SOCIALIZED LEADER DEVELOPMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE
COLLEGE ARMY ROTC STUDENT PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCE

by

Ammon Sean Campbell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine leader development within the college Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) in order to understand from the participating cadets' perspectives, the leader development experience. The study focused on the following central research question: How do participants view and interpret their collegiate Army ROTC leadership development experience? Guiding theories for this study were Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), Bandura's social learning theory (1977) and Tajfel's identity theory (1982). The study involved twelve college seniors involved at three distinct universities; the data related to their experience as leaders and was collected through reflective journals, interviews, and observations. Data collected was sorted into themes that illuminated the importance of leadership experience, character, and mentorship in the leader development process. Insights from the ROTC student participant perceptions provided evidence of the uniqueness of leader identity and the importance of gaining a leader psyche as components to an effective leader development program. This study helps to inform education administrators, faculty, and fellow students about the importance of leadership experience, character, and personal leader identification throughout the leader development process. On a broader scale, the study provides insightful information to leader developers in all fields about formal and informal cultural transmission aspects within leader development.

Keywords: Character, Leader Experience, Identity, Leadership, Mentorship

Copyright Page

Dedication

I am thankful for the loving support that my family, friends, and the Lord have shown me during this arduous educational journey. Throughout my life, I have been greatly blessed with a variety of opportunities, each with their own merits. This experience, while challenging, has contributed to my personal development.

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Dr. Reyes, a counselor at BYU during my freshman year, in 1991. Although he will never know, (Rest in Peace); his carefree Latino guitar playing and song singing spirit lifted me at a time when I felt truly lost. Visiting his office I will never forget seeing his picture on the wall as an American Paratrooper and feeling in my heart that I wanted to be just like him: an inner city raised, US Army Airborne, carefree Latino, Good Samaritan with a doctorate; and upon graduation I too will have succeeded in all of these. Thank you, Dr. Reyes for your kindness.

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List of Abbreviations

Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET)

Cadet Leader Course (CLC)

Leader Development Assessment Course (LDAC)

Military Science student level 1 (MSI)

Military Science student level 2 (MSII)

Military Science student level 3 (MSIII)

Military Science student level 4 (MSIV)

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

United State Military Academy (USMA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study provides an understanding of questions related to individual participant leader identity, the influence of military culture, and how participants describe their leader development experience, which can inform educators and leader developers in all organizational systems. The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the experiences of participants engaged in the Army ROTC leader development process.

This first chapter centers on introducing the focus of the study which is a phenomenological study of the leader development experience of participants of the US Army college-based ROTC program. My personal experience as a former cadet and current Army officer contribute to my interest in studying cadet leader development perspectives. This chapter introduces the study by outlining the following sections: the situation to self, providing a problem statement, purpose statement, and the study's significance. Also incorporated within this chapter are the research questions, research plan, limiting and delimiting factors, and definitions related to the study.

Background

The developed leadership theories of today differ distinctly from management theories that namely focus on task performance, proven solutions, and emphasizing specific skill application (Day, 2001). Many leadership theories have been developed to explain key facets of leading others some based on innate traits, others focused on behavioral transactions (McDermott, 2011). Yet each of these theories has focused on the individual after becoming a leader, rather than the developmental process of becoming a leader, a process which is associated with that of leadership learning through social interactive experiences defined by concepts of

formal and informal learning (Zang & Brundrett, 2010). A qualitative approach is required to better understand leadership and the essence of being, as described by Husserl (Lauer, 1958; Lyotard, 1991; Moustakas, 1958, 1990, 1994; van Manen, 1990), and more importantly, the critical components of individual leader development. In an effort to gain a better understanding of the leader development process and its potential effect on identity as each individual grows within a collegiate experience, a holistic review of multiple disciplines has been used and is outlined in the problem statement. Some of the fields that have provided significant insight to this study of the ROTC leadership educational process are related to identity, culture, socialization, and leader development theory.

Congress established the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) as part of the National Defense Act of 1916 in an effort to augment the U.S. Army leadership with educated professional officers. This act established ROTC programs at colleges and universities across the nation, expanding the capacity of Army leader development beyond the traditional route via the United States Military Academy at West Point. Since that time, the number of universities involved and US Army officers produced through this program has grown exponentially, making the ROTC now responsible for producing a significant portion of the annual requirement of newly commissioned officers entering a military career. Throughout this same period, the United States has faced several distinct challenges to its sovereignty, and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, such threats have continued to exist, whether economic, technological, ideological, or political. Regardless of the nature of such threats, each situation has required capable leadership.

Currently, approximately 273 host school programs across the nation provide Army officer leader development education and training for over three-quarters of all entry-level Army

officers (United States Army Cadet Command [USACC], 2013). Yet almost 100 years after the

formal establishment of the ROTC program, very few research studies have been conducted to

evaluate the efficacy of the leader development program used in ROTC, and fewer still have

reviewed the participants' perceptions. The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the

experiences of participants engaged in the ROTC leader development process.

