A Phenomenological Study of Positive and Effective Leadership's Influence on Success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies

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A Phenomenological Study of Positive and Effective Leadership's Influence on Success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies

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Abstract

The management and leadership practices associated with the Northern Iowa, Des

Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies in the Minneapolis Army Recruiting

Battalion's higher headquarters were examined to determine how three similarly

resourced and situated recruiting companies obtained different success levels or failures

within recent history. The theoretical framework for this dissertation was rooted in

Locke's goal-setting theory. Phenomenological qualitative data were gathered from

Recruiters and Recruiting Station Commanders throughout the State of Iowa to

understand leadership practices' influence on Army recruiting success. In an equal

allocation of funding and equipment, the primary influencer of success or failure may rest

on those persons charged with leading the companies. Results substantiated successful

practices that may be replicated across the entire U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

Improving leadership practices in a recruiting organization may prove a more viable

approach to achieving success in the fiscal year 2021 and beyond. Semistructured

interviews were obtained from Recruiting Station Commanders and Recruiters in four

recruiting stations from each recruiting company. Findings revealed clearly defined

management and leadership principles for effective leadership within the USAREC. The

implications of the findings describe how leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies

use effective and positive leadership to influence their organization to achieve mission

success. Results indicated a positive relationship between effective leadership behaviors

and mission success. Recommendations include further qualitative analysis to understand

the driving factors for success or failure within the USAREC. Further research may

determine if other recruiting companies leverage the leadership principles associated with

Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. Research is also recommended on the effects of toxic

leadership within recruiting organizations. Researchers should continue to conduct

phenomenological research on recruiting companies that realized success or failure to

determine the driving factors from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders'

perspectives. A second recommendation is to further explore the effects of toxic

leadership within recruiting organizations. Toxic leadership behaviors are considered

hostile and abusive behaviors that destroy the organization's trust and credibility while

spurring resentment. Toxic leadership behaviors may influence mission success within

the USAREC.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Human resource departments are tasked with the critical role of staffing the right positions with the right personnel (Gurchiek, 2008). Failure to manage the vital personnel areas within a company would be disastrous for any organization. There is a delicate balance between hiring employees to meet end-strength goals and hiring the best-qualified candidates for positions within a firm. Recruiting managers within a human resources department are tasked with an even more critical role in structuring and executing a company's recruiting objectives, which will result in a company attracting highly qualified performers to their team (Sartain, n.d.). The responsibility lies with a recruiting manager to ensure their units are equipped with the tools and resources to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, recruiting managers are considered an essential element in a successful recruiting strategy (Davisu, 2006). Leveraging, empowering, and operationalizing an organization's recruiting force is the most vital strategic human resource management objective pertaining to unit strength and talent management (Argue, 2015; Mbugua et al., 2015; Rovero, 2016). Human resource practices directly influence an organization's connection with its employee's performance, retention, and overall citizenship behaviors (Rafiei & Davari, 2015).

The dissertation topic was focused on determining what influence effective and positive leadership has on Recruiter efficiency and success in an Army recruiting organization. Positive leadership is a leadership strategy that fosters a productive and positive work environment, boosts positive relationships amongst all persons within an organization, sets the guidelines for and promotes positive communication methods, and drives organizational values and meaningfulness (Lis, 2015). One of the critical characteristics of effective leadership is a leader's ability to improve their team's performance by efficiently influencing the processes that

determine their performance (Yukl, 2012). The U.S. Army's leadership definition is rooted in the aggregation of positive and effective leadership concepts with their two-fold definition of leadership. Army doctrine states that leadership must "influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 11). First, Army leaders must provide purpose, direction, and motivation – a concept similarly stated in effective leadership fundamentals. Army leaders must then be able to use effective leadership methods to accomplish organizational goals and improve the team – an idea identified in the roots of positive leadership. Therefore, this dissertation was conducted to analyze the culmination of positive and effective leadership methods as a single concept to include how positive and effective leadership influences success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

Leaders of the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), both Soldiers and civilians, are charged with meeting the congressionally mandated requirements for new enlisted Soldiers and commissioned officers (John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, 2019; USAREC, 2014). This requirement is tasked to USAREC at the start of each fiscal year with the understanding that the mission is expected to be achieved no matter the economic, sociological, or political climate of the United States' population. Whether during a time of conflict or peace, the number of Soldiers required to staff the United States military must be achieved for the sake of national security and to allow the military to remain an all-volunteer force, free of mandatory conscripted service (Bartlett et al., 2009).

Army recruiting is a unique section of the military service as it focuses on private sales functions and practices (Derrtouzos & Garber, 2006; Frieman, 1987). Army Recruiters are charged with finding personnel to join the service through any means possible so long as it

remains moral, ethical, and legal. Army recruiting's art and science mirror most civilian sector hiring and sales organizations (Derrtouzos & Garber, 2006; Chonko et al., 1991). Most of the research conducted on effective leadership in a recruiting organization stems from data from leadership, management, motivational, and influential theories.

This study demonstrated the significance associated with positive psychology and effective leadership and the implications they have on Recruiter motivation and productivity levels. Applying positive psychological leadership methods to organizations has definitively impacted their employees' level of productivity and engagement (Lyngdoh et al., 2018). Therefore, additional research, literature reviews, and analyses of theoretical frameworks, coupled with an examination of Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, further solidified the need for the organization to focus on positive and effective leadership methods if they are to be successful in the future.

In the fiscal year 2018, USAREC was tasked with recruiting 76,500 and 15,600 new enlistees into the United States Army Active Component and Reserve Components, respectively. Unfortunately, after a tireless year of recruiting efforts, USAREC achieved only 69,972 of their active components and 11,327 of their reserve components missions (AUSA, 2018). Understanding that failure is not an option for recruiting quotas, leaders within USAREC must look inwards at the methods and practices they utilize to motivate and lead Recruiters to success effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study was how a lack of effective and positive leadership in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies led to the inability of these companies' capabilities to leverage Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to achieve mission success in Fiscal Year 2018.

Analyzing one set of sub-organizations within USAREC gives insight into why USAREC, for the first time since 2005, missed its combined mission by 11,500 Soldiers (Baldor, 2018). Another occurrence of failure of the United States Army to achieve its recruiting goal would impact and raise challenges for the United States' current national security strategy (President of the United States, 2017).

The three recruiting companies identified in the study were ideal research candidates. Historical data showed extreme fluctuations in their mission achievement over the last five years. Theoretically, successful behaviors should be easily identifiable and replicable; therefore, recruiting managers should implement strategies that will definitively lead to success. Unfortunately, after nearly two decades at war, Army Recruiters have begun to see a decline in U.S. citizens' propensity and ability to enlist in the Army (Spoehr & Handy, 2018). Recruiting managers have reverted to working Recruiters six days a week for upwards of 10 hours a day to make up shortfalls and achieve their missions (Myers, 2018). Recent increases in work hours and extreme levels of applied pressure are indicative of historically destructive behaviors in USAREC (McChesney, 2009). During the last recruiting surge, toxic leadership methods led to a catastrophic loss, with five Soldiers committing suicide in the Houston Recruiting Battalion (McChesney, 2009). As the organization reorganizes after missing its mission in 2018, toxic leadership behaviors are surfacing, indicating a reversion to harmful management techniques.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army recruiting companies that are being utilized to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to bring Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies to levels of efficiency that would allow them to achieve

their mission. Army recruiting companies in Iowa account for three of the 54 companies in the 3rd Recruiting Brigade. The companies identified are representative of the more than 280 recruiting companies within USAREC. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command is comprised of five separate recruiting brigades; therefore, narrowing the scope to analyze the errors associated with Iowa Army Recruiting Companies should allow for greater insightfulness as to how to re-shape USAREC into an organization that achieves success as it has for the 12 years before 2018. This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to analyze the leadership attributes, managerial methodologies, organizational citizenship behaviors, and training and resources that result in successes or shortfalls within three selected Army recruiting companies. Establishing the critical fundamentals associated with the constructive and fruitful behaviors will eliminate the costly fluctuations these companies have experienced while streamlining them into an approach that will deliver consistently positive results. This study was also implemented to analyze what managers are doing effectively to facilitate the recruiting process and review and define behaviors that keep the respective recruiting companies from achieving success. The primary qualitative research method used was the semistructured interview process to ask open-ended questions to elicit enough data to reach the proper saturation level. Critical concepts, phenomena, and ideas helped the researcher identify management methods, level of influence, subordinates' perceptions of their leaders, organizational commitment, levels of power, and expertise levels. The target population included 101 active and reserve component Recruiters and recruiting Station Commanders from the three Army recruiting companies covering the State of Iowa. Through purposeful sampling, 10 participants were selected to provide semistructured interviews.

This research study extends generalizability to the majority of all civilian, military, and government organizations. Companies that focus their efforts on effective recruiting operations can realize 3.5 times more revenue growth and twice the profit margin than companies focusing on other areas of organizational development (Strack et al., 2012). Effective recruiting operations flow talent and human capital into an organization; therefore, the results of this study pose significant value to nearly any industry that leverages human capital as its cornerstone to success.

Introduction to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework from which this dissertation was derived accredits multiple studies focused on management and leadership and human motivational theory. Management and leadership and human motivational concepts are responsible for driving organizational citizen behaviors and higher levels of efficiency and employee productivity (Barbuto & Story, 2011). The fundamental question sparking the need for research was what can leaders in an Army recruiting organization employ to fuel productivity and achieve success? No previous studies covered Army recruiting companies in Iowa; therefore, the answer was yet to be uncovered. However, the framework for the dissertation was founded on Locke's goal-setting theory and similar theoretical ideologies.

Locke's Goal-Setting Theory

As published in 1968 and further refined from the 1990s to the present, Locke's original goal-setting theory demonstrates thorough research and analyses that useful goal setting can be directly connected to higher performance levels in an organizational context when implemented effectively (Locke, 1968). This theory states that three fundamentals are required to use goal setting as a useful motivational tool. These concepts include: hard goals produce higher levels of

productivity when compared to easy-to-achieve goals, specificity is required when establishing

challenging goals rather than asking employees to do their best, and choice behavior can be

dictated by employee behavioral intentions (Locke, 1968). In addition to the fundamentals

required to use goal setting, four moderators are associated with this theory's feasibility (Latham

& Locke, 2018). These moderators are as follow:

- Ability: Ability in this context refers to a person or group's knowledge or skill level

  of the task at hand. One's ability level significantly increases their commitment to the

  goal one will set out to achieve. Asking a Recruiter to contribute one hundred

  enlistments a month is beyond reasonable expectation. It will be unlikely to motivate

  them (Latham & Locke, 2018).

- Commitment: One of the critical aspects of implementing goal setting is ensuring an

  individual or team is committed to achieving the goal. An individual who is

  uncommitted to attain a goal cannot have a goal by nature of the definition of a goal.

  An organization's most abled employees will never achieve success if they lack

  commitment to the mission (Latham & Locke, 2018).

- Feedback: Employees in recruiting organizations or similar human resources firms

  rely on clear and consistent feedback to maintain high-performance levels.

  Additionally, suppose the input is not given regularly and openly defined. In that

  case, employees are unaware of situations in which they should continue, increase,

  decrease, or abandon workplace behaviors that may be hindering them or the

  organization entirely (Latham & Locke, 2018).

- Situational Constraints: Organizations must prepare their employees for success.

  Companies that lack the financial, technological, or human resources to achieve their

mission will not succeed. Furthermore, organizational leadership must be cognizant of their requirements and behaviors to avoid becoming a burden on the task at hand (Latham & Locke, 2018).

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

Data collection methods included the phenomenological qualitative research method of employing semistructured interviews with a randomized sample of the population as the primary data source. Interview results gave insight and obtained enough data to discover trends and experiences associated with leadership practices in Iowa Army recruiting companies. Measures were taken to avoid limitations associated with those selected for the interview. The study strictly captured people's experiences who were willing and able to give insight into the questions provided.

Qualitative research methods of this caliber are demonstrated to successfully validate and verify current employee engagement and productivity levels in previous research studies (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007; Seymen, 2015; Srivastava & Bhatia, 2013). The research method was focused on understanding employees' motivation and commitment to the organization; furthermore, the study revealed the role the attributes above have on the sub-organizations throughout USAREC. USAREC's goal is to achieve its annual recruiting mission to secure the personnel required to continue protecting our nation in times of war and peace (Spoehr & Handy, 2018). If those charged with achieving this mission are not genuinely engaged in their professions, whether due to poor leadership, lack of proper motivation, or lack of competence and training, the responsibility lies with organizational leaders to determine how to rectify the situation.

Phenomenological qualitative research methods are ideal for employee engagement and productivity and organizational citizenship behaviors studies. Research studies related to gauging

individual points of view and commitment levels towards an organization's goal have been proven to benefit from qualitative research methods (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). In a qualitative study, Shuck et al. (2011) found that companies such as North Shore LIJ Health System, Johnson and Johnson, and Caterpillar, realized substantial organizational benefits, including record profitability, after they made a deliberate plan to focus on employee engagement and productivity across the company (Shuck et al., 2011). In this study, the preferred method of data collection included interviewing, document and data collection, and observational analyses at various large successful organizations. The researcher leveraged the use of interviewing as a critical component of the findings in this research design. Interviews lasted no more than 45 minutes and were conducted telephonically. Furthermore, an interview guide was established to help obtain information ranging from hiring and recruiting practices to employees' understanding of their roles within the team (Shuck et al., 2011). This study's success was indicative of the most appropriate method used in the data collection phase of the dissertation.

Research Questions

This dissertation utilized the four primary methods of qualitative measurement in research. Before the semistructured interview process, the researcher analyzed the historical levels of mission achievement. While there is a constant turnover associated with any military organization, ideally, recruiting stations should perform at the same levels based on the geographic and socioeconomic factors of their areas of responsibility. Therefore, any significant increases or decreases in performance were noted and incorporated into the qualitative research questions posed to Recruiters and Station Commanders in those respective locations.

Analyzing a recruiting station's historic success levels helped give insight into whether the leadership methods facilitate success. A purposive sample was gathered from three different

recruiting companies that have experienced both success and failure over the years. Incorporating historical analyses assisted the researcher in discovering what differences existed between similar groups with very different outcomes.

The research questions to be answered were:

Q1. To what extent does positive and effective leadership play a role in mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q2. How do Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence their ability to be productive and effective in achieving recruitment goals in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q3. What are the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant leadership characteristics from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q4. What are the driving factors for Army Recruiters' productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study had a direct relationship with the problem statement of the dissertation. The United States Army Recruiting Command is the only recruiting organization within the United States Army. No other organization can cover the shortfalls of USAREC if they do not achieve their annual goals. Without achieving their yearly goals, the United States' national security is in jeopardy (Spoehr & Handy, 2018). The purpose of USAREC is significant in itself; therefore, conducting research and analyzing critical factors that allow the organization

to achieve success may have an effect on the largest branch of the military's readiness and potential.

Aside from 2018, USAREC had not missed a recruiting goal since 2005 (Baldor, 2018); therefore, they must achieve their goal in future years to keep the United States Army on track with its end-strength goal of 500,000 AC Soldiers by 2028 (Department of the Army, Financial Management and Comptroller, 2018). While the Army always has people separating and joining, based on the reports that USAREC missed its fiscal year 2018 mission by 6,528 (AUSA, 2018), the goal of reaching 487,500 (John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, 2019) becomes that much more critical to the Army's task.

This study also presented an opportunity to analyze one of the individual sectors within the military's human resources functions. Army recruiting is unlike any other component within the entire organization. Most personnel assigned to USAREC are selected on an involuntary basis, whether due to their rank, current occupation, time in service, or an aggregate of the three. Soldiers are pulled from their career field, trained for seven weeks, and then sent to a recruiting station to be assigned for the next three years (USAREC, n.d.b.). Soldiers who are assigned to USAREC come from every command and geographic region in the world. Screening criteria must be met. Still, there are very few personality factors that would determine who may be inherently prepared for being an Army Recruiter rigor.

Utilizing Locke's goal-setting theory and similar theories related to employee engagement and productivity, coupled with literature reviews that focus on human resource management methods and leadership studies, allowed this dissertation to be a first of its kind from an academic setting. This dissertation's core focus was the analysis of the three recruiting companies in the State of Iowa; however, the results and data yielded from the research can be

expanded to a national level, which would assist USAREC in mission achievement in the years to come. USAREC has set forth scientific guidance, which is to be implemented across every recruiting station in the command, yet what remains is the analyses of what leaders, multiple echelons from the Command level, are employing and implementing daily to achieve mission success. This study revealed what additional management and leadership tools are required to be synchronized with the training and preparation given for success to be reached in the career field of recruiting.

Phenomenologically analyzing leadership's influence on success in Iowa Army recruiting companies has never been publicly researched before; thus, examining what makes suborganizations within USAREC successful is vital to the unit's overall accomplishment. There are two primary leaders in a typical Army recruiting company, the Company Commander and the Company First Sergeant. This Company Leadership Team (CLT) is responsible for the welfare of the Soldiers assigned to their company and the accomplishment of their assigned mission. Commander and First Sergeant duties require an excessive amount of time and energy. They are limited to two-year tours of duty. Rather than expecting each CLT to operate and lead their companies in different ways, this research narrowed down leadership methods and practices that can lead to success. This research could change the future approach to incorporate more leadership-based training into the USAREC Company Commander and First Sergeant Course instead of the current curriculum, which focuses primarily on statistics and supervision of recruiting tasks.

Recruiting individuals who can provide value to an organization is vital to an organization's success (Breaugh, 2009). The United States Army is no different and relies on many of the same principles as private organizations. The U.S. Army must recruit the best-

qualified persons for the correct positions if they are to remain a dominating, talented, and lethal force in the world (U.S. Army Cyber Command, 2019). USAREC has historically encountered a problem with the sustainability of the results being accomplished in their recruiting stations; therefore, the concept behind the research executed aimed to determine what has made the systemically successful Recruiters and recruiting stations achieve their results while identifying disturbing trends in management that lead to unfavorable outcomes. This dissertation offers a significant contribution to the future successes of Iowa Army recruiting companies and may benefit the overall literature on the importance of how influential effective and positive leadership is on an organizational recruiting program.

Furthermore, findings from this study demonstrated positive leadership behaviors might be the driving force behind successful recruiting companies. The study's results have the potential to change how Recruiters, Station Commanders, and all other associated Soldiers conceptualize and execute Army recruiting practices. Recruiting practices in the first decade of the War on Terror campaigns were deemed toxic and detrimental as recruiting leaders punished and drove their subordinates to a stint of suicides in 2009 (McChesney, 2009). Since that time, leaders have been prudent when balancing the mission's risk against the force's risk. Adjusting the focus away from how well a CLT can manage their recruiting stations' daily tasks and metrics to enhancing how to influence Recruiters to achieve their goals properly could be the most notable change to occur throughout USAREC's 50-year history.

Definitions of Key Terms

Active Component

Active Component, also referred to as Regular Army, Active Duty, or Active Army, denotes the U.S. Army segment that serves in a full-time capacity. These Soldiers are stationed on one of the Army's installations and make up most of the force (U.S. Army, n.d.).

Active Guard Reserve (AGR)

Active guard reserve (AGR) Soldiers represent individuals from the Reserve Component on full-time active duty status. The majority of the AGR positions throughout the world are Recruiters as AGR Recruiters are put on full-time status to recruit men and women into the U.S. Army Reserve (U.S. Army Reserve, n.d.).

Army Leadership

Army leadership is "the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 11).

Department of the Army Selected Recruiter (DASR)

DASR refers to Soldiers selected to be assigned to USAREC for a three-year recruiting tour. At the completion of their tour, DASRs will return to their original career field to continue working in their primary career field (USAREC, n.d.).

Effective Leadership

Effective leadership is defined as a leader's ability to improve their team's performance through efficiently influencing the processes that determine their performance (Yukl, 2012).

Enlist

Enlist refers to an action where a qualified individual will sign a contractual agreement to ship to basic training, with a follow-on Active Duty or Reserve Component assignment (Headquarters, 2019e).

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

An alpha-numeric code, called an MOS, is associated with a specific job in the Army. Each MOS contains "information describing entry prerequisites, characteristics of job-holders and entry-level training courses, and the nature of the work performed" (Kirin & Winkler, 1998, p. 5).

Mission

U.S. Army Recruiting Command's mission in this context refers to its monthly, quarterly, and annual goal for a specified number of men and women entering the U.S. Army (Headquarters, 2019e).

Phase Line

Phase line refers to the time frame for which recruiting goals are expected to be met. There is a phase line for every month that typically starts in the middle of the month and runs through the middle of the following month. For example, the February phase line ran from January 11, 2019, to February 14, 2019 (Headquarters, 2019e).

Positive Leadership

Positive leadership aims to foster a productive and positive work environment, boosts positive relationships amongst all persons within an organization, sets the guidelines for, promotes positive communication methods, and drives organizational values and meaningfulness (Lis, 2015).

Recruiting Station

Recruiting stations refer to a recruiting office that may have anywhere from 3 to 15 Army Recruiters assigned. One station may be responsible for up to 80 high schools in their area of operations (Headquarters, 2019e).

Reserve Component

Reserve component, also stated as the Army Reserve or Reserve, refers to Soldiers who serve in part-time status, typically one weekend a month and two weeks a year (U.S. Army, n.d.).

Troop Program Units (TPU)

Troop program units (TPU) refer to the companies, detachments, and other U.S. Army Reserve subunits. The two primary statuses of Army Reserve Soldiers are AGR, which is full-time, and TPU, which is part-time. In this study, AGR Recruiters fill vacant positions within TPUs with Army Reserve enlistees (U.S. Army Reserve, n.d.).

79R

79R is the MOS for Active Component and Army Reserve Recruiter. Duties include recruiting "qualified personnel for entry into the Army in accordance with applicable regulations, supervises recruiting and recruiting support activities" (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, 2018, p. 1).

Summary

This study helped define what influence organizational leaders' effective and positive leadership methods have on Recruiters' ability to succeed. Leaders in this organization are given autonomy to direct and manage their teams as they see fit. This autonomy leaves teams at the mercy of their managers, depending on which leadership method they employ. Integrating theoretical frameworks and literature reviews to analyze if successful Army recruiting companies apply similar leadership concepts as reviewed in scholarly articles will reinforce positive leadership behaviors and minimize destructive management methodologies.

The research conducted identified the positive and effective leadership occurrences throughout the research process. This study focused on facilitating and replicating success by

leveraging desirable behaviors while minimizing toxic leadership styles that do not embody positive and effective leadership. The sample population encompassed over 100 Soldiers assigned to three recruiting companies in the State of Iowa. The method used was semistructured interviews. Coding was used to categorize and target specific occurrences. Key terms were identified to help give this dissertation readability to those unfamiliar with Army recruiting. The data collected led to addressing how managers can influence and lead Recruiters to achieve peak efficiency levels.

