others, change or flux may serve to only increase an already high level of job stress. Wardens in this latter category may be less malleable in general but especially with regard to their job requirements or philosophical approach to their role within the prison. in these instances, organizational change may be perceived as especially taxing. Additional research is needed before any definitive conclusions can be made.

The intention of this article was to examine perceived job stress for prison wardens with a goal of identifying correlates that may enhance or protect against job stress. Although some correlates were found to reflect existing correctional officer stress literature (i.e., demographic variables were not significantly predictive of warden job stress), prison war- dens remain immersed in a very different role in the correctional environment, and other factors were also important to consider. Overall, stress levels of prison wardens were moderate and not widely dispersed on this scale despite the geographical dispersion of the prison facilities. Through the measurement of individual and organizational factors, this study attempted to explain the variance that existed among prison wardens in job stress. despite the significant relationship between job

stress and transformational leadership skills, type of prior correctional experience, and facility capacity, the model explained only 34% of the variance in prison warden job stress, leaving much to discover in future research endeavors.

To contextualize the merits of the results presented herein and associated discussion, it is important to note the limitations of the data collected in this study. As noted, the participants comprised a convenience sample of prison wardens who willingly participated in a professional development program. Participation in this type of training may have resulted in some manner of selection bias that was not captured by the covariates included in the analytical strategy, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, despite efforts to encourage survey completion, a 44% response rate was achieved. Although this response rate is not in stark contrast to other Web-based survey research, it may have introduced a sampling bias.

Related to this, the sample size is not overwhelmingly large (N = 103), and given the number of independent variables included, the power of the analysis may have been affected. to ensure sufficient statistical power, Green (1991) has previously suggested a sample size of $N > 104 + m$, where m is the number of independent variables when testing individual predictors. our analysis falls shy of this threshold. Although a lack of statistical power would bias statistical analysis *against* statistically significant findings of any kind, results do lend themselves to noteworthy consideration given the exploratory nature of this study. Certainly, a larger and more representative sample of prison wardens nationwide would be beneficial to furthering this line of research in the future. Finally, as with the majority of the job stress literature in corrections, this study is cross-sectional in nature and therefore limited in making any causal connections because of temporal ordering issues between the factors considered herein.

In summary, the workplace stress literature is replete with references to the notion of movement as a response to job stress. Clearly, a significant direction for future research in the correctional stress literature is to study prison warden job stress as it coincides with periods of significant organizational change. These studies could be used to develop policies, programs, and environments supportive of an approach that in anticipation of change is able to reduce unhealthy levels of turnover in the correctional organization at a critical time in the development of the organization. For criminal justice

practitioners, the importance of relationship building between supervisors and subordinates is once again highlighted. Moreover, to further this line of research, further quantification of the correctional environment from the perspective of prison wardens and a determination of the role these factors have in workplace experiences of prison wardens are needed.

appendix
sCale iTems and faCTor loadings

Job Stress ($\alpha = .88$)	Factor Score
1. There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset.	.681
2. I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work.	.574
3. I am usually calm and at ease when I am working.[a]	.493
4. When I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight.	.708
5. My work environment allows me to be attentive, yet relaxed and at ease.[a]	.601
6. A lot of time, my job makes me very frustrated or angry.	.707

Transformational Leadership ($\alpha = .88$)[b]	
1.	.789
2.	.607
3.	.732
4.	.718
5.	.706
6.	.754
7.	.732
8.	.713
9.	.736

Indicates a reversal that was recoded prior to scale creation.
Item wording left blank because of copyright policy of Mind Garden, Inc.

Notes

Participants included wardens from the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

A survey question determined if the participant was currently a warden or was a warden in the prior calendar year.

An additional 42 surveys were returned as "undeliverable," indicating a bad address, a change in email address, or that the person was not with the organization. no further follow-up attempts to contact the individual were made to maintain the consistency of the methodology (i.e., electronic survey completion).

As the multifactor leadership Questionnaire is a propriety instrument, the specific wording of the items cannot be published. interested parties may contact mind Garden Inc., Redwood City, California, to obtain appropriate permissions.

Age was excluded because of its high correlation (> .7) with corrections tenure.

Post hoc analysis split the type of prior experience variable into four categories—correctional officer only, treatment only, both, or no prior experience. descriptive analyses demonstrated that wardens without prior correctional officer or treatment experience did indeed experience the highest level of job stress. Wardens with either treatment *or* correctional officer experience were relatively similar in levels of job stress. Finally, wardens who held experience in *both* types of positions perceived the least amount of job stress.

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