In recent history, the United States has faced several distinct leadership challenges, in the

forms of foreign political unrest, internal financial instability, and/or general domestic turmoil

existing in tandem with war and conflict (Panetta, 2012). In addition, the US Army has been

confronted with significant internal leadership challenges, such as epidemic suicide rates within

the ranks, destructive sexual harassment and assault issues, budget constraints, and personnel

reductions. Yet there exists almost no literature evaluating the success rates of current military

leader development techniques for such an ever-changing world environment. Though young

leaders need "the ability to understand the world around them and to better see the entire

battlespace from all dimensions" (Johnson, 2002, p.2), due to insufficient research related to

ROTC or college student leader development (Dugan & Komives, 2010), there is a gap in the

understanding of the personal development process of cadet leaders. Cadets on a civilian campus

have a vastly different experience than military academy cadets, due to the nature of their dual

identity on campus, whereas academy cadets experience a total military institutional setting

(Goffman, 1961). There have been a variety of quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the

military academy programs within the United States over the years, and very few have focused

on ROTC programs with the majority of these limited studies having a quantitative emphasis.

Thus, the use of a systematic qualitative approach involving participants enrolled in the program

will provide critical insights. This study will focus on the experience of active Army participants

in the ROTC leadership development program, a program designed to indoctrinate and socialize students by exposing them to military customs, courtesies, and culture as cadets during their undergraduate studies at a college or university campus.

Situation to Self

Within the philosophical writings of John Dewey, he states that "that social phenomena do, as a matter of fact, manifest something distinctive" (Hickman & Alexander, 1998, p. 311); this indicates that each individual participant has a unique perspective of his or her experience of being a cadet in college. This is due to the subjective meaning each participant brings to the process of acting as both a college student and ROTC cadet. I am deeply motivated to conduct this research in order to better understand the individual cadet-student experience through their perspective. Having completed the ROTC program over 20 years ago, my personal recollection and interpretation of my experience has dwindled with time and has been reconstructed by my current leadership perspective. In addition, significant technological advances within the past two decades have completely revolutionized the university experience and present novel territory to be explored in relation to student engagement and leader development. Today's students have a host of different challenges and opportunities compared to those to which I was exposed to as a cadet, and through a contemporary transcendental phenomenological lens, the viewpoint of each participant's experience will captured within the study to "explicate the phenomenon in terms of its constituents" (Moustakas, 1994, p.49), thereby contributing to a stronger understanding of what it is like to be a cadet today.

Problem Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study is both important and necessary for several reasons. First, there exists a gap in the literature related to the experiences of student leaders, which cripples the current understanding of leader development (Henshaw, 2003). Secondly, the majority of scholarly research related to leader development has been quantitatively-based, focusing on performance evaluations or other assessments (Henshaw, 2003; Muir, 2011). Within his research Eich (2008) comments, the issue of a leadership deficit has been noted for decades by prominent leadership scholars like Burns, Greenleaf and Wren, all of whom noted a desperate need for more and better leaders in all areas of society. As society has grappled with the challenge of leadership, many researchers have focused on theories related to leader performance and often "viewed through an industrial lens characterized by management" (Dugan & Komives, 2010, p. 525).

A problem that has developed as researchers have focused on leadership skills is a lack of attention devoted to understanding the leader identity development process, or the development of "how one thinks of oneself as a leader" (Muir, 2011, p. 17). Even less research has focused on Army ROTC leader development programs at universities across the country, or the experience of serving as a cadet on a civilian campus, which is a vastly different experience than that of a cadet enrolled in a military academy, in which the institutional focus revolves around military leader development. This oversight creates the opportunity for a rigorous qualitative research study focusing on the experience of participants within the ROTC subculture on a college campus, and the effects this experience has on individual perception and development. The study takes into consideration the demographic of college-age adolescents working to become leaders, as it would be inadequate to evaluate the ROTC leadership experience without a proper

foundation of understanding "the predictors of psychosocial development" (Bartone, Snook, Forsythe, Lewis & Bullis, 2007, p. 503) of cadets as they develop their personal leader identity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to generate a greater descriptive understanding how college Army ROTC cadets interpret their leader experiences while developing a leader identity; this process is complicated by the added requirement of managing the duality of being both an ROTC cadet leader and a student on a college campus in the Western United States. In the research, the cadet leader identity will be generally defined as university students who have decided to participate in the Army ROTC program on campus in an effort to learn leadership skills and ultimately graduate and commission as an officer in the military. Three distinct theories have guided this work, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, along with components of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) and work by noted identity theorists Tajfel (1982) also Stryker and Burke (2000). Likewise, concepts by Schein (1992) related to culture and its influences on leadership have been used within the study.