Throughout the dissertation, literature reviews and further examinations of theoretical frameworks supported the positions that effective and positive leadership can positively influence an organization's level of success; however, only the research conducted on the sample population associated with the Iowa Army recruiting companies demonstrated the real foundation for future success. Iowa Army Recruiting Companies cannot afford to encounter failure regularly. Insight into the U.S. Army's recruiting methodologies and how effective and positive leadership is integrated into Iowa Army recruiting companies' strategies for success significantly contributes to the fields of human resources, leadership, management, and recruiting.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore effective and positive leadership practices that may be applied to maximize USAREC Recruiter and Station Commander productivity and effectiveness and allow them to achieve their mission, from the perspective of Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies. The researcher also indicated proven methods that will allow Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies to continue streamlining successful practices that can be implemented despite the regular turnover of active and reserve component Recruiters and Station Commanders. The researcher outlined the critical elements of effective and positive leadership that directly relate to organizational sustainability and success. The researcher elaborated on concepts associated with Lis' (2015) definition of positive leadership, which includes fostering a productive and positive work environment, boosting positive relationships amongst all persons on a team, promoting positive communication methods, and driving organizational values. Yukl (2012) defined effective leadership as a leader's ability to improve team performance is fostered through efficiently influencing the processes that determine performance. In the Army, positive and effective leadership is the process of influencing a team by providing "purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 11). The literature review is based on these two definitions.

In this literature review, the researcher bound the connection between positive and effective leadership and successful organizations. Specifically, the review is designed to demonstrate the need for consistent positive and effective leadership in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies if Recruiters are to be successful in current and future recruiting operations. The

literature, both current and seminal works, was examined to link the impact further positive and effective leadership has on the Army's human resources function of recruiting.

The research strategy focused on the following organizational characteristics: positive leadership, effective leadership, organizational leadership, positive psychology, emotional intelligence, employee engagement, employee productivity, organizational behaviors, and human motivational theories. The Army recruiting organizations are a collective of sales-based teams, recruiting teams, and departments; therefore, the review and analyses of organizational characteristics are examined within the collective context. The researcher used the following primary search methods to locate literature for the review: The Northcentral University Library, Google and Google Scholar, ProQuest e-book databases, and previous articles and textbooks gathered in doctorate-level courses.

Throughout the literature review, the primary databases accessed were the Northcentral University Library Roadrunner Search, Researchgate, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and Google. The primary date parameters used included date ranges of all years and 2015–2020. The type of documents searched for were scholarly journal articles followed by books. The search terms included effective leadership behavior, leader-member exchange, organizational citizenship behaviors, emotional intelligence, leadership, human resource management, positive leadership, leader-follower relationship, and social exchange.

This chapter of the dissertation investigates the management and leadership theories that leverage the power of a leader's positive influence and the leader's ability to motivate the team. The majority of this chapter reviews the importance of high exchange relationships between leaders and team members, emotional intelligence, and the ideal leader character behaviors. The information is supported by current Army doctrine as well as a vast array of scholarly sources.

The first section provides insight into the dissertation's theoretical framework, which is rooted in Locke's (1968) goal-setting theory and transformational leadership theories.

Theoretical Framework

Goal-setting theory was developed by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham in 1990 after having dedicated over 30 years toward perfecting an idea on incentives, task motivation, and goal setting procedures (Locke & Latham, 2019). Locke's first article, "Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives" (Locke & Latham, 2019, p. 97), was published in 1968. From there, Locke joined Latham to conduct nearly 400 studies and perfect a theory that focused on the effects of goals on task performance (Locke & Latham, 1990). Locke and Latham were aware of the dangers of premature theorizing before releasing their theory (Locke, 1976, 2007; Locke & Latham, 2005); however, their prudence resulted in an approach that has withstood nearly three decades (Locke & Latham, 2019).

Goal-setting theory served as an improvement to Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory in many ways as it redefined methods that drive people to achieve more significant levels of success (Jong, 2017). Expectancy theory only served to be "positively related to performance; however, because difficult goals are harder to attain than easy goals, the expectancy of goal success would presumably be negatively related to performance" (Locke & Latham, 2002, p. 706). Therefore, Locke and Latham assumed that expectancy theory would only drive people so far to achieve success. It is wholly dependent upon the individual's expected reward for the behavior exhibited. The goal-setting theory proved to consistently increase employee productivity in theory and application (Latham, 2012).

Several factors influence the effective implementation of a goal-setting strategy within an organization. Locke and Latham acknowledged in their research that "goal intentions in

themselves do not automatically activate self-reactive influences of motivation. Knowledge or ability is a prerequisite" (Latham, 2012, p. 66). Locke and Latham identified four mediators that influence goal-setting and task-performance effects: choice/attention, effort, persistence, and relevant strategies (Latham, 2012).

Locke and Latham also identified four moderators that work together synchronously to allow employees to pursue their goals: ability, goal commitment, feedback, and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 2019). Employees must have the capacity required for the task if the goal is to be feasible. Successful goal-setting strategies require an employee's motivation and cognition (Wood et al., 2013). Likewise, when managers assign goals that are perceived as excessively burdensome, the opposite effect can occur. Overly challenging goals have been correlated with toxic leadership and abusive workplace behaviors (Mawritz et al., 2014).

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) share similarities with goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2018). Vroom stated, "a higher expectancy of performance effectiveness is more motivating than a lower expectancy" (Locke & Latham, 2018, p. 98); however, Locke and Latham (2012) still proved that a "high goal leads to higher performance than one that is easily attained" (p. 99). Self-efficacy concepts state that "task or domain self-confidence is positively related to performance " (Locke & Latham, 2018, p. 99). Therefore, self-efficacy theory elements are incorporated. Self-efficacy is influenced by the goals assigned, which influence responses to feedback and goal commitment (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). Despite these similar theories' influential elements, the goal-setting theory remains the most accurate theory on motivation and task-performance (Locke & Latham, 2018). Goal-setting theory consistently adds new findings, which enlarge researchers' knowledge of

mediator and moderator impact as well as unique applications in goal-setting theory's application (Locke & Latham, 2013).

Goal-setting theory was selected as the theoretical framework for this dissertation. It focuses on human motivation and goal-setting strategies. Goal-setting theory suggests that people work more efficiently and are more successful when they are given a goal to achieve (Ones et al., 2018). Furthermore, employees who embrace the concepts behind goal-setting theory will experience enhanced performance due to increased levels of motivation (Kim et al., 2018). The core concepts associated with goal setting require the following:

- A detailed and challenging goal leads to higher performance than an easy goal, a vague goal such as "to do your best," or no goal setting at all.

- The higher the goal, the higher an individual's performance.

- Such variables as performance feedback, participation in decision-making, and competition do not affect behavior unless they commit to a specific, high goal. (Ones et al., 2018, p. 146)

The practice of effective goal setting relies upon causal relationships (Ones et al., 2018). Kim et al. (2018) contended that the interactions found within the causal, dyadic relationships, referred to as the leader-member exchanges (LMX), provide the necessary mechanisms for goal-focused leadership to increase task-performance. Therefore, task performance requires effective high-performing LMX coupled with focused and specific goal-setting methods for teams to operate at their highest efficiency levels (Kim et al., 2018; Ones et al., 2018).

Army leadership is founded upon building cohesive teams based on mutual trust, and leaders providing purpose, direction, and motivation to their subordinates to achieve unit goals (Headquarters, 2019b). Army leadership concepts mirror those outlined in goal-setting theory

and correlate to how Army leaders must leverage management theories to be successful. USAREC Training Circular 5-01, Mission Command (USAREC, 2017a), reflects the importance of daily interactions, which consist of goal-setting guidance and task-performance review, between the Station Commander and the Recruiter, and between the CLT and the Station Commander. Leaders use the in-progress review (IPR) to capture everything from daily, weekly, and monthly goal-setting to subordinate training and development, personnel issues, and employee recognition. The IPR process highlights the importance of causal, dyadic, and task-performance relationships synchronized with effective and positive LMX interactions (Kim et al., 2018; USAREC, 2017a).

Leaders who implement the IPR and goal-setting process in USAREC should be wary of the potential for toxic leadership and abusive effects associated with exceedingly difficult goal assignments (Mawritzet al., 2014). Goals must be achievable, as the task relates to the employee's level of ability and knowledge to buy-in to the organizational strategy (Locke & Latham, 1990). Leaders in USAREC should leverage goal-setting strategies through the IPR process with the intent of individually assigning goals to Recruiters that are difficult but achievable if they expect to see a maximum return (Ones et al., 2018).

Goal-setting theory has many mediators, moderators, and precursors that influence the concept's implementation (Locke & Latham, 2019). The goal-setting theory requires positive and effective leadership behaviors if it is to be effective. Additionally, goal-setting theory applied to group involvement, and leader-follower teams, has been proven successful (Porter & Latham, 2013; Pritchard et al., 2013). Finally, emotional intelligence is determined to be a precursor for successful workplace behaviors (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Brackett et al., 2011; Lopes et al., 2006). The literature review will examine how the successful integration of

effective leadership behaviors, active usage of emotional intelligence, and effective leader-member exchanges can supplement a goal-setting theory to drive positive and effective leadership.

Effective Leadership Behavior

Effective leadership behavior is one of the primary topics throughout this dissertation. It would be overly simplistic to state that an organization's efficiency depends on a good leader. Yukl's (2012) article on effective leadership behavior provides a critical thesis and an in-depth review of the specific leader attributes associated with truly effective organizational leadership. Yukl (2012) analyzed decades' worth of leadership behaviors to discover leadership traits, categorizing them into four meta-categories with 15 specific associated components. The four meta-categories include task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented, and external. According to Yukl, leaders must align their anticipated organizational outcomes and goals with the four categories' related components. Leaders must embrace the meta-category associated with their intended leadership approach. Each element drives results for the given category. The basis for addressing effective leadership behaviors and how they apply to organizational efficiencies and processes stem from the critical guidance laid out from a supervisor to their subordinates through task-oriented leadership behavior (Henkel & Marion, 2019).

There are four meta-categories, along with their respective components, of Yukl's (2012) hierarchy of leadership behaviors. The first category of Yukl's scale starts with task-oriented leadership behaviors. Task-oriented leadership behaviors align with the theoretical framework and give breadth to the overarching functions of Iowa Army recruiting companies. Recruiting company and station leaders must clarify tasks, plan operations, monitor progress, and direct the various processes that facilitate the recruiting function (USAREC, 2017d).

Task-oriented Leadership Behaviors

Task-oriented leadership behavior helps leaders ensure a team's personnel, equipment, and other resources are used efficiently to achieve organizational goals (Yukl, 2012). Leaders who display task-oriented leadership behaviors drive productivity within an organization to achieve specific and measurable goals. Behaviors associated with task-oriented leadership include clarifying, planning, monitoring operations, and problem-solving. Task-oriented leadership components directly align with Locke's goal-setting theory and can help leaders better establish and facilitate specific organizational outcomes (Locke et al., 1981; Yukl, 2012).

The behaviors associated with the task-oriented meta-category align perfectly with Locke et al.'s (1981) concept of goal setting. Leaders utilize goal setting to give specific and measurable guidance to team members. A set performance standard that appropriately measures end-results will assist leaders in clarifying employee assigned tasks and responsibilities. Leaders must also be able to differentiate between tasks and goals when distributing guidance to their teams. Tasks are "pieces of work to be accomplished" (Locke et al., 1981, p. 126), whereas goals are the "object or aim of an action" (p. 126). Leaders must clarify which task-oriented behavior is sought from subordinates while synchronously maintaining a goal-setting approach. The four practices associated with task-oriented leadership behavior, clarifying, planning, monitoring, and problem-solving, are further explored in the following sections.

Clarifying. The act of clarifying requires that a leader ensures the employees understand their specific function within the team (Yukl, 2012). Clarifying can include identifying daily operational responsibilities, assigning specific tasks, emphasizing team goals, deadlines, priorities, and establishing performance expectations. By stressing these aspects of an employee's role within the organization, the leader can improve the entire team's performance

(Locke & Latham, 1990; Yukl, 2012). Likewise, the Army employs the Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 611-21: Military Occupational Classification and Structure (Headquarters, 2018a) to address and specify a Soldier's specific roles and responsibilities in their career field. The Army also leverages the guidance outlined in DA PAM 600-25: U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Guide (Headquarters, 2018b) to establish the roles and expectations of leaders that are not necessarily career specific.

Planning. The planning component focuses on making decisions about goals and organizational priorities, organizing functions and tasks, scheduling actions, and allocating available resources for projects (Yukl, 2012). The primary objective for the leader in this area is to collectively execute all goals and team priorities through maximizing the team's efforts and avoiding redundancies, such as two employees attempting to complete the same task. Proper planning is the cornerstone of nearly all Army leadership ideologies. The leader's primary drive is to provide strategic planning through purpose, direction, and motivation (Headquarters, 2019a). USAREC leaders rely on the principles outlined in Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, Mission Command (Headquarters, 2019b), ADP 5-0, The Operations Process (Headquarters, 2019d), and USAREC Manual (UM) 3-30, Recruiting Company Operations (Headquarters, 2019f), to develop the commander's intent and a course of action to achieve success.

Monitoring. A leader uses monitoring to ensure specific guidance is followed, and tasks are completed to standards set forth by leaders (Yukl, 2012). Information obtained during this phase gives leaders insight into whether the original guidance should be adjusted or maintained throughout the task's completion. Yukl (2012) offered specific advice on the careful use of monitoring so as not to negatively influence progress with processes that become "intrusive, excessive, superficial, or irrelevant" (p. 70). When used effectively, monitoring can be critical

for ensuring a project stays on track through completion. Leaders in USAREC utilize the In-Progress Review (IPR) as the primary method of monitoring and directing recruiting operations (USAREC, 2017e). Commanders use command and control principles to receive feedback, adjust procedures, and modify their vision of the process as needed (Headquarters, 2012b). Commanders must leverage control to answer:

- What is the actual situation compared with the desired end state?

- Are adjustments to the plan necessary to reconcile the situation with the desired end state? (Headquarters, 2012b)

Problem-solving. Problem-solving is a fundamental critical behavior associated with effective leaders (Yukl, 2012). Leaders who can identify deviations in operations and destructive employee behaviors can remedy situations and keep their teams operating at peak efficiency levels. Furthermore, leaders must quickly distinguish whether a problem can be resolved with a quick adjustment or require substantial leader involvement from higher levels within the organization (Yukl, 2012). Army leaders leverage visualization ideals to solve challenging tasks during the operations process (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2019b). Through this mental process, commanders understand the current situation, visualize the operational approach, and define the end state. This process is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Commander's Visualization
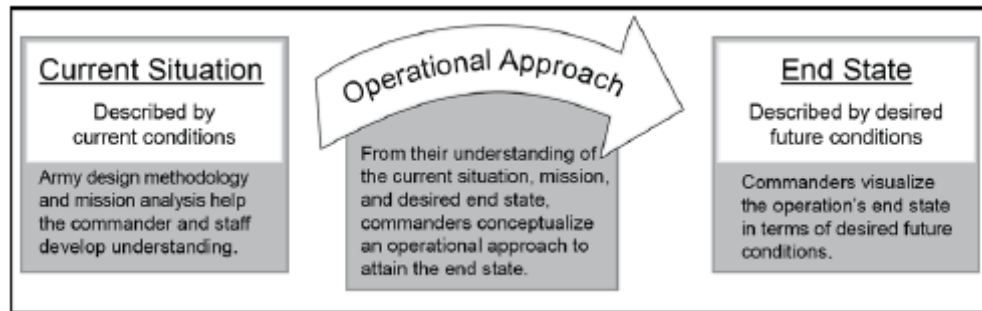
Note. Reprinted from "Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command" by Headquarters, 2019b, p. 49. Reprinted with permission.

Task-oriented behaviors are the beginning stages of a leader realizing the full potential of effective leadership behaviors. Once a leader has grasped the concepts associated with this phase, the focus may be redirected to the benefits related to relations-oriented practices. Relations-oriented leadership behaviors focus on supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering one's team (Yukl, 2012).

Relations-Oriented Leadership Behaviors

Relations-oriented leadership behaviors are specifically focused on the connections made between leaders and team members, leaders, team members, and the organization; and the organization and its commitment to the mission (Yukl, 2012). Yukl stated that relations-oriented behaviors are a vital element of the leader-member exchange (LMX), emphasizing the importance of the leader-member relationship and how it directly correlates to organizational success (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015; Martin, 2015; Yukl, 2012). The components of relations-oriented behaviors include supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering; each part is described in the following sections.

Supporting. The supporting leadership behavior component refers to leaders showing team members positive regard, helping employees through stressful situations, and facilitating cooperative team-focused relationships (Yukl, 2012). Supporting leadership is proven to be one of the most successful behaviors that define effective leadership qualities (Yukl, 2012; Zhang et al., 2017). Alternatively, negative forms of supporting such as toxic, hostile, or abusive leader behaviors are proven to destroy trust and credibility, encourage resentment-type practices, and create opportunities for retaliatory actions (Yukl, 2012).

Army commanders use the application of operational art to leverage their "skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment" (Headquarters, 2019c, p. 25) when developing strategy and mobilizing forces to achieve the mission. Commanders and their staffs in USAREC employ the eight recruiting functions through two mutually supportive cycles when supporting Recruiters on the ground who are responsible for achieving the mission (USAREC, 2017c). Two rings work synchronously together. When executed by CLTs, they provide the supporting and sustaining foundations for Recruiters to succeed (USAREC, 2017c). Figure 2 displays the outer ring of support that includes mission command, sustainment, and training and leader development. The inner ring consists of intelligence, prospecting, interviewing, processing, and Future Soldiers. Together, the two rings develop the method in which CLTs support their Recruiters and drive productivity.

Figure 2

Eight Recruiting Functions

Note. Reprinted from "USAREC Manual 3-0, Recruiting Operations" by Headquarters, 2019g, p. 20. Reprinted with permission.

Developing. Leader development practices are used to increase team members' skill levels and overall confidence in their profession (Yukl, 2012). Developing can occur at all levels within the organization – from the leader to the member, between colleagues, and between experienced employees and new managers. Organizations require positive and inspirational leaders to guide them; therefore, leaders at all levels should embody and radiate the leadership traits they want to develop in their team members (Headquarters, 2019a). Positive relationships, established through leaders or team members taking a genuine interest in their cohort's development, are critical indicators of leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2012).

Leader development has always been one of the Army's top priorities (Headquarters, 2019a). Army leader development includes "education, training, and experience" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 13). The Army leadership requirements model has six primary categories: character, presence, and intellect as three leader attributes; and leads, develops, achieves as three leader-competencies (Headquarters, 2019a). Through the continual focus on developing and training one's Soldiers to be proficient at their craft, Army leaders leverage the principles of development.

Recognizing. Like the reliance on positive relationships demonstrated by the previous two behaviors, the practice of recognizing focuses on emphasizing team members' contributions to the organization. Leaders have the inherent responsibility of designing an environment where employees desire to work as a cohesive unit with a passion for achieving the group's purpose (Koontz, 1965). Areas of emphasis that will drive organizational success include praise for achievements, overall performance levels, and individual contributions to the team's mission (Yukl, 2012). Recognition may come in various mediums such as awards, compensation, time-off, public praise, or similar methods. The differencing factors associated with effective and non-effective leaders can be seen in a leader's active pursuit of recognizing and highlighting team members' achievements. Effective leaders seek out areas of opportunity to acknowledge and praise their teams to reinforce positive employee practices (Yukl, 2012).

Army leaders at every level in the organization are directed to encourage hard work and recognize Soldiers' achievements (Headquarters, 2019a). Through the successful recognition of Soldiers, Army leaders drive motivation and provide future purpose and direction. Effective Army leaders find and capitalize on the core motivating factors of Soldiers (Headquarters, 2019a). Through the synchronous alignment of command priorities and Soldiers' motivations,

CLTs develop and attack a "shared understanding of the operational picture" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 48). USAREC (n.d.b.) has established awards and recognition policies that leverage the operative principles of leader contingent reward behaviors as depicted by researchers (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Puni et al., 2018). Leaders are encouraged to utilized contingent reward behaviors as one of the many tools available to motivate, inspire, and influence Recruiters to accomplish their mission and achieve success (USAREC, 2017b).

Empowering. Leaders who find ways to empower their subordinates, and team members, will see near-immediate results in "decision quality, decision acceptance, job satisfaction, and skip development" (Yukl, 2012, p. 72). Empowering has been defined as "the act of strengthening an individual's beliefs in his or her sense of effectiveness" (Conger, 1989, p. 18). Empowering employees is essential to allow for growth and organizational development. Empowering builds teams to be more productive by focusing on increasing individual determination and give team members the skills required to cope in a challenging environment (Conger, 1989).

Alternatively, ineffective empowering behaviors can lead to ambiguity and too much autonomy in areas where autonomous decision making can be detrimental to organizational goals. Ineffective empowering, also referred to as depowering, sacrifice leadership to achieve organizational results (Curtin, 1989). Depowering an organization results in team members who lack citizenship behaviors and drives employees to leave their positions (Curtin, 1989). The practice of employee empowerment must be deliberate and strategic to develop into better team members and future leaders of the organization while synchronously avoiding insignificant autonomy or dangerous autonomous behaviors (Yukl, 2012).

The Army utilizes mission command as a core fundamental for all its operations (Headquarters, 2019d). Army mission command is the empowerment of Soldiers to make decisions at their operational levels to decentralize the execution of tasks when deemed appropriate (Headquarters, 2019d). USAREC leverages these principles holistically, given the geographic dispersion of the command. Recruiting stations are located throughout the continental United States, Europe, and Asia (USAREC, n.d.a.). Using mission command, Station Commanders are empowered to make decisions and rapid adjustments that will achieve better results given their proximity to the operations at hand (Headquarters, 2019d; USAREC, 2017a).

Fundamentally, leaders at all echelons leverage empowering their subordinates and implementing the other task-oriented leadership behaviors (Headquarters, 2019c). With task-oriented leadership behaviors, CLTs and Station Commanders can give Recruiters guidance, support, and motivation to achieve the team's mission. In addition to the task-oriented leadership behaviors, leaders in USAREC must rely on Army leadership principles outlined in ADP 6-22 (Headquarters, 2019a) coupled with change-oriented leadership behaviors as described by Yukl (2012). Synchronizing these efforts will give leaders two of the four leadership behaviors that will result in a highly effective organization (Yukl, 2012).

Change-oriented Leadership Behaviors

Change-oriented leadership behaviors can be utilized to spur innovation, team-learning, and adaptation to external influences (Yukl, 2012). The four behavior-components within this meta-category are divided between encouraging change and facilitating change processes. Inspiring change is displayed through advocacy and vision. Advocating for change and envisioning change are necessary preparatory leadership behaviors to set the organizational culture. Facilitating change requires innovation and collective learning. Only once the

preliminary culture has been established can an organization embrace change by encouraging innovation and promoting collective learning behaviors (Yukl, 2012). The components of change-oriented leadership behaviors, advocating change, envisioning change, encouraging innovation, and facilitating cooperative learning are described in the following paragraphs.

Advocating Change. Yukl's (2012) approach to advocating for change is grounded in Kotter's change management theories (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Complacency, fear, and anger are the three top reasons organizations fail to adapt and recognize emerging threats and opportunities (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Effective leaders can counter organizational sentiments of complacency, fear, and anger and provide teams a sense of urgency to adapt to change. Leader involvement and effective leadership behaviors will mitigate organizational distress and ineffective solutions to mounting problems (Yukl, 2012).

The Army employs its senior leaders to be change agents for their organizations (Galvin, 2014). The Army utilizes its change agents to set "climates favorable to implementing change, top-down or bottom-up" (Galvin, 2014, p. 12). Initiating change from the top of the organization has never been the ideal route to pursue in any organization (Koene, 2017). The company and station leaders who follow their higher commander's intent can execute changes on the operational level based on feedback and intelligence gathered from their Recruiters (USAREC, 2017e).

Envisioning Change. Leaders must visualize and communicate the desired change to employees if teams are to buy-in to seemingly radical ideas. A deliberate vision and strategic approach to change will be more inspiring and motivating. They will result in better reception and more effective implementation of the change (Yukl, 2012). Typically, innovative change is scary and risky; therefore, team members are more likely to accept the proposed ideas when

leaders communicate confidence in a proposed change strategy. Leaders are cautioned to avoid risky and unrealistic policies that ultimately deter employees from organizational goals and priorities (Yukl, 2012).

Once leaders have established the climate for successful change, the Army relies on senior leaders to develop and articulate their ideal end state to their forces (Galvin, 2014). Army leaders must be able to envision the desired future of the organization while synchronously communicating the details to their troops (USAREC, 2017c). Army leaders in recruiting execute this process through the issuance of orders to their subordinates. Orders "direct, coordinate, and synchronize subordinate actions to optimize results" (USAREC, 2017c, p. 21).

Encouraging Innovation. Once leaders have established the team's need for change, it is paramount that leaders nurture and promote innovation throughout the organization. Leaders should facilitate a climate of "psychological safety and mutual trust" (Yukl, 2012, p. 73) with the mindset of encouraging team member input that will serve as a conduit for new ideas and opportunities. Organizations must be willing to gain and sustain an advantage against competitors. Only through encouraging innovation can an organization genuinely leverage being a market leader in the 20th century (Kalyani & Vihar, 2011).

The Army has recently invested in an innovation strategy for the first time in its history (The Office of Business Transformation, n.d.). Army leaders play a critical role in fostering an environment conducive to change; therefore, Army leaders are charged with encouraging innovation that holds the potential to benefit Soldiers and the service. CLTs are responsible for promoting innovative behaviors, through actions and words, and utilize their influence to be creativity-enhancing forces within the Army (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; The Office of Business Transformation, n.d.).

Facilitating Collective Learning. Effective leaders should encourage organizational learning opportunities that focus on team improvement (Yukl, 2012). Leaders must consider four contextual factors when promoting a collective learning environment within their teams: "corporate culture conducive to learning, a strategy that allows flexibility, an organizational structure that allows both innovativeness and new insights, and the environment" (Fiol & Lyles, 1985, p. 804). When leaders account for these factors, they can establish the environment in which collective learning can be fostered and will flourish. Facilitating collective learning is a two-pronged approach. The organization seeks out ways to exploit current methods and strategies and explore new and innovative avenues. Leaders who leverage collective learning must analyze organizational successes and failures for the sake of enhancing the team's overall effectiveness (Yukl, 2012).

Recruiting commanders utilize the after-action review (AAR) to facilitate collective learning in USAREC. The AAR is used to measure the return on investment in targeted operations and events (USAREC, 2017c). During this process, CLTs, Station Commanders, and Recruiters will analyze their performance and effectiveness periodically instead of at the end of the entire operation. The AAR facilitates a collaborative learning environment where feedback and analyses are used to implement methods to improve the organization and its success processes (USAREC, 2017c).

Change-oriented leadership behaviors cover the roles and responsibilities of leaders charged with fostering, developing, and driving their organizations to improve. Senior leaders must set the tone for acceptance and innovation just as company leaders and Station Commanders must drive the innovation process based on their Recruiters' feedback and intelligence. With an effectively poised command climate, recruiting companies possess the

ability to lead their organizations to make successful changes. CLTs are charged with leveraging their organization's external factors and influencers to support their organizations once their units have embraced an innovative and change-focused ideology. CLTs must first master their internal behaviors before branching out to work on their behaviors that influence their external networks. Finding a balance between mastering internal and external will create the environment for a leader to embody all the necessary leadership behaviors to be successful (Bachiochi et al., 2000).

External Leadership Behaviors

Leadership behaviors should not be solely focused on internal operations. Leadership behaviors must include the leader's ability to empower the organization through external influencers. Great leaders should balance internal productivity with external practices such as networking, external monitoring, and representing to be successful in their industries (Yukl, 2012).

Networking. Networking is essential for an effective leader as it builds and maintains "favorable relationships with peers, superiors, and outsiders who can provide information, resources, and political support" (Yukl, 2012, p. 74). This effective leadership behavior component can include attending seminars, conferences, meetings, and multiple other similar relationship-building methods. Networking allows leaders to obtain industry-wide data that is relevant and can be put into practice within the organization. Networking should be implemented and encouraged at all levels of the team (Yukl, 2012).

Networking provides Army organizations and civilian networking partners the ability to leverage innovation through the "exchange, transfer, and recombination of new knowledge and ideas" (LaPlaca, 2014). Recruiting leaders leverage an extensive network with the community

partners in their area of operations (USAREC, 2017c). The internal and external networks include all the supporting components required for a recruiting company to operate within and amongst a civilian population. Network partners each play a pivotal role in the success of Army recruiting operations. These partners are listed in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Recruiting Company Network

Note. Reprinted from "USAREC Manual 3-30, Recruiting Company Operations" by Headquarters, 2019f, p. 12. Reprinted with permission.

External Monitoring. External monitoring refers to a leader's general awareness and cognizance of impending changes within the organization's political and industrial environments (Yukl, 2012). Leaders must have an extensive or influential external network that encourages harmony with their surroundings (Yukl, 2012). Furthermore, having a team of employees who are scouting external environments for significant indicators and changes can be even more powerful. External monitoring requires leaders to establish valuable and high-quality relationships with their subordinates, peers, and external influencers (Hassan et al., 2018). Ultimately, the need for external monitoring is dependent upon an organization's reliance on external influencers (Yukl, 2012). Suppose an organization is sensitive to competitors or market

changes. In that case, it will benefit the organization greatly to maintain a sizeable external monitoring presence.

The Army uses the dual-designed manual, ATP 2-01.3, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield/Battlespace (IPB) (Headquarters, 2019e), as the guiding framework for external monitoring (USAREC, 2017b). Recruiting leaders leverage the IPB process to the recruiting environment, market, and external influencer analyses. During the IPB, CLTs conduct a precise examination of the market, coupled with the Recruiter's feedback, to determine trends and areas of opportunity and weakness within their operating environment (USAREC, 2017c). Through pooling the intelligence gathered from Recruiters and external factors, commanders make informed decisions and establish their intent for Recruiters to pursue the commander's guidance (USAREC, 2017c).

Representing. Representing the organization is the fundamental role of a leader. This component requires a leader to interact with superiors, investors, stakeholders, or business partners regularly on behalf of the employees. How a leader presents to internal and external stakeholders can directly impact the organization's ability to operate efficiently (Yukl, 2012). Often, leaders must sell themselves to their subordinates and external networks to gain the trust, support, and resources needed for the organization to succeed. Once leaders have achieved the ability to represent themselves to their organizations and their external influencers, they have attained all the requisites associated with effective leadership behaviors.

Yukl's (2012) theory on effective leadership behavior identifies characteristics and traits that successful leaders should embody to drive organizations to success. Iowa Army recruiting companies are no different – leaders in charge of Army recruiting organizations should embrace the four meta-categories and underlying components as core cultural leadership approaches.

Company Leadership Teams are obligated to provide purpose, direction, and motivation to their recruiting teams through the steps identified in Yukl's (2012) hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviors. Identifying and prioritizing leadership behaviors components will give CLTs the tools necessary to be successful; however, none of the components are independently unique tools for efficiency. Instead, Army leaders must first analyze their leadership styles and the needs of their organizations, and then strategically implement leadership behaviors if they are to work. The behaviors and leadership components "are most useful when they can be measured accurately, they can predict and explain leader influence on important outcomes, and they can improve leadership development programs" (Yukl, 2012, p. 79).

Research on leadership and effective leadership behaviors has led to one continuous result over the past decade – organizational success depends on the manager's leadership skills (Behrendi et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2011). Effective leadership will lead to accomplishing shared tasks and organizational goals (Behrendi et al., 2017). While the leader's role in the leadership model is vital to the organization's overall success, there is a shared responsibility between leaders and managers (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Researchers have established the link between high-performing organizations and optimal function dyadic relationships within organizations (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). The relationship between two employees, which establishes the dyadic partnership, is referred to as the leader-member exchange and serves as the bond that collectively develops a productive and successful organization (Mahsud et al., 2010).

Leader-member exchange (LMX)

The leader-member exchange theory "suggests that a leader will develop an exchange relationship over time with each subordinate" (Mahsud et al., 2010, p. 561). Leadership in Iowa

Army recruiting companies is a mandatory element of success. Confidence and competence in leadership styles, coupled with engagement with the recruiting team, will set the conditions for success in the recruiting career field (Headquarters, 2019g). The LMX theory indicates the full range of relationship stages between a leader and their subordinates. As leaders regularly engage their employees, the LMX relationship is negotiated and will eventually determine a quasi-permanent work relationship.

High exchange relationships (HXR) will lead to positive work relationships, including elements such as "trust, liking, and respect" (Mahsud et al., 2010, p. 561). High exchange relationships are critical elements of successful organizations. In an HXR, leaders should be able to provide purpose, direction, and motivation (Headquarters, 2019a) through a clearly defined goal, which is the "object or aim of an action" (Locke et al., 1981, p. 126). In return, the employee is expected to be wholly committed to accomplishing the goal and stay loyal to the organization (Mahsud et al., 2010). This type of leader-subordinate relationship is held in the highest regard in Army leadership practices. Army mission command relies on HXRs when commanders implement authority and direction to "command and control that empowers subordinate decision making and decentralized execution appropriate to the situation." (Headquarters, 2019b, p. 5).

Alternatively, low exchange relationship (LXR) employees are only expected to perform the minimum amount of work required by their formal job specifications. Low exchange relationship employees will never go beyond achieving the baseline of any assigned task (Mahsud et al., 2010). Leader-member exchange relationships are the differentiating factor in leader effectiveness. Not only does the LMX help establish the organization's culture, but it also

can be indicative of an organization's ability to solidify organizational citizenship behaviors and operate at a peak level of effectiveness (Newman et al., 2017).

Leader-member exchanges in Iowa Army recruiting companies exist at multiple echelons. There is an LMX between the Recruiter and the Station Commander, between the Station Commander and the First Sergeant, between the First Sergeant and the Company Commander, and varying other LMXs between all involved parties depending upon each's individual's assigned roles and responsibilities within the organization. There must be HXRs between all interested parties to achieve higher employee satisfaction levels, optimal work performance, and higher retention rates (Mahsud et al., 2010).

Researchers have found that the effectiveness of the LMX is highly dependent upon the leadership style employed and the traits and characteristics associated with the members in the LMX relationship (Smith, 2016). High exchange relationships are synonymous with Yukl's (2012) theories on effective leadership behaviors, Locke and Latham's (1990) five principles for goal-setting, and the principles behind Army leadership and mission command (Headquarters, 2019a; Headquarters, 2019b). The synchronicity between leadership behavior theories and effective leadership styles is the catalyst of a genuinely useful organization that will continue to succeed where others will fail. It is important to note that the responsibility of an HXR does not rest solely upon an organizational leader; instead, three domains comprise the LMX, and equal shares of responsibility are observed among each area. The domains include the leader, the follower, and the dyadic relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Northouse, 2015). Each domain and person in the dyadic relationship has responsibilities to the LMX, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Three Domain Approaches to Leadership

	Leader-based	Relationship-based	Follower-based
What is leadership?	Appropriate behavior of the person in a leader role	Trust, respect, and mutual obligation that generates influence between parties	Ability and motivation to manage one's performance
What behaviors constitute leadership?	Establishing and communicating vision; inspiring, instilling pride	Building strong relationships with followers; mutual learning and accommodation	Empowering, coaching, facilitating, giving up control
Advantages	Leader as a rallying point for organization; a shared understanding of mission and values; can initiate wholesale change	Accommodates differing needs of subordinates; can elicit superior work from different types of people	Makes the most of follower capabilities; frees up a leader for other responsibilities
Disadvantages	Highly dependent on the leader; problems if the leader changes or is pursuing an inappropriate vision	Time-consuming; relies on long-term relationships between specific leaders and members	Highly dependent on follower initiative and ability
When appropriate?	Fundamental change; a charismatic leader in place; limited diversity among followers	Continuous improvement teamwork; substantial diversity and stability among followers; network building	Highly capable and task committed followers
Where most effective?	Structured tasks; strong leader position power; member acceptance of the leader	Situation favorability for leader between two extremes	Unstructured tasks; weak position power; member nonacceptance of leader

Note. Reprinted from Graen, G. & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). "Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective," by G. Graen and M. Uhl-Bien, 1995, *Leadership Quarterly. 6*(2), p. 224 (https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/managementfacpub/57/). Reprinted with permission.

Measurement of Exchange Quality

Scientifically measuring the LMX is a critical aspect of ensuring leader-employee relationships operate in the HXR range (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). There are two tools used by researchers to identify where leaders and employees stand in their LMXs. According to Erdogan and Bauer (2015), "83% of all LMX studies captured the employee perspective" (p. 641). Measuring the LMX from the employee's perspective allowed for more accurate results than when LMXs were evaluated by both the employee and the leader (Hiller et al., 2011). Three primary reasons indicate a variation in results when studying both the leader and the subordinate

as opposed to solely analyzing the employee's perspective on the LMX: (a) There exists an assumption that it is natural for employees and leaders to give varying answers when asked the "degree to which they like, respect, and feel loyalty to the other party" (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015, p. 641). Due to this fact, objective reality may not be genuinely reported; instead, individuals report their outlooks on the other individual as an exchange partner. However, with the impact that a person's subjective assessment of the other LMX member has on one's attitudes and behaviors, and ultimately, their work performance, the subjective evaluation provides the reliability of members' feelings and subjectivity. (b) Individuals will experience varying levels of success in meeting the other members' expectations within the dyadic relationship (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Depending on the organization, team members' roles, and the members' length and experience in the LMX, there is a naturally expected growth period. The LMX will naturally evolve as time goes by (Sin et al., 2009). (c) Leaders are apprehensive about reporting low-quality exchange relationships (LXR) due to social acceptability concerns. No leader wants to admit that they cannot synchronously work together with members of their teams. Whether an LMX is operating at a peak level, when asking leaders, results may be disingenuous (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015).

Once the measurements of exchange quality have been established, leaders have two primary platforms to evaluate their LMX. These tools are the LMX-7 and the LMX-Multidimensional. Each method of evaluation has been employed by researchers and carries its unique benefits. Leaders must analyze their organization to determine which of the two instruments would best fit their specific circumstances. The LMX-7 and the LMX-MDM are equally accurate and useful tools for measuring the level at which an LMX operates. The LMX-7 method will be reviewed first.

LMX-7. The original measurement method for LMX relationships was with the LMX-7 (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Scandura & Graen, 1984). The LMX-7 is a 7-item questionnaire that is used to evaluate the dyadic relationship within the LMX. The questions range from, "Do you usually feel that you know where you stand, and do you usually know how satisfied your immediate supervisor is with you?" (Scandura & Graen, 1984, p. 430) To "I have enough confidence in my immediate supervisors that I would defend and justify his or her decisions if he or she were not present to do so" (p. 430). Each question has a range of answers, including a numerical value of one through four, that aggregately achieves a total score between seven and 28. The higher the score on the LMX, the more likely the leader and employee are in an HXR.

LMX-Multidimensional. The second method for measuring LMXs is with the LMX-Multidimensional (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The LMX-Multidimensional (LMX-MDM) framework's essence is grounded in role theory, which focuses on the multidimensionality of human interactions. Examples of this concept include employees focusing solely on their work-related tasks and ignoring social interactions within their organization and employees who focus too much on social interaction while sharing little focus on work tasks (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). In addition to role theory, social exchange theory plays a critical role in the LMX-MDM concept framework. Social exchange theorists found that members of an LMX will have material and non-material exchanges such as friendship, mentorship, and camaraderie that will define the concept of LMX as multidimensional (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

LMX-MDM theorists have further described LMX-MDM based on the idea that there are three exchangeable currencies within the relationship: task-related behaviors, loyalty, and affect (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The multidimensional aspect considers all LMXs to be individual and

to vary among those who belong in the LMX. Some LMXs will have a high emphasis on task-related behaviors but lack loyalty and affect, just as others will be higher on the other side of the spectrum. Researchers used the literature that defined LMX-MDM to generate a measurement method that included multiple variations of questionnaires (Jian et al., 2014). By the completion of the study on LMX-MDM, the questionnaire had grown to 120 questions due to the trend of "trust and professional respect as being critical in their relationships with leaders" (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 49). The results were indicative of Dienesch and Liden's (1986) original four-factor idea that detailed the critical components for measuring an LMX: affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect. Prioritizing the four elements of the LMX-MDM is the core of an HXR (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). LMX measurements are methods to establish the level at which the dyadic relationship will operate. After the status of the LMX has been determined, it is the antecedents and consequences that will define the organization's efficiency.

LMX Antecedents and Member Consequences

High-quality exchange relationships do not exist naturally; instead, they must be developed over time (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Researchers have found that there are typical antecedents that will indicate a faster and more solid formulation of an HXR (Henderson et al., 2009). Additionally, when these antecedents exist and are groomed in the dyadic relationship with proper focuses, the consequences of the LMX will be higher levels of employee performance (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015).

LMX Antecedents. There are specific antecedents that serve as indicators for the forming of HXRs in the LMX. The premise of having characteristics that serve as predictors of HXRs came about in Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell's (1993) review of demographic similarity and leader-rated performance. Researchers initially proved "perceived similarity, member

expectations of the leader, and leader expectations of the member" (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015, p. 642) to be the real differentiators in the early stages of LMXs. Given that an LMX has the proper antecedents, the LMX then goes through the beginning stages of formulation where members will or will not develop trust as part of a mutual testing process (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Leader-member exchanges that develop trust in the early stages set off a rapid reaction of increasing responsibility followed by confirmed feelings of mutual trust, thus further solidifying the importance of the antecedents is a critical element at the early stages of an LMX (Duchon et al., 1986).

Researchers have further expanded upon the concept of who is responsible for which antecedent if members are to form an HXR (Erodgan & Bauer, 2015). Early studies indicated as long as there was a mutual relationship founded on the antecedents listed in Figure 4, the LMX was pre-dispositioned to operate at the level of an HXR (Erodgan & Bauer, 2015). However, Dulebohn et al. (2012) further delineated the roles and responsibilities of the categories in which the LMX encompasses. As seen in Figure 4, three categories indicate the perfect criterion for an HXR.

Figure 4

Leader-Member Exchange Antecedents and Consequences Theoretical Framework
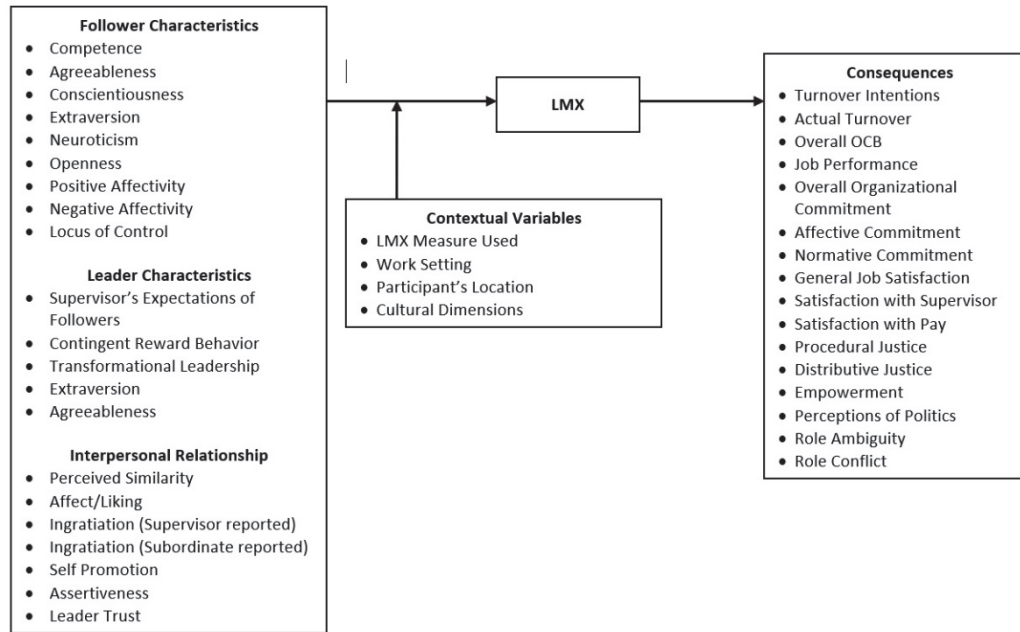
Note. Reprinted from "A Meta-Analysis of Antecedents and Consequences of Leader-Member Exchange: Integrating the Past with an Eye Toward the Future," by J. H. Dulebohn, W. H. Bommer, R. C. Liden, R. L. Brouer, & G. R. Ferris, 2012, *Journal of Management, 38*(6), p. 1717 (https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311415280). Reprinted with permission.

Follower Characteristics. Fiske (1993) proved that initial perceptions of the dyadic partner are based mostly on individual characteristics. Furthermore, initial attraction within the relationship is based on physical characteristics and personality (Byrne, 1971). As the dyadic relationship continues to develop, the LMX is formed into either an LXR or an HXR; however, the initial interactions between the leader and the member are critical to the direction in which the LMX progresses. Leaders tend to assess follower competence to determine what tasks they believe employees are willing to and have the ability to accomplish (Dulebohn et al., 2012). As a result of this natural screening process that leaders subject employees to during the initial LMX encounters, the "follower's response to the initial task assignment represents a primary stimulus evaluated by the leader" (Dulebohn et al. 2012, p. 1719). Followers who display positive

characteristics and possess the ability to achieve the leader's desired results will immediately be assumed to achieve the most demanding of tasks. This ability to perform complex tasks, follow directions well, and have a positive exchange with one's leader will propel the LMX into the early stages of an HXR (Dulebohn et al., 2012). An employee's inability to complete tasks or follow directions appropriately during the early stages of an LMX will result in the opposite reaction and move the dyadic relationship towards an LXR.

As displayed in Figure 4, there are multiple characteristics of a follower within an LMX. Competence is likely the most critical of the follower characteristics based on research and discoveries, which assert that the initial interactions will progress an LMX into either an HXR or an LXR (Byrne, 1971; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Fiske, 1993; Liden & Graen, 1980). Despite the importance of the first exchange between the leader and the employee, it is crucial to ensure all characteristics are given time to develop through social interactions and be assessed throughout the fruition of the LMX (Smith, 2016). The other essential features are agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, openness, positive affectivity (PA), negative affectivity (NA), and locus of control (Dulebohn et al., 2012). These eight characteristics are essential to the LMX; however, it is competence and the initial interaction that can set the tone for the relationship (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Conscientiousness and overall emotional stability are the best personality trait predictors of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991, 2005; Lado & Alonso, 2017). Conscientiousness has been touted for decades as the best predictor for varying skill-level positions throughout any industry (Barrick & Mount, 2005). It has been a proven method to select employees who possess the natural ability to exert effort and have the innate emotional intelligence required for accomplishing detailed tasks. Ultimately, competence and conscientiousness give leaders insight

into a member's level of competence, achievement, and dependability; in other words, the ability and motivation to be successful (Barrick & Mount, 2005; Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Phillips and Bedeian (1994) argued that of the follower characteristics, extraversion should be given an appropriate amount of attention as well. Extraverts naturally seek out exchanges with colleagues and supervisors that may feed their desire for more intense and sensation-rich relationships (Phillips & Bedeian, 1994). This constant need for exchanges will progress to higher frequency and potency levels with supervisors and colleagues over time to achieve the satisfaction of interacting and the potential for more fulfilling work-related tasks. This type of behavior will ultimately lead an LMX to achieve HXR-type behaviors. The exchange typically results in higher work engagement levels, positivity, and personal fulfillment, which supports the theory that extraversion is a crucial fundamental associated with HXRs (Shu & Lazatkhan, 2017).

Agreeableness refers to a characteristic that reflects trustworthiness, compassion, supportiveness, and an overall warm nature (Hassan et al., 2016). Agreeableness is closely associated with reciprocity behaviors (Perugini et al., 2003), which are a critical element of any LMX (Erdogan & Liden, 2002). At some point in the dyadic relationship, one or both of the members must be more agreeable than the other if for no other reason than prioritizing the organization's need over individual interest (Lebowitz, 2015). There is value found in members who strategically express their ideas and concerns with empathy (Markman, 2012).

Openness is directly related to overall creativity and one's willingness and ability to influence change (Barrick & Mount, 2005; George & Zhou, 2001; LePine et al., 2000). A member with a general sense of openness about oneself will be more apt to participate and contribute to the team's innovating. Open members will be more likely to enthusiastically pursue

new tasks and roles within the group while accepting broader roles and more responsibility (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Not only will this help spur innovation and creativity, but openness also indicates to leaders that members are more likely to expand beyond the formal contracts of the role and position for which the employees were hired (Bernerth et al., 2007).

Neuroticism is proven as a negative attribute in earlier studies on personality traits among team members (Barrick et al., 1998). Followers should display low levels of neurotic behaviors if they are to engage in LMXs that are trustworthy, social, and commitment-based teams (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Neurotic employee characteristics are most closely associated with team members who continuously showcase feelings such as anger, depression, anxiety, insecurities, and worry (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Positive affectivity (PA) refers to feelings of enthusiasm, positivity, and a general sense of optimism (Watson et al., 1988). Locke (1976) described an individual's feelings and overall job satisfaction as PA when researching human motivation and goal setting theories. Team members identified as having high PA levels, similar to employees who display high levels of competence, are typically given favorable and more intense tasks from supervisors (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Employees who are excited and optimistic about the tasks they are completing are generally more pleasant to be around; therefore, LMXs tend to form into HXRs when PA is identified as a central characteristic (Sears & Hackett, 2011).

Alternatively, negative affectivity (NA) is closely related to neuroticism. It describes a general feeling of mistrust, hostility, fatigue, irritability, and fear (Watson et al., 1988). Team members who display NA view events and individuals with a constant negative outlook (Bernerth et al., 2007; Watson & Clark, 1984). Leader-member exchanges that have members with high levels of NA will lack trust, effective working relationships, and satisfaction in their

work performance (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The constant portrayal of negativity will automatically propel an LMX into an LXR. Furthermore, leaders will perceive members with NA less favorably and solidify a low-quality relationship (Hochwarter & Byrne, 2005; Hui et al., 1999; Leary et al., 1986).

   Leader Characteristics. The second category of antecedents in an LMX covers the leader characteristics. All three types of antecedents are valuable to the LMX; however, it has been argued that leaders' characteristics and behaviors are more influential in determining whether an LMX is an HXR or an LXR (Dienesch & Liden 1986; Liden et al., 1997). Leaders' behaviors substantially impact their followers' reactions and perceptions of the leader and the organization (Lord & Maher, 1991; Nahrgang et al., 2009; Snodgrass et al., 1998). Of the five sub-categories to the leader characteristic antecedent, the most notable and the most researched subjects are transformational leadership and contingent reward behavior (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

   Leader contingent reward behavior (LCRB) refers to the leader's actions and directed toward the member that involves recognition, reward, and feedback (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Leader contingent reward behaviors are based on "economic and emotional exchanges" (Puni et al., 2018, p. 525). Leader contingent reward behaviors aim to clarify team members' role requirements and apply beneficial and attainable employee outcomes. By focusing on contingent rewards, leaders possess the means to motivate and influence positive behaviors that satisfy the leaders' expectations and move the team further towards achieving organizational goals (Puni et al., 2018). Additionally, leaders who establish a connection between specific behaviors and corresponding praise and rewards are more likely to develop precise work-related task requirements (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The clear link between action and compensation will not

only create a high effort-performance expectancy exchange but will solidify the relationship based on positive rewards for positive output (Waldman et al., 1990).

High exchange relationships are built on the foundations of trust, respect, and reciprocated obligation (Brower et al., 2009). Similarly, the Army's core principle of mission command is grounded in "mutual trust, shared understanding, and purpose" (Headquarters, 2019b, p. 2). Teams that have a shared understanding with a stated reciprocal obligation are more likely to operate as an HXR due to followers receiving clear, concise, and positive feedback as well as praise and recognition for their efforts (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Wayne et al., 2002).

Transformational leadership is another element of the leadership characteristics that influence the LMX. Transformational leadership characteristics and behaviors encompass sacrificing individual gains with the group's interest in mind, setting and living as an example for subordinates to emulate, and exercising high ethical standards at all times (Tse & Lam, 2012). Followers are more likely to respond positively to leaders who display transformational leadership behaviors as these behaviors have a higher probability of inspiring and motivating, which will, in turn, elicit a natural response for team members to further commit themselves to the unit and the LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Finally, transformational leaders who utilize LCRBs by establishing clear expectations, praise, and recognition for positive output and display genuine care for their subordinates' personal and professional lives will have a significantly higher potential for developing an HXR (Amor et al., 2019).

A leader's expectation of their follower's success is an equally applicable characteristic necessary for a leader to develop an HXR with team members. As reviewed in the follower characteristic competence and the introduction to LMX, the initial interactions of the LMX can set the tone for the duration of the social and professional relationship. Suppose leaders establish

themselves as displaying a desire for their subordinates to succeed. In that case, they are more likely to develop a social exchange aspect to the LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Introductory behaviors include assigning followers challenging but achievable goals, allowing more significant levels of autonomy than usual, and showing a genuine interest in followers' growth and development. The anticipation of high-performing followers will become a self-fulfilling prophecy to an HXR as well as work-related outcomes as displayed in experimental and field research (Liden et al., 1993; McNatt, 2000; McNatt & Judge, 2004; Wayne et al., 1997).

  Interpersonal Relationship. Interpersonal relationships in this context refer to stimuli that influencer the leader and follower's perceptions of one another, which can be a significant contributing factor to the early stages of the LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Interpersonal relationships are explicitly referring to perceived affect, both positive and negative, similarities, trust, and influentialness (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The effectiveness of an interpersonal relationship has been a recurring theme over the last four decades. The series of exchanges of goods and rights do not develop HXRs; instead, it is the dyadic bond established by the leader and the member that produces high-quality transactions and result in HXRs (Graen et al., 1982; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Landy, 1985). Psychological and social leadership theories also suggest that mutual relationships' similarities will naturally lead to professional relational attractions and mutual bonds (Byrne, 1971).

  Perceived similarities are a critical piece of an HXR. The similarity of personalities is directly correlated to the quality-levels of LMXs (Bauer & Green, 1996; Felfe & Schyns, 2002; Phillips & Bedeian, 1994). People are more likely to be drawn toward those who share similar interests, values, and outlooks in general (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Having similar views on issues, projects, tasks, and how to accomplish them within the workplace will enhance communicative

abilities within the LMX and lead to more efficient outcomes (Fairhurst, 2001). Middle-level leaders who feel like they are similar to their supervisors have a better relationship with their supervisors than those who do not (Bauer & Green, 1996). The positive relationship directly influences organizational outcomes; therefore, it is a critical element of success (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Alternatively, extreme differences can create immediate problems within the dyadic relationship. Differences in values and outlooks can lead to conflict, withdrawal, and the establishing of barriers within the LMX (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Groups that lack perceived similarities are in danger of contributing less often or less truthfully, engaging less often in frequent communication, being less participative in the decision making process, and have a negative attitude toward teamwork and unit cohesion (Baugh & Graen, 1997; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Lichtenstein et al., 1997; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989).

As an element of interpersonal relationships, affect is equally crucial between members of an LMX as it is essential as a follower characteristic. Affect in the interpersonal relationship stage refers to creating an environment within the LMX and the organization where members experience elation, motivation, enthusiasm, and excitement to be at work and complete tasks as a team (Joseph et al., 2015). Establishing a climate of positive affect within the LMX facilitates a capable group on multiple levels. First, positive affect and liking drive the mood contagion processes (Bono & Ilies, 2006). Mood contagion theories suggest that charismatic leaders consistently express positive emotions. Those same positive emotions are replicated by the leader's followers (Bono & Ilies, 2006). The transfer of emotions from leader to follower is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure **5**

Leader Charisma and the Emotional Contagion of Positive Emotions from Leaders to Followers
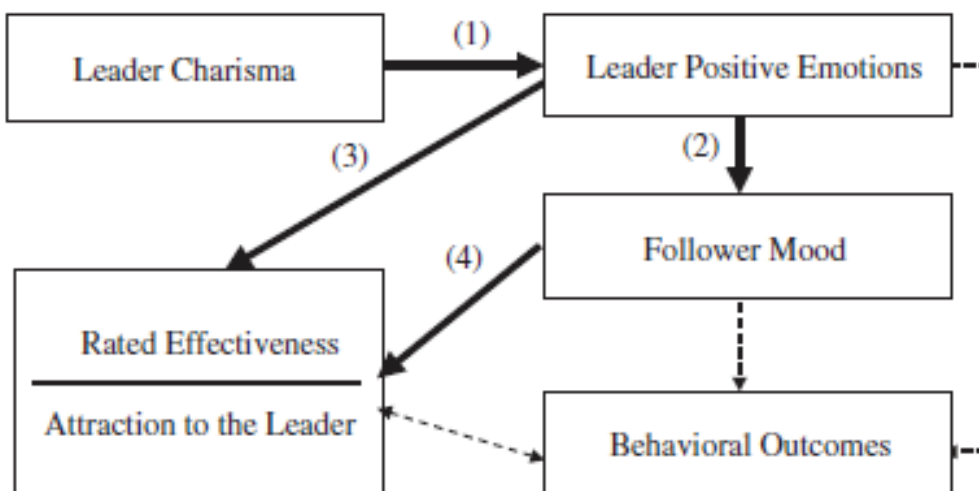
Note. Reprinted from "Charisma, Positive Emotions, and Mood Contagion," by J. E. Bono, & R. Ilies, 2006, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(4), p. 318 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.04.008). Reprinted with permission.

Figure 5 details the process of the transfer of positive emotions from a charismatic leader to a follower. Step 1 details the link between leader charisma and the outward expression of positive emotions within the work environment. Step 2 shows the positive emotions impacting both follower mood and behavioral outcomes in the workplace. Step 3 is the perceived effectiveness of the leader as rated by the followers. Finally, in Step 4, the link between leader charisma to the expression of positive emotions affects the follower's mood. Ultimately, the affect developed within the LMX between both dyadic members of the unit is shown (Bono & Ilies, 2006).

Ingratiation is another element of interpersonal relationships that focuses on perceived affect and liking. Ingratiation is the act of behaviors of either member of the LMX that are executed explicitly to improve one's likability and interpersonal attractiveness to the other

member of the LMX (Deluga & Perry, 1994). Ingratiation is divided into three sub-categories, according to Jones (1964):

- Other Enhancement: Subordinates will find a way to speak highly of their supervisor in front of or around their supervisor's superiors. The intent is to improve one's interpersonal attractiveness by exaggerating their leader's traits, characteristics, or actions. In turn, leaders have a high probability of having a positive effect on their followers. It is human nature to like someone who thinks highly of their leader. Followers may also go out of their way to tell someone they believe will relay the message in casual conversation.

- Conformity in Opinion: Members of an LMX may choose to conform to their dyadic partner's thoughts or values. The intent behind this action is to focus on perceived similarities and the likelihood that the follower's leader will be naturally drawn to like the member more as a person if they share similar views (Jones, 1964). Other variations of this approach include allowing the leader to convince the follower of their beliefs, regardless of how they feel. Followers may choose to disagree about seemingly meaningless topics to establish that they do not aimlessly believe everything the leader is saying.

- Self-Presentation: Self-presentation is the action where either member of the LMX displays themselves, their skills, or their attributes in a way that they believe fits the other member's ideal leader or follower. The member can choose to ask for advice, reveal personal opinions, or find other flattery methods to help gain the trust of their dyadic partner. The status level between the ingratiator and the opposite member can be the difference in approaching this method.

Similar to the self-presentation method of ingratiation, self-promotion is a critical component of the interpersonal relationships aspect of the LMX. Self-promotion methods are proven to have PA on the quality of an LMX between a leader and a follower (Park, 2017). Ingratiation and self-promotion are "tactics that focus on the desire to be liked and to be viewed as competent, respectively" (Dulebohn et al., 2012, p. 1724). Witty (2018) presented five methods to employ self-promotion without being viewed as aggressively pursuing self-interest, which will lead to distrust within the LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The five methods are: be aware of one's audience, be gracious with compliments, be generous, and include recognition of others, be interesting, and be honest (Witty, 2018).

As a part of interpersonal relationships, assertiveness refers to the aggressive pursuit of attaining perceived likeability from one's leader or other members of their LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). As previously mentioned, aggressive dreams and attempts to force the dyadic relationship into something it is not are negatively viewed by leaders. These over-aggressive attempts to be liked will give the other members perceptions of dishonesty, distrust, and an indication of ulterior motives (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Leader trust is the final component of interpersonal relationships and an essential slice of the bond that creates a high-functioning exchange relationship versus a low-functioning relationship. The initial theory on LMXs stated that their leaders chose group members based on "(a) skill and competence, (b) extent to which they can be trusted, and (c) motivation to assume greater responsibility" (Kaila, 2006, p. 150). Trust was the essential element of the initial theory. Leaders had to trust members' skill and competence and their motivation to assume greater responsibility. These nonperishable skills would carry over into their LMXs (Dulebohn et al., 2012). As dyadic partners initially establish themselves with one another, trust is an interpersonal

relationship trait based on members' perceived dependability and competence (Lewicki et al., 2006; McAllister, 1995). Once the LMX moves beyond the group relationship's initial stages, trust is solidified or broken based on affect, mutual obligation, caring, and concern (McAllister, 1995).

Contextual Variables. Contextual variables in the structure of the LMX refer to the potential internal and external factors that influence the viability of the LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Variables include the LMX measure used, the LMX work setting, the participant's location, and the dyadic partners' cultural dimensions (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Dienesch and Liden (1986) also believed that the leader's power and the number of employees within the supervisor's immediate domain were contextual influences. As previously mentioned in this dissertation, the two primary models of LMX measurement, the LMX-MD, and the LMX-7, can be used to access the dynamics of the LMX from two different perspectives.

LMX Consequences. The consequences of the level in which the LMX exists are paramount to an individual's career success and an organization's ability to operate at a peak performance level (Wayne et al., 1999; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). The ultimate outcomes, or consequences, of high-quality LMXs, are most often directly associated with organizational commitment, employee satisfaction, and turnover intention (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). It is worth noting that turnover intention, which refers to how much an employee wants to leave the organization instead of actual turnover rates due to numerous variables, is more indicative of organizational commitment (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Erdogan and Bauer's (2015) summary of antecedents and consequences breaks the LMX consequences down into three primary categories: job attitudes, behaviors, and career success.

Job Attitudes. Job attitudes can be summed up by assessing job satisfaction and employee commitment levels (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Not only are job attitudes the most frequently correlated results of effective LMXs, but they are also clear indicators of low turnover rates, high levels of organizational citizenship behaviors, and overall measures of job satisfaction (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Gerstner & Day, 1995; Ilies et al., 2007). Furthermore, in a study investigating the connection between leader-member exchanges and nurses working at three major general hospitals, LMXs proved to significantly influence job satisfaction (Han & Woo, 2018). The effects of effective LMXs resulted in nurses' increased job attitudes, which fed into positive organizational cultures and enhanced work engagement (Han & Woo, 2018). The cross-industry results have consistently proven that the consequences of positive and engaged employees, through the measure of job attitudes, employee motivation, and organizational effectiveness, indicate that HXRs and transformational leadership are critical elements of effective human resource management methods (Fernet et al., 2015; Han & Woo, 2018).

Behaviors. Leader-member exchanges are proven to mold employees to fit organizational cultures (Hofmann et al., 2003). Employee behaviors will mimic the environments where they are developed and operate regularly (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Hofmann et al., 2003). Leaders must establish and grow organizational cultures that will develop employees to become citizens of their teams and highly valued members of the LMXs for which they work.

Employee behaviors vary significantly as the strength of the dyadic relationship within the LMX fluctuates (Anand et al., 2017). An influential factor in this concept is the distance between the leader and the member. In scenarios where the dyadic partners are not co-located, the strength of the LMX carries more significance than when dyadic partners are geographically co-located (Anand et al., 2017). Positive and effective leadership requires continual leader

engagement as no matter how far the LMX is spread apart, the LMX requires high levels of

"mutual trust, liking, and reciprocal influence, and resource exchanges [that] extend beyond the

formal contract" (Anand et al., 2017, p. 489). The high levels of influence and mutual trust

within the LMX will undoubtedly lead to positive organizational outcomes, such as positive

organizational citizenship behaviors, employee role acceptance, promotion rates, and the

likelihood of turnover (Anand et al., 2017; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015;

Erdogan & Liden, 2002).

Career Success. The leader-member exchange theory suggests that leaders establish

personalized dyadic relationships with their peers, subordinates, and supervisors (Dulebohn et

al., 2012). Neither member within the LMX dictate high-functioning dyadic relationships;

instead, it is an idiosyncratic relationship between every member within an organization

(Rousseau et al., 2006). Within these idiosyncratic dyadic relationships, members can express

their needs for personal and professional self-development. One employee may choose to work

swing-shifts while other employees may choose to be afforded further educational or

professional growth opportunities. Whatever the employee's desire, it is only possible through

stellar performances within the workplace coupled with a robust social exchange and a high

functioning LMX (Ford & Newstrom, 1999; Frank, 1985; Rousseau et al., 2006).

Idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) made within the LMX are afforded to organizations that

consistently achieve results beyond typical expectations to foster employee engagement (Davis

& Heijden, 2018). Organizations typically can gauge their success against a plethora of metrics

that compare them against others within their industries or value themselves to their

shareholders; however, an individual's career success is an extremely subjective concept that has

nearly no range to it (Denning, 2016). i-deals are individualized plans or rewards that offer

employees incentives to operate beyond their contractual obligations (Rousseau et al., 2006). i-deals are primarily negotiated and agreed upon by the leader and the member. i-deals contain the following elements:

- Individually negotiated: i-deals are arrangements or deals made between an employee and their leader. These arrangements are specific to the needs of the employee. They typically vary from any agreements made with other colleagues in one's organization. An employee's perceived market value will be the driving force of this arrangement and allow individual employees more or less negotiating power than their peers (Bartol & Martin, 1989; Rousseau et al., 2006).

- Heterogeneous: Most of the terms agreed upon within an i-deal are specific to the leader-member relationship and the member's idea of career development and success. Terms of the agreements can be made according to benchmarks or performance measures. Incentives and exceptional circumstances can only be realized when employees are operating effectively. Just as positive performance output equates to career success, low work quality can result in the retraction of particular circumstances afforded to team members (Rousseau et al., 2006).

- Benefitting both employer and employee: i-deals are a promotional concept that aims to incentivize career success and highly efficient LMX relationships. i-deals serve the interests of the organization by encouraging productivity and effectiveness, just as they serve employees by offering varying forms of career success opportunities and rewards. The ultimate goal from the arrangement stems from an organization attracting and retaining high-quality employees while offering members their desired resources, in whatever form that takes (Rousseau et al., 2006).

Throughout the review of the positive influencers HXRs have on employees, organizations, and overall efficiency levels, there has been a recurring theme. High-quality LMXs, or HXRs, consist of dyadic members who show desirable attitudes, behaviors, and actions (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Employees who emulate the characteristics and attributes required to operate in HXRs have a significantly higher probability of experiencing career success and an overall positive work experience with their company (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). It is equally important to stress the strength of the individual characteristics of persons who make up the dyadic relationship. Mood contagion has been reviewed as a significant factor in the LMX and the LMX's level of motivation, positivity, and effectiveness in the workplace (Bono & Ilies, 2006). At the root of these characteristics is each dyadic member's ability to regulate and focus their emotional intelligence levels (Jain, 2018). Only through a sufficient grasp of emotional intelligence can a leader guide and influence the LMX to succeed (Jain, 2018).

Emotional Intelligence

A critical element of an employee's ability to remain resilient, positive, and engaged in their personal and professional lives is their ability to realize and regulate their feelings and emotions (Jain, 2018). Furthermore, emotional intelligence (EI) refers to one's ability to discriminate among one's feelings and emotions and execute an appropriate output to the situation and persons involved in the exchange (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Leaders and followers within the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies should identify, regulate, and focus their emotional and physiological responses to be effective in the United States Military (Sewell, 2009). Army leaders must provide purpose, direction, and motivation both in and outside of their unit; therefore, having emotional intelligence as a core competency in leadership and followership is imperative (Sewell, 2009). Emotional Intelligence is built upon the five constructs of cognizance,

self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills. When the five emotional competencies are aggregated, they form a framework that takes leaders and followers from having separate, individual understandings to a competent team (Jain, 2018). Cherniss & Goleman's (2001) framework of emotional competencies is displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Framework of Emotional Competencies

	Self Personal Competence	Other Social competence
Recognition	Self-Awareness - Emotional self-awareness - Accurate self-assessment - Self-confidence	Social Awareness - Empathy - Service orientation - Organizational awareness
Regulation	Self-Management - Self-control - Trustworthiness - Conscientiousness - Adaptability - Achievement drive - Initiative	Relationship Management - Developing others - Influence - Communication - Conflict management - Leadership - Change catalyst - Building bonds - Teamwork & collaboration

Note. Framework of emotional competencies. Reprinted from Cherniss, C. & Goleman, D. (2001). *The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to select for, measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and organizations*, p. 28. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Reprinted with permission.

The 20 competencies, nested within four primary categories, establish the entire spectrum of traits, characteristics, and skills required of an individual to master emotional intelligence. Competencies range between personal, internal, social, or external levels and include recognizing

and regulating one's emotions (Jain, 2018). In addition to the 20 competencies, there are five core components, as seen below:

- Cognizance: The ability to recognize and perceive one's emotions. In addition to identifying one's emotions, individuals must also identify one emotion's effect on others (Jain, 2018).

- Self-regulation: Self-regulating refers to one's ability to manage their emotional, physiological, and physical output as dictated by an activating event (Jain, 2018).

- Internal motivation: Also referred to as intrinsic motivation, internal motivation is the drive to pursue one's goals and passions for personal reasons instead of focusing on incentives and rewards (Jain, 2018).

- Empathy: Having the ability to realize others' motivating factors and values. Empathy is a necessary skill for a leader to inspire and influence their team members to achieve high-efficiency levels (Jain, 2018).

- Social skills: Leaders and followers must have the ability to manage relationships within their organization and networks (Jain, 2018).

Mayer and Salovey introduced four branches of their emotional intelligence model in their framework of emotional intelligence (1997). Like Goleman's approach, Mayer and Salovey defined these four mental abilities: "(i) perceptions of emotion, (ii) use of emotion to facilitate thought, (iii) understanding of emotion, and (iv) management of emotion" (Brackett et al., p. 91). The successful mastery of these four branches is linked with employee's ability to interact with colleagues, manage conflict and workplace stressors, and improve overall job performance (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Lopes et al., 2006). Employees who better grasped the four mental abilities receive better peer and supervisor evaluations, have greater stress tolerance, and display

significantly higher levels of leadership potentials than those who lack emotional intelligence (Lopes et al., 2006).

Leaders who display emotional intelligence are associated with supporting their employees, their organization, and the organization's goals (Brackett et al., 2011). Regardless of which model of emotional intelligence leaders choose, there is a clear connection between positive and effective leadership and one's emotional intelligence level (Brackett et al., 2011). Kerr et al. (2006) proved that job performance and leadership potential were directly related to their subject's emotional intelligence level in a review of senior executive leaders. It has been established as a clear indicator of one's potential to exercise positive and effective leadership behaviors (Brackett et al., 2011).

Summary

Effective use of goal-setting requires leaders to be cognitive of their team's ability to strategically set goals that will drive productivity and produce high achieving employees (Locke, 1968). The traits referred to in Locke's (1968) goal-setting theory embodies the fundamentals associated with effective leadership behaviors, emotional intelligence, and one's ability to leverage high exchange relationships within their organization. Locke's goal-setting theory suggests that employees will be more successful when they are given a difficult yet manageable goal to achieve (Ones et al., 2018). Yukl (2012) described the components of his first meta-category of leadership behaviors similar to Locke. Yukl stressed the importance of giving team members manageable goals. Additionally, Yukl highlighted the leader's responsibility to clarify, plan, monitor, and problem-solve the task-oriented goals assigned to employees. Just as the Army describes effective leadership as providing purpose, direction, and motivation

(Headquarters, 2019a), Yukl's first meta-category is rooted in the same concepts of active leader engagement and consistent interaction (Yukl, 2012).

Yukl's (2012) concept of leader engagement at every level is shared by Erdogan & Bauer's (2015) theory on leader-member exchanges. Erdogan, Bauer, and Dulebohn et al. (2012) set the framework for successful engagements between the leaders and the organization's members. Units that operate in the HXR realm of the LMX concept work synchronously under mutual understandings of trust, respect, and reciprocated obligation (Brower et al., 2009). When HXRs are established and operational, members will strive to achieve the goals set forth by the leader. Leaders give more explicit pictures as to the purpose and end-state of the goal. In-turn, followers receive praise and recognition for their efforts to achieve organizational goals (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Goals must be achievable and challenging, but even more critical, the dyadic relationship must be established and functioning at a high level if the goals are to be achieved (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Finally, one of the core fundamentals required of both the leader and the follower in a group operating under the goal-setting concept is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been positively associated with people's ability to function at higher levels in their personal and professional lives (Brackett et al., 2011). Leaders must be willing to set goals for their employees that are difficult but achievable (Locke & Latham, 2019); however, the key to successfully managing the stressors and associated difficulties with achieving high goals can be seen in one's level of EI (Bracket et al., 2011). Not only are team members expected to have high levels of EI, but supervisors at every level must embody the traits associated with EI if they are to lead their teams to be successful (Bracket et al., 2011). Through the combination of goal-setting, active LMX, driven by leaders who embody efficacious leadership behaviors, and

emotionally intelligent team members and supervisors operating synchronously, units can truly realize organizational success.

Iowa Army Recruiting Companies' positive and effective leadership methods in USAREC mirror the concepts identified throughout this literature review. The Army directs leaders to provide purpose, direction, and motivation (Headquarters, 2019a) as well as build teams based on mutual trust and understanding (Headquarters, 2019b) to achieve the mission. While the Army may categorize their goals as missions, the core concepts remain the same. Through the successful implementation of these fundamentals identified in this literature review, Iowa Army Recruiting Companies can succeed.

The ideas and methods covered in the literature review will support the dissertation and set the framework for the following chapters. The next section will cover the research method associated with evaluating positive and effective leadership within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. The research method consisted of a qualitative research design that assisted in assessing the Des Moines, Northern Iowa, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem explored in this study was how a lack of effective and positive leadership in USAREC led to the inability to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to achieve mission success in Fiscal Year 2018 from Iowa Army Recruiting Companies' perspective. Analyzing one set of sub-organizations within USAREC gave insight into why USAREC, for the first time since 2005, missed its combined mission by 11,500 Soldiers (Baldor, 2018). The reoccurrence of the United States Army's failure to achieve its recruiting goal impacts and would become very problematic for the United States' current national security strategy (President of the United States, 2017).

The three recruiting companies identified in the study were ideal research candidates. Historical data showed extreme fluctuations in mission achievement over the last five years. Theoretically, successful behaviors should be easily identifiable and replicable; therefore, recruiting managers should implement strategies that will definitively lead to success. Unfortunately, after nearly two decades at war, Army Recruiters have begun to see a decline in U.S. citizens' propensity and ability to enlist in the Army (Spoehr & Handy, 2018). Recruiting managers have reverted to working Recruiters 6 days a week for upwards of 10 hours a day to make up shortfalls and achieve their missions (Myers, 2018). Recent increases in work hours and extreme levels of applied pressure are indicative of historically destructive behaviors in USAREC (McChesney, 2009). During the last recruiting surge, toxic leadership methods led to a catastrophic loss, with five Soldiers committing suicide in the Houston Recruiting Battalion (McChesney, 2009). As the organization reorganized after missing its mission in 2018, toxic leadership behaviors began surfacing – indicating a reversion to toxic management techniques.

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore effective and positive leadership practices that may be applied to maximize USAREC Recruiter and Station Commander productivity and effectiveness and allow them to achieve their mission, from the perspective of Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies. Army recruiting companies in Iowa account for three of the fifty-four companies in the 3rd Recruiting Brigade. USAREC is comprised of five separate recruiting brigades (USAREC, n.d.a.); therefore, narrowing the scope to analyze the errors associated with Iowa Army Recruiting Companies allowed for greater insightfulness regarding how to re-focus USAREC into an organization that achieves success as it did for the 12 years before 2018.

This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to analyze the leadership attributes, managerial methodologies, organizational citizenship behaviors, and training and resources that result in successes or shortfalls within three selected Army recruiting companies. Establishing the critical fundamentals associated with the constructive and fruitful behaviors may eliminate the costly fluctuations these companies have experienced while streamlining them into an approach that will deliver consistently positive results. This study was also implemented to analyze what managers are doing effectively to facilitate the recruiting process and review and define behaviors that keep the respective recruiting companies from achieving success.

The primary qualitative research method used was the semistructured interview process with open-ended questions to elicit enough data to reach the proper saturation level. Critical concepts, phenomena, and ideas captured management methods, level of influence, subordinates' perceptions of their leaders, organizational commitment, levels of power, and expertise levels. Participants included active and reserve component Recruiters and recruiting Station

Commanders from the three Army recruiting companies covering the State of Iowa. The research questions answered were:

Q1. To what extent does positive and effective leadership play a role in mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q2. How do Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence their ability to be productive and effective in achieving recruitment goals in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q3. What are the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant leadership characteristics from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q4. What are the driving factors for Army Recruiters' productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Chapter 3 includes discussing the research methodology and design, the population and sample, the materials and instrumentation, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and the ethical assurances for those involved in the research design. The chosen research design was qualitative. The researcher used the interview method as the primary source of data collection.

Research Methodology and Design

The research method for this study was phenomenological. The method relied upon interviewing to collect the required data. Interviews were conducted with Recruiters within the recruiting stations from the three Iowa Army recruiting companies.

A phenomenological qualitative research method was the most appropriate design for the problem identified in this dissertation. The problem addressed in this study was a lack of effective and positive leadership in Iowa Army recruiting companies and the associated impact leadership has on a recruiting station's ability to achieve its assigned mission. Effective leadership is a "key analyst of organizational success or failure while examining the factors that lead to organizational success" (Madanchian et al., 2017, p. 1043). Using individual interviews to determine how positive and effective leadership impacts Recruiters and Station Commanders regularly gave insight on whether these were the key differentiating factors in Iowa Army recruiting companies' success in recent years. Iowa Army recruiting companies play their role as three of nearly 250 recruiting companies throughout the nation; therefore, if USAREC is to be successful, every recruiting company must achieve their respective missions. If USAREC fails to accomplish its mission, a direct negative impact on the United States' current national security strategy will be realized (President of the United States, 2017).

The research questions that stemmed from this dissertation were best answered using qualitative phenomenological research methods. Determining how positive and effective leadership influences an organization's successes or failures can be a unique process and potentially subjective by its very nature (Madanchian et al., 2017). Researchers have argued over one's ability to research an intangible trait. Madanchian et al. (2017) stated that the vast majority of researchers agree that an individual's ability to influence a team to achieve organizational goals is a proven measure of a leader's effectiveness. Two proven methods, the LMX-7 (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and the Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale (PLIS; Craig & Gustafson, 1998), provide questionnaires to facilitate answering the dissertation's research questions. This researcher provided an interview guide that pulled elements from the LMX-7 and PLIS and

focuses them on Army and USAREC-style positive and effective leadership, as described in

ADP 6-22 (Headquarters, 2019a), Army Leadership, ADP 6-0 (Headquarters, 2019b), Mission

Command, USAREC Training Circular 5-01 (Headquarters, 2017a), Mission Command,

USAREC Manual 3 (Headquarters, 2019e), Recruiting, and USAREC Manual 3-0 Recruiting

Operations (Headquarters, 2019g).

The researcher utilized elements from the LMX-7 questionnaire and the adapted 30-

question PLIS survey in addition to questions focused on leadership in Army recruiting to

develop the SSI. The interview facilitated the researcher's ability to determine how well

recruiting stations work together, how their leaders influence their success or failures, and how

positive and effective leadership has influenced their current and historical achievements. The

interviews provided the researcher with enough data to cover multiple aspects and measures of

leadership qualities that should determine answers to the research questions. Applying a

semistructured approach to interviewing participants will help clarify areas of ambiguity

typically associated with the study of leadership behaviors (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The study

of leadership remains one of the more difficult items to analyze and assess objectively (Graen &

Uhl-Bien, 1995); however, covering a sample that spreads throughout the entire state and

multiple leaders should help narrow trends that will assist with answering the research questions.

The personalized section of the interview that focuses on Army and USAREC leadership styles

aligns with Madanchian et al.'s (2017) suggestion for a researcher to evaluate what makes a

leader effective in a given industry.

The researcher selected a qualitative phenomenological research design as the best

approach to assess positive and effective leadership behaviors in Iowa Army recruiting

companies based on multiple items. Quantitative performance reviews and measures of an

organization's employees can be complicated when assessing a leader's influence on the team's success (Whitehurst, 2015). This dissertation aimed to determine what influence positive and effective leadership has on Iowa Army recruiting companies instead of objectively reviewing their assigned mission and subsequent accomplishments. Participants were asked interview questions based on the LMX-7 questionnaire to determine their leader-member exchange interactions. The interviewees were asked to expand upon their responses after each question. Questions were created to analyze how a leader's behaviors affected participants' job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. The multiple elements' aggregation into one interview gave the researcher the data required to answer the research questions.

Quantitative research was not selected as an option based on its reliance on objective empirical observations and measures (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). Of the viable qualitative research methods, phenomenological research proved to be the best method. In this study, a sample of less than 25 provided an opportunity to elicit the necessary number of descriptions of Recruiters' lived experiences. According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological designs are best suited for a sample ranging from 3 to 10 respondents. The approximate number of 15 participants for this study provided an above-average number of participants for a phenomenological research design but less than the appropriate number typically used in a ground theory research design (Creswell, 2013).

Grounded theory was discarded because of the overall purpose of the research design. The researcher intended to determine the influence of positive and effective leadership on Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, which are spread throughout demographically and geographically diverse regions. Grounded theory focuses more on explaining new processes based on phenomena. In contrast, this dissertation was conducted to analyze the pre-existing phenomenon

of positive and effective leadership within recruiting companies (Lingard et al., 2008). The researcher intended on exploring the influence of leadership behaviors that lead to success or failure among Iowa Army Recruiting Companies rather than determining if there is a grounded theory, or pattern that solely leads to success (Lingard et al., 2008).

Narrative research and ethnography approaches were considered as potential avenues during this phase of the research design. Narrative research was considered an option as it would aim to explore individuals' lives within the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies (Creswell, 2013). The adverse outcomes typically associated with narrative research approaches are closely associated with what makes them powerful qualitative research tools—the interviewer develops a narrative story that focuses on scenarios, events, and activities related to one to two individuals (Creswell, 2013). This research design intended to capture an aggregated understanding of what makes Recruiters successful throughout the 12 recruiting stations covering the State of Iowa. Narrative research methods were too narrow in scope to capture the lived experiences of the participants.

Ethnographic research methods aim to examine a single culture-sharing group by analyzing observations, interviews, and artifacts (Creswell, 2013). Ethnography was considered an option but discarded due to the researcher's inability to fully collect materials and conduct the processes typically associated with ethnography. In ethnography, a researcher should either visually observe subjects or obtain communication exchanges between subjects to conduct an ethnographic analysis (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher could not realistically integrate into 12 recruiting stations to observe how Recruiters interact with their leaders to establish the data necessary for proper analysis. Other forms of communicative data and

exchanges would have been improbable to obtain, given that it is a military organization with protected levels of communication and safety protocols.

Case study methods were not selected based on the difficulties associated with retrieving previously documented cases of leadership successes and failures in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. Additionally, the amount of time to achieve data saturation in a single research subject, or multiple subjects, would have been unrealistic for the researcher to complete. One of the primary methods associated with case study research requires researchers to analyze subjects through direct observation methods (Woodside, 2016). Other methods involved analyzing a subject's interpretation of operational data and a thorough analysis of historical documents and data associated with a subject (Woodside, 2016). Case study research did not prove as a practical research method due to these requirements.

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army recruiting companies that are being utilized to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to bring Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies to levels of efficiency that would allow them to achieve their mission. First-person reporting on lived experiences was the best fit for qualitative research design (Moustakas, 2011). Leveraging phenomenological research principles allowed the researcher to execute one-on-one interviews with randomly dispersed subjects amongst the three Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. The phenomenological qualitative research method was selected as the best approach to achieve enough accurate data to determine the impact of positive and effective leadership within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

Population and Sample

The theoretical population for this study was comprised of United States Army Soldiers who are serving as Regular Army or Army Reserve Recruiters and Station Commanders. The target population selected came from the three Iowa Army recruiting companies responsible for Army recruiting efforts in Iowa: Northern Iowa Recruiting Company, Des Moines Recruiting Company, and Iowa City Recruiting Company. Northern Iowa Recruiting Company included 28 79R Recruiters and Department of the Army Selected Recruiters (DASR). Des Moines Recruiting Company had a total of 35 79R Recruiters and DASRs. Finally, Iowa City Recruiting Company had 38 79R Recruiters and DASRs assigned to their unit. The primary factor for selecting the target population was the accessibility and availability of personnel who could serve as respondents in this qualitative phenomenological study. Attempting to extend the population to include the entire command was not a recommended approach as it would have proved challenging to obtain and validate given the expanse of USAREC based on Creswell's (2013) recommendations for selecting the sampling frame.

The population selected met the intent of the research study for multiple reasons. First, the population size encompassed the entirety of the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, which the research was designed to analyze. Second, the sampling was achieved through single-stage sampling procedures. The researcher had direct access to the names in the population as needed (Creswell, 2013). Finally, based on the three Iowa Army recruiting companies' organizational structure, random sampling was achieved at its full potential. The three companies are made-up of 12 recruiting stations. The 12 recruiting stations all had similar make-ups of a single Station Commander and a specific number of Recruiters.

The selected population for this research design was appropriate. It met the purpose of identifying the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army recruiting companies that are being leveraged to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness. The selected population was well-suited to address the research questions on the role positive and effective leadership plays in mission success or failure. The population helped facilitate the examination of Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices and clarify the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant characteristics. Finally, the selected population was ideal for highlighting the primary motivators and incentives for Army Recruiters in Iowa to achieve mission success.

There is ambiguity related to the exact required sample size for qualitative research designs (Vasileiou et al., 2018); however, Creswell (1998) recommended between five and 25 participants for a phenomenological design. The researcher aimed to conduct interviews with 18 participants to ensure data saturation is realized. The end goal of a qualitative research sampling method is to achieve data saturation and ensure the data collected provide a valid representation of the population being studied (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995). It was essential for the research design's integrity that the maximum number of samples is included to achieve a valid population representation (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995).

Random sampling was utilized to achieve the recommended number of five to 25 participants described by Creswell (1998). The sample was selected from 12 Army recruiting stations across the three companies that comprise the Iowa Army recruiting units. In those 12 stations, there were a total of 101 Soldiers. The 101 Soldiers were not broken down further. All Soldiers were equally eligible to be selected into the sample population. These 101 Soldiers included 32 Soldiers who were career Recruiters and held the military occupational specialty

(MOS) 79R. Sixty-nine Soldiers were considered Department of the Army Selected Recruiters (DASR). There were ten recruiting Station Commanders and 91 Recruiters within the total target population.

Using Google number randomizer, the researcher selected between all 101 potential research subjects and identified the first 25 Soldiers who were selected. The purpose of choosing 25 random Soldiers to participate in the research design was to achieve a minimum number of five, with a potential for no more than 25 respondents. The sample's makeup included 10 of the 12 available recruiting stations, three of the 10 Station Commanders, and 20 of the 69 Recruiters. The Recruiters were comprised of eight 79R Recruiters, three 79R Station Commanders, and 14 DASRs.

The selected sample for this research design was appropriate. It met the purpose of identifying the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army recruiting companies that are being leveraged to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness. The selected sample was well-suited to address the research questions on the role positive and effective leadership plays in mission success or failure. The selection helped facilitate the examination of Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices and clarify the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant characteristics. Finally, the selected sample was ideal for highlighting the primary motivators and incentives for Army Recruiters in Iowa to achieve mission success.

Through their Department of Defense Enterprise E-mail (DODEE) accounts and phone calls, the selected sample population was notified that they were chosen to participate in this research project. The identified Recruiters' names and locations were obtained by contacting their higher headquarters for an updated unit manning roster. Contact information for the

identified respondents was obtained through the DODEE directory. The identified Recruiters were asked if they would be willing to answer questions about their direct-supervisors and their supervisors' influence on their performance as an Army Recruiter. The researcher leveraged in-person interviews if a participant was within driving distance and could be interviewed in person. All other respondents were interviewed over the phone. At the beginning of every interview, the researcher provided the interviewee with a consent form that outlines all information given will remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher reassured all participants that their leaders would not have access to their responses. After the interview, the researcher reassured interviewees about their confidentiality and let them know they could read the findings in the published dissertation.

Materials or Instrumentation

The researcher used a semistructured interview process to gather pertinent information from participants. The primary advantages and purpose of using semistructured interviews were to leverage open-ended questions with follow-up queries (Adams, 2018). Phenomenological research aims to discover a phenomenon in-depth, which in this case would be the influence of positive and effective leadership, while also reaching "at the essence of participants' lived experience of the phenomenon" (Yuksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Utilizing the principles and ideals identified in conducting semistructured interviews and phenomenological research, the researcher employed a series of interview questions. Figure 7 covers the goal of using semistructured interviews to capture the essence of one's experience:

Figure 7

The Phenomenological Concept of Experience
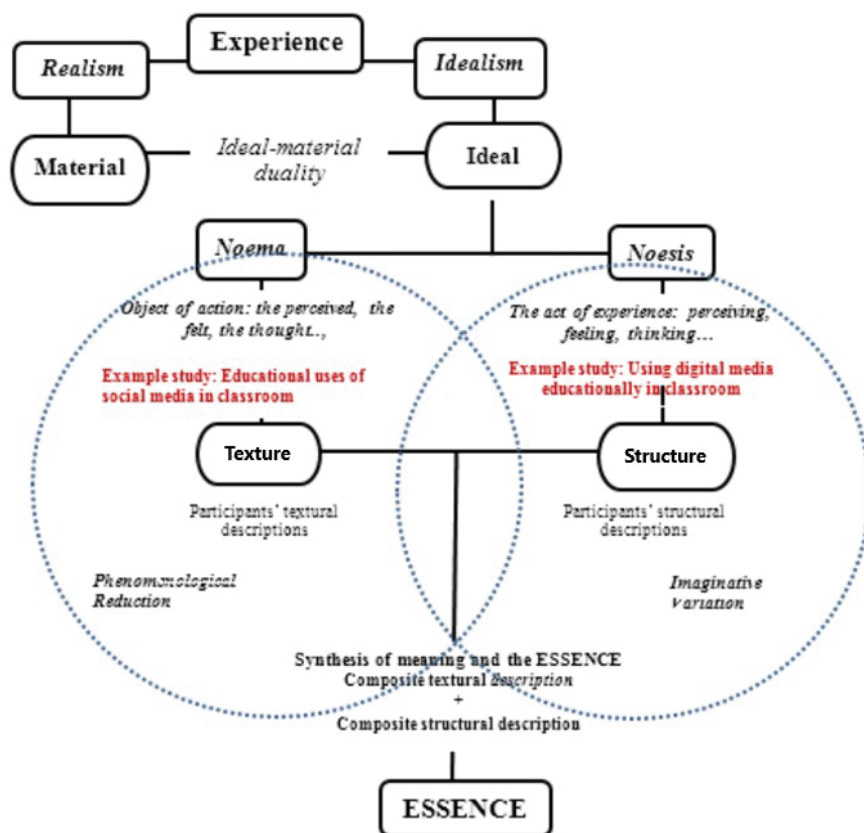
Note. Reprinted from "Theoretical Frameworks, Methods, and Procedures for Conducting Phenomenological Studies in Educational Settings," by P. Yuksel and S. Yıldırım, 2015, *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(1)*,* p. 4. (https://dergipark.org). Reprinted with permission.

The interview questions were designed to cover the theoretical framework concepts and answer the primary research questions. The interview guide covered effective leader behaviors and leader-member exchanges while also addressing Army recruiting operations' leadership questions. The interviews captured the essence of the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' experiences with leadership in Iowa Army recruiting companies.

Study Procedures

The fundamental concepts associated with phenomenological qualitative studies are rooted in the grasp of the essence of a person's lived experience (Yuksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Throughout the research process, between five and 25 participants were interviewed in-person and over the phone. The researcher recorded the conversations and reverted to the dialogue created between the researcher and the interviewee to analyze the lived experience of Recruiters serving in the Iowa Army recruiting companies. Focusing on the responses given and leveraging the semistructured interview's power and flexibility helped the researcher gauge how positive and effective leadership, or the lack thereof, influenced the Recruiters' lived experiences. The individual narratives of the five to 25 Soldiers described the reality of this phenomenon (Cilesiz, 2009; Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994; Yuksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

An interview guide (see Appendix A) was used to collect the data for this research design. The data collected was the phenomenological qualitative data that captured the essence of each Recruiter or Station Commander's lived experience in Iowa Army recruiting companies. The interviews took place over six weeks. Participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix B) that reassured them of their rights and input protection. Pseudonyms were assigned to ensure anonymity. Once the informed consent form was signed, the researcher began the interview. It was expected that each interview would take approximately one hour to complete. Data collected during the interview process was safeguarded by the researcher in the researcher's home office in a locked cabinet.

Once the data were collected, data were reviewed and analyzed following the guidelines associated with Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological research procedures. Yuksel and Yıldırım (2015) described the steps of phenomenological data analysis. The first step in the research

process began with epoché, which instructed the researcher to set "aside…the researcher's prejudgments and predispositions towards the phenomenon" (Yuksel & Yıldırım, 2015, p. 10). Identifying predispositions and prejudgments was a critical part of the process, given the researcher's extensive knowledge and closeness to the career field from which the research problem stems. The researcher wrote down a subjectivity statement and reviewed it before analyzing any data collected. Once the analysis began, the researcher utilized the steps outlined in Figure 8.

Figure 8

The Steps of Data Analysis
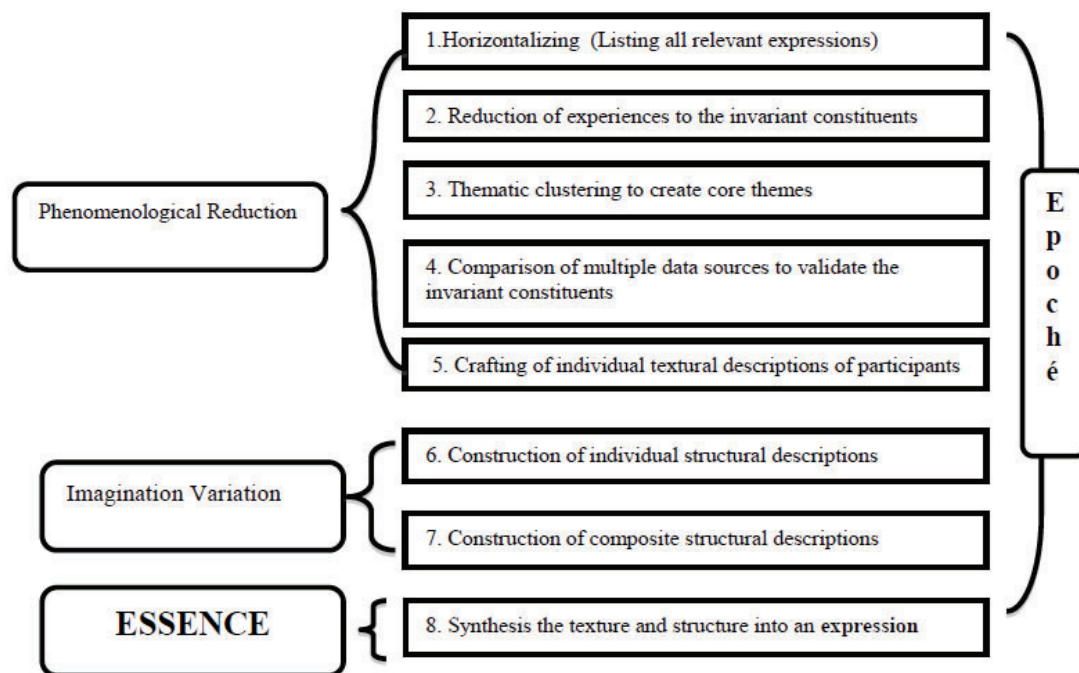
Note. Reprinted from Theoretical Frameworks, Methods, and Procedures for Conducting Phenomenological Studies in Educational Settings," by P. Yuksel and S. Yıldırım, 2015, *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(1)*,* p. 11. Reprinted with permission.

Data Collection and Analysis

The interview process followed Yuksel and Yıldırım's (2015) interview process. The interview model originally stemmed from Seidman (1998), who used three separate interviews in his approach to ensure he gathered the appropriate phenomenological data. A researcher-developed interview guide was the tool used to elicit the subject's perceptions and experiences associated with positive and effective leadership in recruiting.

Participants were asked a series of questions to create a dialogue about Recruiters' perceptions of their leader. The interviewer began by asking subjects to describe the best leader they have worked for while serving in the United States Army. Once the dialogue was created between the researcher and the respondent, the researcher elicited the respondent's perceptions of their leaders by capturing Recruiters' lived experiences with their leaders. The researcher responded with follow-up questions that probed for further information from the subjects throughout the interview.

Questions from the interview guide focused on effective leader behaviors, leader-member exchanges, and industry-specific elements. Emotional intelligence was looked for as a recurring theme throughout the process. The interviewer solicited information from participants regarding how Recruiters operate with their leader regularly. Throughout the interview, the researcher looked for codes and themes that indicated Recruiters' perceptions of whether the LMX is a high-functioning or low-functioning dyadic relationship.

Lastly, the researcher analyzed Recruiters' experiences to describe how positive and effective leadership influences success or failure in Iowa Army recruiting companies. The focus was on how effective a leader is in USAREC from the perspective of the participants. The responses engendered led to an additional dialogue between the interviewer and the participant.

The researcher obtained a sufficient data-saturation after the interviewing phase while capturing the essence of Recruiters' lived experiences within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

The data analysis procedures (Figure 8) followed an 8-step protocol covering the process once the data was collected during the semistructured interview. The 8 steps were followed just as Yuksel and Yıldırım (2015) set forth their data analysis procedures. The end goal was to capture the essence of each Recruiter's experience through three meta-categories of analyses: phenomenological reduction, imagination variation, and essence (Moustakas, 1994). The steps were conducted as follows:

1. Phenomenological reduction: This process includes a holistic approach of bracketing, horizontaling, and grouping related themes together while establishing textural language (Moustakas, 1994). The textural language during the phenomenological reduction process focuses on capturing not only the "external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 88). Typical perception and analysis call for a researcher to take a straight-forward analytic approach to an object, whereas phenomenological reduction calls for a researcher to focus on an object's perceived experience (Miller, 1984; Moustakas, 1994).

2. Imagination Variation: The second phase of the phenomenological data analysis process calls for the researcher to "seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying from the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 93). The goal is to identify more than the simple object being analyzed; rather, the researcher must be able to define

"the 'how' that speaks to conditions that illuminate the 'what' of experience"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 93). Through collecting data, the researcher must describe the

interviewee's experience, perceptions, and memories (Husserl, 1931).

3. Essence: The end goal of the phenomenological data analysis process is to execute

the "intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a

unified statement of the essences of experience of the phenomenon as a whole"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). Capturing the essence of experience requires the researcher

to synthesize the word, experiences, and feelings of interviewees captured during the

semistructured interview (Moustakas, 1994).

Data were analyzed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software

(CAQDAS). Using CAQDAS is standard practice during the coding and analysis phase of the

research process (Lucas, 2017). CAQDAS is a valuable tool used by researchers to manage

significant data sources to search through and retrieve data, keywords, and identified codes

within the interview responses (Lucas, 2017). Analyzing the responses gathered from the

conducted interviews was critical in performing the following:

- The analysis of differences, similarities, and relationships between passages of text.

- The development of typologies and theories.

- The testing of theoretical assumptions using qualitative data material and integrating

  qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick et al., 2004).

The researcher used the NVivo software provided by Northcentral University as the

program to facilitate the coding process. The interview responses gathered during the

semistructured interviews were transcribed by the researcher and entered into the NVivo

software. Once the interviews were transcribed or manually uploaded into NVivo, the researcher could quickly identify recurring themes and other codes.

Assumptions

The researcher was deliberate with the use of philosophical reflexivity when the research phase began. The philosophical reflexivity refers to the researcher's epistemic, metaphysical, and moral assumptions of the researcher's experience with USAREC (Gonnerman et al., & Hall, 2015). Leveraging the researcher's philosophical reflexivity and experience with the subject matter will help the readers understand the researcher's assumptions (Gonnerman et al., 2015). The first assumption was that the researcher would avoid the pitfalls of social-psychologically based biases based on lived experiences in USAREC (Gonnerman et al., 2015).

Further assumptions for this study were that respondents would be honest with their experiences with their leaders. This assumption was based on an unbiased person with whom no one directly reports being the interviewer. Twenty-five Recruiters were asked to participate based on the randomization of the total population. It was assumed that approximately 15 Recruiters would respond and be willing to join the semistructured interview process. Based on the high number of employee surveys that Soldiers receive, it was assumed that approximately 10 of the 25 would not respond to the interviewer's request for an interview due to the subject considering this is another typical survey.

It was also assumed that those who choose to participate would be doing so out of the desire to better the current state of Army recruiting. Finally, it was assumed that only approximately 10 of the 15 would participate due to scheduling conflicts or an unwillingness to answer questions about their direct supervisors. The interviewer was previously assigned to the same regional command; therefore, some Recruiters may have been apprehensive about being

completely honest due to the potential for their responses to make it back to their leaders. Additionally, the amount of time needed to set aside for the interview may have been assumed to interfere with their work schedule. Recruiters under pressure to meet quotas may have perceived volunteering to be interviewed without reward a burden in terms of time.

Limitations

Limitations to this research design stemmed from the randomized sampling procedures. The researcher identified 101 Soldiers throughout the Iowa Army recruiting companies; however, due to geographical dispersion and the number of Soldiers within the target population, the researcher did not identify previous experiences or time associated with the companies. Respondents could have provided insufficient information based on their lack of time within Iowa Army recruiting companies. The limitations specified were counteracted through the large sample size. Creating a sample size that included over 25% of the target population was to account for Recruiters not wanting to participate and ensure there was sufficient data saturation.

Additionally, limitations existed with the Recruiters randomly selected who worked within the same company as the researcher. While the chosen Recruiters did not directly work with or for the researcher, they know the researcher could contact their supervisors. The ease of access and communication for those within the Northern Iowa Army Recruiting Company may have made respondents apprehensive about being truthful and open during their semistructured interviews. To counteract this limitation, the researcher reiterated the confidentiality practices associated with the research process. Furthermore, the researcher provided contact information to the researcher's university should participants feel that their confidentiality had been compromised. The goal was to ensure all interviewees felt free to answer questions truthfully and elaborate as deemed appropriate.

Delimitations

The sample population included only Soldiers assigned to the Iowa Army recruiting companies. Over 10,000 Soldiers work in USAREC; however, it was not feasible to collect qualitative phenomenological data from a large and geographically dispersed group. Soldiers were selected based on their current assignment to one of the three companies within Iowa. If Soldiers recently moved to a new location, they were eliminated from the population from which the random sample was derived. Pulling a sample population from the currently assigned population allowed the researcher to have 101 personnel to randomize in order to achieve the maximum number of 25 potential participants for the study. Given the potential for work, personal, or other professional conflicts in being interviewed, the researcher selected 25 for the sample to achieve between 5 to 25 interviews.

The population from which the sample was pulled met the criterion of persons who would be positively impacted by effective leadership behaviors, leader-member exchanges, emotional intelligence, and goal-setting theories. All persons in the population were in a professional setting where leadership and positive influence could create success conditions. Regardless of whether the person was coming from the Burlington Recruiting Station in southeast Iowa or the Sioux City Recruiting Station in western Iowa, the theoretical framework and literature review concepts were equally applicable.

The researcher could have applied this same research design to one of the three companies alone based on the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions. Instead, the researcher wanted to spread the target population far enough out that Soldiers were unaware of one another to an extent. There was a potential to find similar data in recruiting companies based on how company leaders operate. Including all three of the Iowa Army

recruiting companies assisted in confirming the data collected. Ultimately, the purpose and problem statement were applicable at every recruiting station level throughout USAREC. The delimitations set helped with validating data collected throughout an entire region.

Ethical Assurances

The researcher gained approval from Northcentral University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before collecting any data. Confidentiality and anonymity were of the utmost importance in qualitative interviewing strategies (Weiss, 1994). Furthermore, suppose the collected data could be used without providing identifying information. In that case, it was the researcher's responsibility to include the respondent's data in a way that would protect research subjects from harm (Kaiser, 2009; Sieber, 1992). Appendix B contains the informed consent that outlined steps for confidentiality in this study. Informed consent was provided to all participants before any interviews took place. Additionally, the researcher assured each respondent that their name and location would not be repeated to anyone aside from the dissertation committee's members.

All interview materials were kept at the researcher's home office or on the researcher's personal computer. No other person had access to either the researcher's home office or personal laptop. The researcher's laptop was locked and could only be opened with a password or fingerprint. It was improbable that anyone would have accessed the data being collected during this process. Finally, as an additional step to ensure anonymity, the researcher assigned interviewees a sample number and pseudonym. Respondents were only referred to by their assigned participant code or pseudonym (e.g., Research Subject Number 1 or John Smith) if a specific quote was to be given. The researcher understood how important it was to maintain confidentiality and respect all persons involved in the research study to the highest degree.

The researcher was mindful of biases and prejudgments when executing this research project. For nearly ten years, the researcher has been in USAREC and has experienced various leadership approaches to recruiting operations. The researcher understood the importance of separating personal experiences from objectively collecting personalized phenomenological qualitative research from individuals working in Iowa Army recruiting companies. The potential for determining what is setting the scene for successes or failures throughout the entire state was valuable information that could be replicated at the national level; therefore, the researcher understood the obligation associated with carrying out this research study free of biases and prejudgments of the topic.

Summary

The phenomenological research design was the best way to capture the experiences of Recruiters and Station Commanders to establish how positive and effective leadership has influenced their ability to be successful in Iowa Army recruiting companies. Utilizing semistructured interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to interview between five and 25 subjects from the target population. The sample was established through a randomized sample collection. It covered multiple types of respondents within the Iowa Army recruiting companies. Semistructured interviews were conducted in person and telephonically throughout six weeks. After completing each interview, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the recorded responses given during each semistructured interview.

The essence of each Soldier's experience in Army recruiting within the Iowa region was captured by leveraging the power of the three-phase phenomenological research and data analysis process. The phenomenological research and data analysis procedures gave insight into the research problem. The method employed provided significant findings, which allowed the

researcher to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 contains the findings from this qualitative

phenomenological study.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify positive and effective leadership practices within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies by capturing the lived experiences of Recruiters and Station Commanders within these companies. The three recruiting companies used in this phenomenological qualitative study represent more than 280 companies that create the USAREC. Analyzing the lived experiences of Recruiters and Station Commanders within the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies allowed insight into positive and effective leadership methods that will result in future mission success.

Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 Soldiers within the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies to capture the data used in this study. Interviews were conducted telephonically, recorded, and transcribed for further analysis. The results of the study are captured in this chapter. The chapter is organized into three sections: trustworthiness of the data, results, and evaluation of the findings. Themes were identified during the analysis and are located under each research question. The following research questions guided the study:

Q1. To what extent does positive and effective leadership play a role in mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q2. How do Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence their ability to be productive and effective in achieving recruitment goals in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q3. What are the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant leadership characteristics from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Q4. What are the driving factors for Army Recruiters' productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Trustworthiness of the Data

Phenomenological research studies rely upon a researcher's ability to authenticate the study findings to rule out defective or biased results (Alase, 2017). Trustworthiness is one of the primary tools associated with establishing credible and transferable findings in a phenomenological research design (Alase, 2017). Trustworthiness is best achieved when data are presented, so critical themes were highlighted while individual phenomenological experiences are captured (Peat et al., 2019). The unique experiences and shared themes are equally essential to the reliability of the data collected. Trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure the highest authenticity and quality of data (Peat et al., 2019).

Credibility

Credibility is considered the first and most important aspect of data collected during a research design (Statistics Solutions, 2020). Credibility in research offers to prove the truth and reliability of the data collected from the research subjects. Triangulation is a critical method linked with associating credibility and validity to a research design and discovered data (Noble & Heale, 2019). There are four primary types of triangulation when associating credibility to the research: "data, investigators, theories, as well as methodologies" (Denzin, 1970, p. 301). The researcher utilized data triangulation as the primary source for offering credibility to the study. The researcher was given the perspective of Recruiters and Station Commanders working for three different companies that make up Army recruiting within the State of Iowa. Triangulating

three data sources into a single population allowed the researcher to achieve a phenomenological

perspective on effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army Recruiting

Companies.

Transferability

Transferability speaks to the ability for the research findings to be transferred from the

population analyzed to another similar community or group (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher

used triangulation to spread the population across three distinct but regionally co-located groups

to capture multiple effective and positive leadership views. Furthermore, the researcher selected

25 participants with the intent of securing at least 6–8 interviews from the three companies and

12 recruiting stations that encompass Iowa. Creswell (1998) suggested between 5–25

participants, while Morse (1994) recommended six respondents to capture the required data for a

phenomenological study. Utilizing a randomizer and the number of respondents who agreed to

be interviewed, the researcher captured 10 interviews spanning seven of the 12 available

recruiting stations and all three companies. The three companies that cover Army recruiting in

Iowa have similar setups to companies throughout the United States, Germany, and Asia. The

results from this study can be applied to any recruiting company throughout the command.

Dependability

One of the critical concerns regarding dependability came from validating the interview

situation (Flick et al., 2004). The researcher previously worked in the Northern Iowa Army

Recruiting Company but waited until he had moved to a different assignment to conduct the

interview process. The researcher leveraged his rapport with many of the respondents during his

last job in Iowa. Because of the time between the researcher leaving the Northern Iowa Army

Recruiting Company and when the interviews were conducted, the researcher and respondents

had a low power difference. This prior relationship allowed dependability using rapport and member checks (Flick et al., 2004).

Confirmability

The researcher used an audit trail to achieve confirmability during the analysis phase. An audit trail allows future researchers to follow the researcher's decision path to arrive at the study's conclusion (Carcary, 2019). The interpretive phenomenological analysis will never lead two researchers to interpret data the same; however, the results of following the audit trail should give outside researchers the ability to arrive at a similar finding (Carcary, 2009). The researcher-maintained journal notes, NVivo notes, and all original transcriptions throughout the process.

Results

This study demonstrated how positive and effective leadership influences Recruiters within the Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. Twenty-five Soldiers were requested to participate in this research study. Of the 25 Soldiers, 10 agreed to be interviewed. They were happy to share their lived-experiences as Recruiters or Station Commanders within Iowa. The findings indicated that their supervisor's leadership greatly influences Recruiters and Station Commanders. Furthermore, when leaders implemented positive and effective leadership, Recruiters and Station Commanders were more productive and fostered a positive command climate within their organization.

Positive leadership is the leadership strategy that focuses on positive and productive work environments, boosts positive relationships amongst all persons within an organization, sets the guidelines for, promotes positive communication methods, and drives organizational values and meaningfulness (Lis, 2015). Effective leadership relies on the core component of a leader's ability to improve their team's performance by efficiently influencing the process that determines

their performance (Yukl, 2012). The Army defines leadership as having the ability to "influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p. 11). This study demonstrated that Army leaders who implement these foundations of positive and effective leadership were able to drive their organizations to be more positive and productive.

The researcher asked respondents a series of open-ended questions from the established semistructured interview guide. The interview guide contained 18 questions that started with the respondent's most memorable and best leader and ended with a question to propose what the respondent would change if they were in charge. The respondents gave an array of responses that included negative and positive reviews of their current leaders. The semistructured interview guide addressed the four research questions, as listed throughout the next section.

Demographic information is displayed in Table 2 and is limited to ensure the data cannot identify respondents. Respondents were from all three companies in Iowa and were Station Commanders and Recruiters from seven of the 12 stations available. Respondents ranged in rank from Sergeant to Sergeant First Class.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Respondents from Iowa Army Recruiting Companies

Participant	Male/Female	Component	Years in Iowa
1	Male	Regular Army	< 2
2	Male	Regular Army	> 2
3	Female	Regular Army	> 2
4	Male	Regular Army	> 2
5	Male	Regular Army	> 2
6	Male	Active Guard Reserve	> 2
7	Female	Regular Army	< 2
8	Male	Active Guard Reserve	< 2
9	Male	Active Guard Reserve	> 2
10	Male	Active Guard Reserve	> 2

Research Question 1

To what extent does positive and effective leadership play a role in mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

An LMX relationship is an inevitable series of exchanges employees will establish given enough time together in the workplace (Mahsud et al., 2010). The researcher used the criterion associated with high and low-performing LMX relationships to capture data during the research design. Interview questions that related to this theme were associated with the following areas: (a) the amount of time a leader dedicated to assisting with their subordinate's problems, (b) how likely a leader was to defend the actions of their associates, (c) how satisfied a leader was with the performance of their subordinates, and (d) how the working relationship between the employee and their supervisor was defined from the perspective of the respondent.

Theme 1: Leader Involvement. Leader involvement is the cornerstone of successful organizational performance (Headquarters, 2019a). Respondents answered that, for the most part, their leaders would go above and beyond to assist with any issues the Soldier experienced. In a few instances, Soldiers indicated their leader would commit to solving a problem but fail to follow through. N. Willigan answered they expect their leader to devote the "very minimum" to assist with issues in their personal or professional lives. Despite feeling "bad" about answering the question, C. Juvenal wanted to be truthful with their responses.

The occasions where Soldiers did not believe their leader would assist with their problems were fewer than the instances where leaders were involved and engaged in their subordinates' lives. Most of the Soldiers being interviewed felt confident with their leader's level of involvement. There was a relationship between Soldiers in recruiting stations who were not

making their assigned mission and their leader's involvement in their personal and professional lives. Lack of leader involvement can be an indicator of a low-performing LMX, and in this case, the indications proved to be accurate (Mahsud et al., 2010).

Theme 2*:* Leader Support for Actions. All of the respondents agreed their leader would be likely to defend their actions regardless of the situation in which they found themselves so long as it wasn't an "egregious" intentional act or error. Soldiers who had a limited amount of experience within Iowa or with their current leader indicated that their leader would defend their actions if a situation arose. M. Chui stated, "I have never really given my leader reason to have to defend me, but if I were to be blindly confident, immediately." High-performing LMXs are founded on trust and respect (Mahsud et al., 2010). Respondents also answered with high confidence levels, such as Z. Newlin, who stated their leader would have "gone on the carpet in front of the man and defended their actions" Soldiers must operate within the parameters of mutual respect and trust that their leaders will support and defend their actions if an issue arises.

Theme 3*:* Leader Satisfaction with Performance. Respondents gave varying answers as to whether they knew where they stood with their leader and how satisfied their leader was with their performance. High-performance levels are found when leaders have clearly established a subordinate's duties, responsibilities, and performance goals (Locke, 1968). Soldiers who were unclear of their leader's view on their performance indicated they also were part of a low-performing LMX. I. Ingrao stated, "I think it is difficult to tell … like where I really stand, I do not think I know that."

Soldiers in successful recruiting stations gave more precise answers and identified this theme from a positive perspective. N. Spears felt their leader would keep them informed of their progress, for better or worse, with a detailed description of their performance and goal-

achievements. N. Spears stated, "There is never a question;" alternatively, if they did not meet their goals, their leader would let them "know that you messed up, but they are going to help you also." Most of the responses received were in line with high-performing LMXs who used goal-setting techniques.

Theme 4: Positive Work Relationship. Eight of the 10 participants discussed positive working-relationships between their supervisor and themselves. On several occasions, respondents gave similar answers to M. Chui's comments. M. Chui stated, "like my leader is vastly trusting in me that I will, you know, do my job." M. Chui said they would do everything in their power to not "let him down" in response to the vast amount of trust given. The positive relationship was a clear theme throughout the data collection process. It displayed a connection with higher-performing and highly successful stations.

Despite the high number of positive working relationships, not all respondents felt the same. Soldiers like N. Willigan, who indicated they had a low or negative working relationship with their supervisor, revealed they "feel like they have a boss, not a leader." J. Weiss felt their leader could reduce the number of "forcing functions and trust in the Recruiters themselves until they showed failure."

The researcher revealed the theme of a positive work relationship after studying interview data that pertained to questions about the workplace environment, incentives, expectations, and counseling sessions. Recruiters and Station Commanders agreed that their leaders could influence their organizational commitment and motivational level daily. Eight of the 10 Soldiers included positivity as a factor for what they would describe as the best leader they served within the Army. The degree to which leaders were positively engaged with their unit and the teammates who make-up these teams had a significant relationship with its success level.

Positive leadership's root strategy is to foster productive and positive work environments seen in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies (Lis, 2015).

Research Question 2

How do Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence their ability to be productive and effective in achieving recruitment goals in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Locke's goal-setting theory relies on four moderators associated with successful leader-subordinate relationships: ability, commitment, feedback, and situational constraints (Latham & Locke, 2018). The researcher established a connection between the four moderators of Locke's goal-setting theory and how attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influenced Recruiters' and Station Commanders' abilities to succeed in Iowa. The themes identified during this analysis were as follows.

Theme 1: Recruiters' and Station Commanders' Proficiency Level. The researcher asked a series of questions that would provide insight into the respondent's proficiency level in their current role. Five of the 10 respondents stated they were fully prepared to conduct their daily operations as either a Recruiter or Station Commander. The other five who did not feel confident in their abilities came from successful and unsuccessful recruiting stations. Respondents who were not confident in their abilities cited the current environment, the USAREC Station Commander Course curriculum, and the job's complexity as the primary factors.

There was no definitive relationship between being successful as a Recruiter or Station Commander and feeling prepared in their current duty. Furthermore, two of the five respondents who stated they felt fully equipped to do their job said they had to learn the job independently. N.

Willigan stated, "I feel like I am prepared. I mean, it is just something I had to learn on my own

… I have talked to a lot of people about how to become better, so I feel like I am prepared."

There was little to no leader involvement in preparing a Recruiter or Station Commander in their

abilities to do their job. The overarching relationship between a high level of preparation in

Recruiters and Station Commanders could be found in their attitude towards the job. Recruiters

and Station Commanders who maintained a positive outlook and were willing to learn from

situations, peers, and supervisors were more likely to feel they were proficient at their job.

 Theme 2: Leader Engagement in Daily Operations. There was an adequate level of

daily engagement in Recruiters' and Station Commanders' duties despite a low relationship

between leader engagement in formal training and preparing subordinates for their jobs.

Recruiters and Station Commanders agreed at a 90% rate that their best leaders were leaders who

engaged in operations or gave them the tools necessary to complete the job. Soldiers in Iowa

Army Recruiting Companies are thriving despite their need for greater leader involvement and

training. In their lived experiences, Soldiers in these companies achieve success by focusing on

leadership-based principles and attitudes instead of formal training.

 Additionally, seven of the 10 respondents stated that a characteristic associated with the

best leader they have had in the Army was the leader's drive to be hands-on in the organization's

operations. From the perspective of Recruiters and Station Commanders, leaders in Iowa Army

Recruiting Companies are more focused on daily operations than training their teams to operate

independently. N. Willigans's best leader was one who they felt "like they went above and

beyond" to get the job done. The desired characteristics included a leader who would push the

team to get them operating at a level where they would succeed. Recruiters and Station

Commanders look for leaders to be more involved in their daily operations.

Theme 3: Leaders Supporting Their Teams. A third theme that reinforced Research Question 2 came from leaders supporting their subordinates' personal and professional lives. This theme supported Recruiters' and Station Commanders' job satisfaction and positive attitudes toward their organization and daily duties. Job attitudes directly correlate with employee commitment levels, low turnover rates, high levels of organizational citizenship behaviors, and degree of personal and professional satisfaction (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Gerstner & Day, 1995; Ilies et al., 2007). Eight of the 10 respondents felt their leaders were incredibly supportive of their personal and professional issues. The two respondents who thought their leaders did not support them also indicated they did not believe their leader recognized their potential. T. Wallis stated, "That is a rough question. I mean, I have not been told exactly how he would measure my potential." There is a relationship between leaders supporting their subordinates, leaders realizing their teammates' potential, and Recruiters' and Station Commanders' commitment to achieving their mission.

There was a relationship between Recruiters' and Station Commanders' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices and their abilities to be productive and achieve their mission. Recruiters and Station Commanders who felt like their leaders supported them and worked together as a team indicated they were more engaged in achieving their mission. Leader engagement in daily operations and leader involvement in their subordinates' personal and professional lives had a clear connection with Soldiers who were willing to be productive and as effective as possible in achieving recruitment goals. The respondents' commitment levels were directly in line with Locke's requirements to successfully implement goal-setting theory efficaciously (Latham & Locke, 2018).

Research Question 3

What are the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant leadership characteristics from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams must successfully master the practice of influencing "people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p.11). The researcher analyzed interview data from all respondents, searching for dominant leadership characteristics in Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams. Yukl (2012) stated there are four meta-categories of effective leadership behaviors. The following themes provide a closer look at which meta-category is utilized the most within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

Theme 1: Relations-oriented Leadership Behaviors. The components of relations-oriented leadership behaviors consist of supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering (Yukl, 2012). This type of leadership behavior directly aligns with the Army's primary leadership focus of influencing one's team to achieve its mission and better the organization (Headquarters, 2019a). Nine of the 10 respondents reported that relations-oriented behaviors in some form were required to be successful. Only one respondent noted that, from their perspective, toxic leadership was beneficial to their growth and development as a Soldier in USAREC. N. Willigan said, "recruiting was super horrible at that point in time … but, after he left, I realized he was just prepping us for the future of recruiting."

Respondents reported a variety of relations-oriented leadership behaviors currently being implemented by Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams. Nine of the respondents stated they were given 75% or more daily autonomy to operate within the constraints of their commander's intent. Four of the respondents said they were empowered to work daily with total

freedom over managing their recruiting operations. From the perspective of those who were authorized to operate how they deemed necessary, CLTs focused on supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering their teams to achieve success.

Theme 2: Toxic Leadership. Toxic leadership can be construed by various acts or managerial methods employed by leaders. These methods include abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, narcissism, self-promotion, and unpredictability (Schmidt, 2008). One respondent mentioned toxic leadership as a method for driving production in USAREC; however, multiple respondents stated their leaders use toxic leadership components as a form of management. Toxic leadership behaviors may push for immediate results but are ultimately destructive to organizations (Bell, 2020).

Four respondents cited their CLTs employed some form of toxic leadership. Those who indicated toxic leadership behaviors were being utilized at the CLT level stated they were not currently achieving their assigned missions. A relationship existed between toxic leadership behaviors and those who do not achieve success in obtaining their recruitment numbers. One respondent who reported toxic leadership behaviors indicated their leaders employed "micromanagement from the company down." A second respondent noted a lack of consistency in how Recruiters were held accountable for their recruitment goals. The unpredictability of how leaders enforce their Recruiters' success or failures strengthened negative behaviors and created division within the unit. Recruiters and Station Commanders perceived consistency and predictability as their leaders' critical traits to be productive and effective in their daily operations.

Theme 3: Effective Communication. Communicating a deliberate vision and strategic approach to achieving the organizational mission is a cornerstone in mastering positive and

effective leadership (Yukl, 2012). Army leaders must balance strategizing the desired end state of the organization—mission accomplishment—while effectively communicating that picture to their teams (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; USAREC, 2017c). From the perspective of Recruiters and Station Commanders, effective communication covered multiple areas of their daily operations. Effective communication methods impacted how leaders responded to work-stressors, how leaders recognized their subordinates' potential, how satisfied associates felt their leaders were with their performance, and their leader's decision-making processes.

Nine Recruiters and Station Commanders perceived their CLTs to employ effective communication methods when work stressors would arise. N. Willis noted their leader utilizing regular "sensing sessions" to help flatten communication and build teamwork. J. Weiss stated they appreciated how their leader is "always looking to point me in the right direction, saying this is where you can find the answer." Respondents all gave an example of how they felt their leader's effective communication improved the organization and made their teams more effective and productive.

Alternatively, one respondent indicated they felt their leader did not communicate effectively. The lack of effective communication in their organization acted as a deterrent to effective and productive recruiting operations. N. Willigan felt their leaders were "providing answers but not implementing them." N. Willigan also perceived their leader would "not say things to specific people to fix the issues that are occurring," and the problem "is never solved." The respondent stated their leader did "not know how to kind of give the direction, like, pass the direction down to us … they brief it well, but they do not help us finish the end state."

Research Question 4

What are the driving factors for Army Recruiters' productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective?

USAREC leaders have the difficult task of influencing Army Recruiters to achieve annual recruitment goals, as stated by Congress (John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, 2019). Locke's goal-setting theory was founded on perfecting an approach focused on incentives, task motivation, and goal setting procedures (Locke & Latham, 2019). Leaders must use the principles outlined in ADP 6-22, Leadership (Headquarters, 2019a) ADP 6-0, Mission Command (Headquarters, 2019b), UM 3-30, Recruiting Company Operations (Headquarters, 2019f), and related publications to influence their teams to be successful. Leaders give the authority to operate under mission command principles to achieve the organization's desired end state (Headquarters, 2019b). Driving success can be accomplished through various motivational and influential methods, as seen in the themes associated with Research Question 4.

Theme 1: Incentives. From the perspective of Recruiters and Station Commanders, Recruiters respond well to incentives. The primary incentive for Recruiters was time off in some form. Three respondents indicated they are currently incentivized by not working past 5:00 p.m. during the workweek. B. Bissex stated, "I love days off … every month you will get a four-day weekend" for achieving above-expectation recruitment goals. Respondents also cited more family time as their primary incentive, which aligns with being incentivized by time off. Eight respondents said more time off is the ideal incentive and would boost productivity in their organization.

Two of the respondents stated their primary incentives were total autonomy in their daily operations. Recruiters or Station Commanders who were incentivized by full autonomy were in

recruiting stations that successfully achieved their recruiting mission. M. Chui stated they were incentivized because they "love being in the Army" and wanted the opportunity to continue serving in the Army. Finally, M. Chui said they would be incentivized to be successful if they were offered the assignment of their choice following their position in USAREC.

   Theme 2: Intrinsic Motivation. Incentives served as one factor to propel productivity and effectiveness for Army Recruiters. Still, it was not the only dominating theme for this research question. There is a relationship between intrinsic motivation, Recruiters and Station Commanders who have been given total autonomy, and successful recruiting stations. B. Bissex stated, "being successful will help me get where I want to go" when discussing why they are motivated to succeed in recruiting. B. Bissex indicated they are given total autonomy because their "work ethic will show up at the end of the day;" if they are wasting their time throughout the day, it will be seen in the number of enlistments they have achieved or failed to achieve. B. Bissex indicated they could conduct "95%" of their work with total autonomy, which allows them to pursue the avenues they believe will make them successful. J. Weiss stated they "just like to win" and are "super-competitive … I am always trying to get that number one spot." Respondents cited various motivation sources, but intrinsic motivation and the desire to be successful had a clear relationship from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspectives.

Evaluation of the Findings

   The four research questions served as the primary tool for the researcher to identify the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies being utilized to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness. The researcher used the 18-question interview guide to dive into the lived-experiences of Recruiters and Station Commanders out of the three Army recruiting companies that cover Iowa. The researcher found

12 themes throughout the four research questions supported by this dissertation's theoretical framework.

The first research question's focus was to identify the extent to which positive and effective leadership influenced mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective. The third research question focused on identifying the dominant leadership characteristics of Iowa Army Recruiting Company CLTs from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspectives. These research questions were designed to determine to what extent leadership influences recruiting stations achieving mission success. During this analysis, the themes identified included positive work relationships, leader satisfaction with performance, leader support for actions, leader involvement, effective communication, toxic leadership, and relations-oriented behaviors. Leader involvement was determined to be an identifying factor for high-performing recruiting stations. Leader involvement is a crucial component of employing effective leadership behaviors (Yukl, 2012). It is also a critical task associated with effective Army leadership (Headquarters, 2019a).

Leaders who let their subordinates know when they were satisfied with their performance were seen favorably by their teams. Recruiters and Station Commanders who received recognition were driven to perform at higher levels than those who were unsure of their leader's perception of their performance. Leaders must continually employ the concepts from Locke's goal-setting theory, which focuses on giving employees clear and consistent feedback to encourage high performance (Latham & Locke, 2018). Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams were proficient at leveraging this tool, among others, to drive productivity.

Respondents indicated a high level of support from their leaders throughout the interviewing process. Relations-oriented leadership behaviors, a category of effective leadership

behaviors, is rooted in supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering one's team (Yukl, 2012). Iowa Army recruiting leaders who unconditionally supported their teams established high performing LMXs supported by idiosyncratic deals (Davis & Heijden, 2018). The i-deals assisted in fostering employee engagement based on the leader to subordinates and subordinate to leader expectations. Even Soldiers with a limited amount of time in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies indicated the positive relationship between leader support and their ability to operate productively and effectively.

Positive work relationships were found to be connected to high performing recruiting stations in Iowa. Soldiers assigned to Iowa Army Recruiting Companies predominantly had high levels of faith and mutual trust in their leaders and established work relationships. The high levels of mutual trust set high-performing LMXs, which in turn led to positive organizational citizenship behaviors, employee role acceptance, promotion rates, and low turnover rates (Anand et al., 2017; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Erdogan & Liden, 2002). The respondents who stated they lacked a positive work relationship indicated the inverse effects of high performing LMXs, which marked the relationship existing and preferential to positive work relationships. The relationships with poor work relationships identified trends typically associated with toxic leadership behaviors.

Research Question 2 was designed to help the researcher determine how attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence Recruiters' and Station Commanders' abilities to succeed. The researcher used Research Question 4 to determine what drives productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspectives. The findings from the researcher's analysis of these questions indicated the following themes: leaders supporting their teams, leader engagement in

daily operations, Recruiters and Station Commanders' proficiency levels, incentives, and intrinsic motivation.

Like the themes identified in Research Question 1, leader support of their subordinates' actions was vital to establish a high-performing LMX. From the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective, it was essential for leaders to support their team's operational needs and requirements. Recruiters and Station Commanders were more committed to their organization's end state when their leader was involved with the unit's day-to-day operations. The reciprocal exchange of dedication to the team's mission led to a positive organizational culture and enhanced work engagement (Han & Woo, 2018). Recruiter and Station Commander proficiency levels in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies were high for the most part despite a lack in the consistency of formal training. High levels of proficiency were more closely attributed to incentivization and intrinsic motivation of Recruiters and Station Commanders.

Recruiters and Station Commanders displayed predominantly high levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is considered the foundation for successful workplace behaviors (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Brackett et al., 2011; Lopes et al., 2006). Recruiters and Station Commanders indicated high intrinsic motivation levels, a core component of emotional intelligence, and other attributing elements. Recruiters and Station Commanders were influenced by incentives, such as days off, shorter workdays, and extended weekends; however, a predominant theme was Recruiters' and Station Commanders' natural desire to succeed in their career field. Recruiters and Station Commanders desired greater autonomy when it was not already granted and continued autonomy as an incentive for those who operated with it. Recruiters and Station Commanders who were given autonomy to conduct recruiting operations

displayed the emotional intelligence components of cognizance and self-regulation (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001); thus, reinforcing their leader's encouragement to grant greater autonomy.

Summary

Throughout Chapter 4, the interview data were analyzed for themes and to establish the findings. Twelve themes were identified and connected to the four research questions identified by the researcher. The researcher discovered a positive relationship between positive and effective leadership and mission success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. Recruiters and Station Commanders who felt empowered and supported by their leaders were more likely to achieve recruitment goals successfully. Furthermore, the dominant leadership characteristics of Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams were relations-oriented leadership behaviors and similar effective leadership behaviors from Recruiters and Station Commanders' perspectives. The CLT's use of effective leadership behaviors was capitalized on by most Recruiters and Station Commanders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies who displayed emotional intelligence traits. Recruiters and Station Commanders leveraged their leaders' effective leadership behaviors to propel their intrinsic motivation and achieve mission success. In Chapter 5, the researcher will review the implications, recommendations, and conclusions of the research design.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The problem addressed by this study was how a lack of effective and positive leadership in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies led to the inability of these companies' capabilities to leverage Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to achieve mission success in Fiscal Year 2018. Analyzing one group of companies within USAREC may give insight into why the command, for the first time since 2005, missed its combined mission by 11,500 Soldiers (Baldor, 2018). The second occurrence of failure of the United States Army to achieve its recruiting goal impacts and will become very problematic for the United States' current National Security Strategy (President of the United States, 2017).

The dissertation topic focused on determining what influence effective and positive leadership has on Recruiter efficiency and success in an Army recruiting organization. Positive leadership is a leadership strategy that fosters a productive and positive work environment, boosts positive relationships amongst all persons within an organization, sets the guidelines for and promotes positive communication methods, and drives organizational values and meaningfulness (Lis, 2015). One of the critical characteristics of effective leadership is a leader's ability to improve their team's performance by efficiently influencing the processes that determine their performance (Yukl, 2012).

The U.S. Army's leadership definition is rooted in the aggregation of positive and effective leadership concepts with their two-fold purpose of leadership. Army doctrine states that leadership must "influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Headquarters, 2019a, p.11). First, Army leaders must provide purpose, direction, and motivation, a concept similarly stated in effective leadership fundamentals. Army leaders must then be able to use effective leadership methods to accomplish

organizational goals and improve the team, an idea identified in the roots of positive leadership. Therefore, this dissertation was conducted to analyze the culmination of positive and effective leadership methods as a single concept to include how positive and effective leadership influences success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify the effective and positive leadership practices within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies that are being utilized to maximize Recruiter productivity and effectiveness to bring Northern Iowa, Des Moines, and Iowa City Army Recruiting Companies to levels of efficiency that would allow them to achieve their mission. Army recruiting companies in Iowa account for three of the 54 companies in the 3rd Recruiting Brigade. The companies identified are representative of the more than 280 recruiting companies within USAREC. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command is comprised of five separate recruiting brigades; therefore, narrowing the scope to analyze the errors associated with Iowa Army Recruiting Companies should allow for greater insightfulness as to how to re-shape USAREC into an organization that achieves success as it had for the 12 years before 2018.

This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to analyze the leadership attributes, managerial methodologies, organizational citizenship behaviors, and training and resources that result in successes or shortfalls within three selected Army recruiting companies. Establishing the critical fundamentals associated with the constructive and fruitful behaviors will eliminate the costly fluctuations these companies have experienced while streamlining them into an approach that will deliver consistently positive results. This study was also conducted to analyze what managers are doing effectively to facilitate the recruiting process and review and define behaviors that keep the respective recruiting companies from achieving success. The primary qualitative research method used was the semistructured interview process to ask open-

ended questions to elicit sufficient data to reach the proper saturation level. Critical concepts, phenomena, and ideas will capture management methods, level of influence, subordinates' perceptions of their leaders, organizational commitment, levels of power, and expertise levels. Participants included active and reserve component Recruiters and recruiting Station Commanders from the three Army recruiting companies covering the State of Iowa.

The researcher followed the interview methods established by Yuksel and Yıldırım's (2015) interview process. The interview model originally stemmed from Seidman (1998), who divided his approach into three separate interviews to ensure he gathered the appropriate phenomenological data. A researcher-developed interview guide was the tool used to elicit the subject's perceptions and experiences associated with positive and effective leadership in recruiting.

Participants were asked a series of questions to establish a dialogue about Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perceptions of their leader. The interviewer began by asking subjects to describe the best leader they have worked for while serving in the United States Army. Once the dialogue had been created between the researcher and the respondent, the researcher elicited the respondent's perceptions of their leaders by capturing respondents' lived experiences with their leaders. The researcher responded with follow-up questions that probed for further information from the subjects throughout the interview.

Questions from the interview guide focused on effective leader behaviors, leader-member exchanges, and industry-specific elements. Emotional intelligence was looked for as a recurring theme throughout the process. The interviewer solicited information from participants regarding how Recruiters and Station Commanders operate with their leader regularly. The researcher

looked for themes throughout the interview to indicate respondents' perceptions of whether their LMX is a high-functioning or low-functioning dyadic relationship.

Lastly, the researcher analyzed Recruiters' and Station Commanders' experiences that described how positive and effective leadership influences success or failure in Iowa Army recruiting companies. The focus was on how effective a leader is in USAREC from the perspective of the participants. The responses engendered additional dialogues between the interviewer and the participant. After the interviewing phase, the researcher obtained sufficient data saturation while capturing the essence of Recruiters' and Station Commanders' lived experiences within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

The data analysis procedures followed an 8-step protocol covering the process once the data had been collected during the semistructured interview. The eight steps were followed just as Yuksel and Yıldırım (2015) set forth their data analysis procedures. The end goal was to capture the essence of each Recruiter's or Station Commander's experience through three meta-categories of analyses: phenomenological reduction, imagination variation, and essence (Moustakas, 1994). The steps were conducted as follows:

1. Phenomenological reduction: This process included a holistic approach of bracketing, horizontaling, and grouping related themes together while establishing textural language (Moustakas, 1994). The textural language during the phenomenological reduction process focused on capturing not only the "external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 88). Typical perception and analysis call for a researcher to take a straight-forward analytic approach to an object, whereas phenomenological

reduction calls for a researcher to focus on an object's perceived experience (Miller, 1984; Moustakas, 1994).

2. Imagination Variation: The second phase of the phenomenological data analysis process called for the researcher to "seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying from the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 93). The goal was to identify more than the simple object being analyzed; instead, the researcher had to define "the 'how' that speaks to conditions that illuminated the 'what' of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 93). Through collecting data, the researcher had to describe the interviewee's experience, perceptions, and memories (Husserl, 1931).

3. Essence: The end goal of the phenomenological data analysis process was to execute the "intuitive integration of the fundamental textual and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). Capturing the essence of experience required the researcher to synthesize the words, experiences, and feelings of interviewees captured during the semistructured interview (Moustakas, 1994).

Data were analyzed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Using CAQDAS is standard practice during the research process's coding and analysis phase (Lucas, 2017). CAQDAS was a valuable tool to manage significant data sources to search through and retrieve data, keywords, and identified themes within the interview responses (Lucas, 2017). Analyzing the responses gathered from the conducted interviews was critical in performing the following:

- The analysis of differences, similarities, and relationships between passages of text,

- The development of typologies and theories,

- The testing of theoretical assumptions using qualitative data material and integrating qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004).

The researcher used the CAQDAS tool, NVivo, provided by Northcentral University as the primary program to facilitate the coding process. The interview responses gathered during the semistructured interviews were transcribed by the TapeaCall application before the researcher uploaded the transcripts into the NVivo software. Once the interviews were transcribed and uploaded into NVivo, the researcher could quickly identify recurring themes and other codes.

The data results indicated a positive relationship between effective and positive leadership in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies and their success. The three Army recruiting companies in Iowa have been relatively successful despite challenges faced in recent years. Despite ongoing difficulties, positive and effective leadership methods have proven to motivate and influence the one hundred and one Recruiters or Station Commanders currently assigned to Iowa. From the perspective of Recruiters and Station Commanders, leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies are positively influencing their teams to be successful for the most part. There were instances of toxic leadership or situations when leaders were not as involved as they should have been; however, most respondents believe their leaders are positively influencing their organization.

Limitations to this research design stemmed from the randomized sampling procedures. The researcher identified 101 Soldiers throughout the Iowa Army recruiting companies; however, the researcher did not remove potential interviewees based on previous experiences or time associated with the companies. The limitations related to respondents' potentially limited

amount of time with the organization were not an issue. Every respondent interviewed had more than a year with their team, which served as long enough to gather the interview data. The large sample size counteracted the limitations identified. Creating a sample size that included over 25% of the target population was to account for Recruiters not wanting to participate and to ensure there was sufficient data saturation.

Additionally, limitations existed with the randomly selected interviewees who work within the same company as the researcher. While the respondents no longer worked with the researcher, they knew the researcher could contact their supervisors. The ease of access and communication for those within the Northern Iowa Army Recruiting Company could have made respondents apprehensive about being truthful and open during their interviews. To counteract this limitation, the researcher reiterated the confidentiality practices associated with the research process. Furthermore, the researcher provided respondents with the contact information to the researcher's university and dissertation committee should participants feel as though their confidentiality had been compromised. The goal was to ensure all interviewees felt free to answer questions truthfully and elaborate as deemed appropriate.

This chapter includes an overview of the problem statement, purpose statement, research design, methodology of the study, results of the data, and the effects of the study's limitations. The following sections will be discussed by the researcher and cover the implications of the findings, the recommendations for practice, and future research recommendations. The researcher will then close out the manuscript with a conclusion and final comments.

Implications

The implications of the findings describe how leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies use effective and positive leadership to influence their organization to achieve

mission success. The phenomenological qualitative research design was used specifically to capture the essence of Recruiters' and Station Commanders' lived-experiences as members of Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. The researcher developed several relationships between the data analysis results and how influential leaders in Iowa were with positive and effective leadership behaviors. A positive relationship was found in all four research questions and is described by the researcher in the following sections.

Research Question 1

To what extent does positive and effective leadership play a role in mission success or failure in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective? The researcher established four themes during the analysis of the first research question: Leader involvement, leader support for actions, leader satisfaction with performance, and positive work relationship.

The researcher established research question one to identify how positive and effective leadership played a role in mission success or failure for Recruiters in Iowa. The researcher established a constructive relationship between positive and effective leadership and mission success in Iowa Army Recruiters and Station Commanders, from their perspectives. Respondents who reported their leaders do not leverage the positive and effective leadership practices reported they are not successfully achieving their mission. A higher number of recruiting stations accomplished their assigned goals than those who did not, and a relationship existed with a predominantly effective and positive leadership approach throughout Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

High-performing LMX relationships were also an indicator of high-functioning teams. Leader involvement was one of the many hands of a highly successful organization. High levels

of leader involvement align with the Army's view on leader involvement being a critical piece associated with optimal organizational performance (Headquarters, 2019a). Nine of the 10 respondents answered their leaders would consistently go above and beyond to assist with any of their Soldiers' needs. Leader involvement, leader support for actions, respondents feeling confident in their leader's satisfaction with their performance, and positive work relationships were critical components of successful recruiting stations from Recruiters and Station Commanders' perspectives. The themes were interconnected; where the researcher discovered positive work relationships, the researcher typically found high occurrences of the other four themes. The four themes associated with Research Question 1 supported the theoretical framework and the research design findings.

Research Question 2

How do Recruiters' attitudes and overall comprehension of Army recruiting practices influence their ability to be productive and effective in achieving recruitment goals in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective? The researcher established three themes during the analysis of the second research question: the proficiency levels of Recruiters and Station Commanders, leader engagement in daily operations, and leaders supporting their teams.

The researcher utilized Research Question 2 as a tool to discover how Recruiters' and Station Commanders' attitudes influence their ability to be productive and effective. In addition to how influential their attitudes were, the researcher also wanted to establish if a relationship existed between the comprehension level of recruiting practices and productivity and effectiveness. Of the two influencers, a more substantial relationship existed between Recruiters with a positive attitude toward recruiting than a relationship between comprehension levels and

efficiency. It was more critical for Recruiters in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies to have a positive and productive outlook toward recruiting than to comprehend all aspects of the job thoroughly.

Only five of the respondents stated they were fully prepared to conduct their daily operations as Recruiters and Station Commanders. More than 50% of the recruiting stations achieved their assigned missions or came close to doing so. There was no definitive relationship between comprehension of the role and the level of success realized. Despite a clear connection between comprehension and mission success, respondents tended to be more optimistic about their positions when they had a better comprehension of their duties. The positive outlook and limited preparedness level were supplemented by a high level of leader engagement in daily operations, which was the second theme. Recruiters and Station Commanders did not perceive a limited comprehension of their job to be devastating if they had a leader who they perceived was fully engaged in all aspects of the team's goals. Leaders who dedicated their time and energy to the team's mission were perceived as highly favorable by Recruiters and Station Commanders. There was a clear relationship between leader engagement in daily operations and the success level of the organization.

Like Research Question 1, the themes from Research Question 2 were highly interconnected. Leaders supporting their teams was a prevalent occurrence when leaders were also engaged in daily operations, leading to a more positive outlook on the job and higher organizational performance. Leaders who supported their teams had higher employee job attitudes, which is supported by the research in that positive job attitudes are connected to higher commitment levels, lower turnover rates, higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors, and higher levels of personal and professional satisfaction (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Gerstner &

Day, 1995; Ilies et al., 2007). Respondents' job satisfaction and commitment levels were aligned with Locke's requirements to effectively implement goal-setting theory (Latham & Locke, 2018). The higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and personal satisfaction support and further the importance of the literature on effective leadership behaviors (Yukl, 2012). Leaders supporting their team members through the display of positive regard, assisting employees through difficult times, and facilitating teamwork is a fundamental part of relations-oriented behaviors. Iowa Army Recruiting Company leaders not only displayed these relation-oriented leadership behaviors, but their actions support the theory's effectiveness in leading an organization.

Research Question 3

What are the Iowa Army Recruiting Company Leadership Teams' dominant leadership characteristics from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective? The researcher established three themes during the analysis of the third research question: Relations-oriented leadership behaviors, toxic leadership, and effective communication.

The three themes the researcher discovered while analyzing Research Question 3 established the relationship between effective and positive leadership behaviors within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies and mission achievement. The first theme focused on the use of relations-oriented leadership behaviors and how they influenced productivity and effectiveness. Leaders who focused on positive LMXs and increasing organizational efficiency were also focused on the relations-oriented aspect of Yukl's (2012) effective leadership behaviors. Nine respondents stated they believe a relations-oriented leadership approach was necessary to be successful in Army recruiting. Only one respondent said they thought toxic leadership was an appropriate approach to push productivity in recruiting stations.

Related to the second theme, despite only one respondent perceiving toxic leadership as an appropriate leadership strategy to achieve mission success, four respondents stated their CLTs employ some form of toxic leadership to achieve results. There was a high relationship between unsuccessful recruiting stations and the use of toxic leadership behaviors. However, it should be noted that there were also instances of toxic leadership present in successful recruiting stations. The researcher established that small occurrences of toxic leadership behaviors were not definitive of an ineffective recruiting station. Instead, the leaders who relied solely on toxic leadership behaviors could not achieve consistent results.

The third theme, effective communication, was a reoccurring element associated with successful and productive recruiting stations. Locke's goal-setting theory relies on effective leadership fundamentals – leaders must clearly and precisely define expectations if employees effectively accomplish tasks (Locke & Latham, 2002). Leaders must explain hard to achieve goals and communicate their subordinates' expectations to elicit peak organizational performance. Only through communicating the organization's mission effectively can a leader drive productivity (Latham, 2012). Nine of the respondents perceived their CLTs employed effective communication methods. CLTs used various tactics to ensure communication was always open and encouraging productivity as opposed to creating obstacles. CLTs' effective communication use also ties back in with the effective use of relations-oriented leadership behaviors and high-performing LMXs, as previously discussed.

The results of Research Question 3 further the relationship between leading organizations and implementing effective goal-setting theory techniques. Locke's goal-setting theory's third moderator is founded on effective employee feedback (Latham & Locke, 2018). Regardless of government or civilian, employees require constant feedback to maintain performance levels

(Latham & Locke, 2018). Employees who lack a steady stream of feedback from their supervisors may be unaware of situations where they should increase, decrease, or abandon potentially detrimental workplace behaviors. Engaged leaders who provide regular feedback through effective communication exemplify the many positive leadership methods employed by Iowa Army Recruiting Company leaders.

Research Question 4

What are the driving factors for Army Recruiters' productivity and effectiveness in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies, from Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspective? The researcher established two themes while analyzing Research Question 4: incentives and intrinsic motivation.

Leaders in USAREC have the arduous task of driving productivity within their formations to achieve congressionally mandated end-strength requirements of the U.S. Army (John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, 2019). Army leadership is founded on influencing a team to achieve success and improve the organization (Headquarters, 2019a). Army leaders are trained to influence their teams to achieve organizational goals while simultaneously developing their subordinates to be successful leaders in their organization. Recruiters and Station Commanders perceived incentives as an excellent motivator for themselves and their teammates to strive for success. Eight respondents stated time off from work was their primary motivator. Respondents also said being given total autonomy was the driving factor for their success. Leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies are doing an efficient job of incentivizing productivity. The incentivization of productivity aligns with Locke's goal-setting theory, which focuses on challenging but achievable tasks with clearly communicated rewards (Latham, 2012).

Intrinsic motivation was demonstrated to have a relationship with productive and effective Recruiters in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. Intrinsic motivation is one of the components of emotional intelligence, and one of the necessary traits Recruiters must have if they are going to be successful. Respondents who displayed intrinsic motivation indicators stated their driving factors were to make their team the best and maintain the autonomy to conduct daily operations on their terms. There was a high relationship between Recruiters and Station Commanders who were naturally motivated to achieve success and productive and effective recruiting stations. Intrinsic motivation furthers the theory of the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace. Employees in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies who indicated high levels of emotional intelligence were more resilient and had higher perceptions of their duties. Those who displayed emotional intelligence also perceived themselves as more successful than those who did not display emotional intelligence indicators.

Incentivization and intrinsic motivation are concepts that solidify the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Locke's goal-setting theory's four moderators include a critical aspect of commitment from the individual and team achieving the goal (Latham & Locke, 2018). The other three factors are essential, as well. Still, an individual must be committed to achieving the mission if the goal-setting theory is to work (Latham & Locke, 2018). Leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies successfully incentivized while synchronously leveraging their teammates' intrinsic motivation to clinch success. The use of goal-setting theory techniques contributes to the existing theory by demonstrating it can be implemented in an Army recruiting organization, an area previously lacking substantial research and analysis.

One factor that could have influenced the results, and possibly, the interpretation of the results, is eight of the 10 respondents held the primary MOS of 79R. Maintaining the primary

MOS 79R means that a Soldier has recently reclassified to be a career Recruiter, as opposed to completing a three-year tour and returning, or are in the Station Commander position and have served in USAREC for an extended period. Recruiters or Station Commanders who have served in USAREC for an extended period may have judged their leader's managerial methods against former assignments instead of answering the interview questions objectively. The researcher selected a vast enough population to capture 79Rs and DASRs; however, due to randomization and the number of respondents who agreed to be interviewed, there was a more extensive representation of 79Rs.

A second factor that could have influenced the interpretation of the results was the global circumstances stemming from COVID-19. USAREC is still adapting to operating during an evolving challenge surrounding maintaining the force's strength during a worldwide pandemic. Recruiting stations in Iowa even proved to be holding a level of success commensurate with the ongoing challenges. Depending on the leadership methods adjusted during the COVID-19 pandemic, Recruiters and Station Commanders could have altered perceptions of their leaders' strengths and weaknesses. The researcher was aware of the circumstances potentially affecting Iowa Army Recruiting Companies' abilities to be successful during this timeframe and did not allow it to alter or influence the interpretation of the results.

Recommendations for Practice

The researcher's primary finding was leaders assigned to USAREC can leverage positive and effective leadership principles to drive productivity and achieve mission success in their organizations. Respondents in this study described their ideal work situations where they experienced engaged leaders supporting their teams could effectively drive productivity with the right leadership approaches synchronized with proper incentivization. The concepts of positive

and effective leadership married with positive leadership approaches and adequate incentivization can be found in leadership theory, USAREC publications, and Army Doctrine Publications. Leaders in USAREC should use this study's findings and apply similar methodologies to boost productivity and effectiveness in their companies and areas of responsibility.

The researcher found a relationship between leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies and Locke's goal-setting theory's successful implementation. Throughout USAREC and civilian organizations, leaders should focus on goal-setting theory's core components to increase employee productivity (Latham, 2012). The researcher identified intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes while analyzing the data. Knowledge or ability is one of the core foundations required before goal-setting theory can be implemented. Comprehensions of Army recruiting practices did not prove to be a deterrent from recruiting stations realizing success; however, "knowledge or ability is a prerequisite" (Latham, 2012, p. 66). Iowa Army Recruiting Companies could boost productivity and realize even greater success levels if they focus on training and development. Enhancing the organization's knowledge base while maintaining leader engagement levels in daily operations and leader support for their teams could boost the unit to significantly higher levels of mission achievement. Leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies have covered the other core components of goal-setting theory: goal commitment, feedback, and task complexity; now, they should focus on ability (Locke & Latham, 2019). Training and leader development will help address the concerns identified in Research Question 2 that concentrated on Recruiters' and Station Commanders' proficiency levels.

Relations-oriented leadership behaviors focus on the connections between leaders, employees, and the organization in a circular fashion. Recruiters must be as dedicated to the

mission as the organization is to the Recruiters, just as Station Commanders must support Recruiters as Recruiters must support their supervisors and the unit (Yukl, 2012). The researcher recommends following Iowa Army Recruiting Companies' focus on relations-oriented leadership behaviors. Organizations that focus on the importance of the leader-member exchange have a significant relationship with organizational success (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015; Martin, 2015; Yukl, 2012). Recruiters and Station Commanders perceived high-performing LMXs to boost productivity and effectiveness, just as researchers and Army doctrine describe it. The researcher recommends organizations focus on relations-oriented leadership behaviors' core components to include supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering actions through two-way exchanges.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends further phenomenological qualitative research analyses in USAREC. Iowa Army Recruiting Companies represent three of the more than 250 recruiting companies that make up the United States Army Recruiting Command. Iowa Army Recruiting Companies were selected based on their fluctuation in success over the last decade. 2018 proved to be a year where Iowa Army Recruiting Companies did not realize success; however, 2019 and 2020 proved to be significantly better despite ongoing operational and environmental challenges. Researchers should continue to conduct phenomenological research on recruiting companies that realized success or failure to determine the driving factors from the Recruiters' and Station Commanders' perspectives. Further research could determine if other recruiting companies leverage the leadership principles associated with Iowa Army Recruiting Companies.

A second recommendation is to research further the effects of toxic leadership within recruiting organizations. Toxic leadership was related to overworking and the eventual suicides

of multiple Recruiters and Station Commanders in 2009 (McChesney, 2009). The majority of those who participated in this research study perceived their leaders leveraged the principles associated with positive and effective leadership. However, some respondents reported elements of toxic leadership behaviors. Only one respondent said their leader's use of toxic leadership behaviors was what they believed to have been the key to their success. Toxic leadership behaviors are considered hostile and abusive behaviors that destroy the organization's trust and credibility while spurring resentment (Yukl, 2012). The majority of those interviewed perceived positive and effective leadership were the keys to influencing success in recruiting organizations. The slight indication of toxic leadership behaviors leading to successful outcomes leaves researchers with the potential to investigate toxic leadership's actual effects on a recruiting organization as perceived through Recruiters' lived experiences.

One of the identified limitations was related to the potential to miss Recruiters or Station Commanders with enough longevity in the organization who could give enough data during the interview process. The researcher determined during the interviewing and analysis process that the opposite existed. The researcher was able to achieve sufficient data saturation to the point where it was not an issue; however, there was a potential to miss the perceptions of newer Recruiters and Station Commanders. Future researchers have an opportunity to phenomenologically analyze the Recruiters and Station Commanders by dividing up the population into groups determined by the amount of time in USAREC or the recruiting companies being examined. Separating the population into groups defined by their time in the organization would give future researchers the ability to capture perspectives from both perspectives and analyze them for similarities and differences.

The researcher also recommends that future researchers select a population with which they have no prior relationship. The researcher's previous relationship to Iowa Army Recruiting Companies did not prove a conflict of interest, nor did the researcher perceive to have failed to capture the data saturation point required for this research design; still, it may have limited the number of participants who partook in interviews. The researcher was able to capture the lived-experiences of 10 Recruiters and Station Commanders from Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. The researcher was abundantly clear with the interviewer's confidentiality and ethical obligations during the data collection process. Even still, potential respondents may have been deterred by the interviewer's prior relationship with colleagues in Iowa. Future researchers could select a larger population and potentially elicit a larger number of participants if the respondents do not have to be concerned with their feedback becoming public knowledge. Choosing an utterly random population in USAREC can further solidify or contradict the researcher's findings and may be worth investigating.

Conclusions

The researcher investigated the positive and effective leadership practices within Iowa Army Recruiting Companies to maximize Recruiter efficiency. The researcher investigated the positive and effective leadership practices to address how Iowa Army Recruiting Companies had failed to leverage Recruiter productivity and efficiency in 2018. The three companies that cover the State of Iowa are a small subset of the more than 250 Army recruiting companies worldwide. With Iowa Army Recruiting Companies maintaining success, it was important for the researcher to determine what practices leaders are implementing to lead them to mission success. The findings, results, and implications can be used from this study throughout USAREC and similar civilian organizations to boost productivity and organizational success.

The researcher found that leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies leverage multiple leadership theories to lead their organizations to success. Iowa companies focus on goal-setting theory, effective leadership behaviors, high-performing LMXs, and promoting emotional intelligence as the foundations for their success. This study's findings solidify the theoretical framework and literature pieces instrumental in developing this research design. Furthermore, this research study's results support the leadership principles outlined in USAREC publications and Army doctrine publications, focusing on influencing and inspiring one's team to achieve success and improve one's organization.

The researcher recommended replicating methods currently in place by Iowa Army Recruiting Companies to guide positive and effective leadership practices. The researcher also recommended analyzing the effects of toxic leadership behaviors on Army recruiting organizations. Both recommendations for future research would contribute to the organization and the literary framework of leadership and human resources theories. The researcher was one of only a few to analyze leadership behaviors in Army recruiting organizations. Recommendations for further research detail the potential to improve upon the researcher's findings by expanding phenomenological qualitative analyses throughout Army and civilian recruiting companies. Other studies would continue to solidify, or potentially dispute, the effects of positive and effective leadership in Army recruiting organizations.

USAREC exists to support the United States Army's congressionally mandated end-strength requirements (John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, 2019). It is a national defense priority for the Army to maintain its personnel strengths. Recruiters have the vital task of finding qualified volunteers to support and defend the United States of America. Leaders in USAREC have the trying task of influencing, training, motivating, and supporting the

Recruiters tasked with this unbelievably complex job. This study's results revealed a relationship between high-performing recruiting organizations who achieved their tasks and were successful and positive and effective leadership behaviors implemented by leaders in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies. The perceptions of Recruiters and Station Commanders were that positive and effective leadership significantly contributed to their ability to be successful and achieve their mission. Leaders throughout USAREC should leverage the principles identified in this study to boost their organization's productivity and effectiveness if they are not already. Organizations that leverage positive and effective leadership should be encouraged to continue and distribute their lessons on how influential positive and effective leadership is in Army recruiting organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Please describe your best leader you have served under in the Army.

2. Do you know where you stand with your leader, and do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?

3. How much of your daily work are you able to conduct with total autonomy?

4. How does your leader understand your difficulties and needs?

5. How does your leader recognize your potential?

6. How prepared do you feel you are as a Recruiter?

7. How much time does your leader devote to solving your problems?

8. How likely would your leader be to defend your actions and decisions?

9. Describe how your leader handles work-stressors with your team. Please provide an example of a recent situation.

10. How would you describe your leader's decision-making process?

11. How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?

12. How would you describe your leader's ability to influence your level of motivation?

13. How has your leader influenced your team's ability to be successful?

14. How does your leader leverage positivity in the workplace?

15. What motivates you to be successful as a Recruiter?

16. How are you currently incentivized to be successful?

17. What would your ideal incentives be, and where would the benchmark exist to achieve said incentives?

18. What would you change if you reversed roles with your leader?

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

Date: August 05, 2020
PI Name: Cole Hamilton
Chair Name (if applicable): Chris Agada
Application Type: Initial Submission
Review Level: Exempt - Category 2
Study Title: A Phenomenological Study of Positive and Effective Leadership's Influence on Success in Iowa Army Recruiting Companies

Approval Date: August 05, 2020

Dear Cole:

Congratulations! Your IRB application has been approved. Your responsibilities include the following:

1. Follow the protocol as approved. If you need to make changes with your population, recruitment, or consent, please submit a modification form.

2. If there is a consent process in your research, you must use the consent form approved with your final application. Please make sure all participants receive a copy of the consent form.
3. If there are any injuries, problems, or complaints from participants (adverse events), you must notify the IRB at IRB@ncu.edu within 24 hours.
4. IRB audit of procedures may occur. The IRB will notify you if your study will be audited.
5. When data are collected and de-identified, please submit a study closure form to the IRB.
6. You must maintain current CITI certification until you have submitted a study closure form.
7. If you are a student, please be aware that you must be enrolled in an active dissertation course with NCU in order to collect data.

Best wishes as you conduct your research!

Respectfully,

Northcentral University Institutional Review Board
Email: irb@ncu.edu