Significance of the Study

The study of leadership is important. There is a widely-held belief that effective leadership has a valuable impact on organizational output (Zang & Brundrett, 2010). Understanding leadership has fascinated scholars through the ages, and although we do not have a specific field called "leaderology"; devoted to the study of leaders, their development and interactions. It is possible to use the compilation of knowledge related to human development, social sciences, and behavior to better understand how leaders develop, interact with one another, and generate influence. This compilation is important to our society because throughout history,

and on a daily basis, we see the effects of effective and ineffective leadership on others, organizations and nations.

Due to the nature of leadership, efforts to study, describe, and theorize it have been at best challenging. Researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership have noted this challenge of understanding leadership, and "leadership scholars often describe leadership theory as being highly diverse and lacking integration" (Drath et al., 2008, p. 635). Such a dynamic presents an excellent opportunity for a phenomenological approach, in order to capture and describe the shared themes and experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001) and common meaning of participants (Creswell, 2013) in the ROTC leadership development program. Miller (2011) posits that an emphasis on environmental factors associated with social learning theory, coupled with a focus on the importance of observational learning "as embedded within pervasive cultural belief systems" (p. 236), would contribute to a better understanding of leader development. It is the very diversity and lack of integration described by (Drath et al., 2008) that lends to such a variety of concepts related to leadership. Throughout the study of literature, multiple types of leadership have been identified: military leadership, school leadership, political leadership, student leadership, and various others. However, in reality, leadership itself does not change, and its principles are fixed. Rather, it is the context of the application of leadership influence that changes. The principles that constitute leadership are considered scientific and measurable and the application of such principles an art.

By examining the cadet student experience at three selected schools, it is expected that commonalities will be found that may provide rich descriptions capable of improving understanding and systemic improvements for students in other college ROTC programs. The increased knowledge derived from the cadet experience will contribute to the ability of ROTC

departments to attend to their students and potentially assist in successful retention of

participating students. This research will also positively contribute to the knowledge that

university support services, such as student affairs, may use to better understand the needs

associated with this subculture population. Along the same lines, it is anticipated that some of

the insights gained through this study will transfer to other small groups on campus that may feel

disenfranchised or isolated. Identification of phenomenological factors as identified by the

participants could have positive effects on overall university student support and outreach. Also,

ROTC program retention and an overall better understanding of the needs of ROTC students on

campus may be accomplished. This study may also encourage further investigation into the

same topic or similar qualitative issues related to leader development of students on campus or

within the military.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are designed to support the central research

question: How do participants view and interpret their collegiate Army ROTC leadership

development experience? The questions will also help to gain insight of the general ROTC cadet

perspective, as well as his/her specific leadership experience as both a student and a cadet on a

university campus.

SQ1: How do ROTC cadets describe their college leader development experiences?

This question will help give a descriptive voice to each participant's ROTC leader

development experience. This question addresses the developmental aspect of adolescents

during their college years. According to the scheme developed by Perry in the 1960s, a college

student developmental approach is based upon simplistic black and white absolutes, and

pluralistic and contextual concepts (Clarkeburn, Downie, Gray, & Matthew, 2003); thus cadet views should be distinct according to grade level.

SQ2: How do Army ROTC cadets view and interpret their leader identity?

The purpose of this research question is to solicit deeply personal reflective thoughts and feelings from the participants. The intent is to cause each individual to pause and consider his or her experience holistically. Moustakas (1990) advocates focusing "long enough to examine his or her experience of the phenomenon" (p. 25), and Avolio (1999) discusses the value of intellectual stimulation "providing meaning and understanding" (p. 42) in relation to leader development. Each individual experience is part of a greater whole. Vygotsky, as explained by Jaramillo (1996) established a sociocultural approach of development which parallels both Erikson (1968) and Piaget (1977), but differs, in that the cultural context is a significant contributing factor (Miller, 2011). He and subsequent socioculturalists share the premise that "culture defines what knowledge and skills" are needed and provides the "language, technology, and strategies for functioning in that culture" (Miller, 2011, p. 166). As cadets reflect and share their personal description of their leader development experience they will help to shed light on the sociocultural factors that have had an impact on them. Their memories, stories, and schema will provide a rich description of the leader development phenomenon.

SQ3: How do cadets perceive military cultural influences impacting their leader development?

The ROTC program has a distinct purpose: to provide a systematic military approach to leader development during the formative college years. This is accomplished through standard academic classes and informal leadership experiences, both of which are conducted under the supervision of Army faculty. Through this process, Army leaders are formed and inculcated

with military culture. Schein (1992) describes culture and leadership as "two sides of the same coin" (p.1) in that leaders create culture, and that culture, in turn, supports the leaders that have created it. This question is designed to find out if participants are conscious about the influences that contribute to their experience and identity as a leader on campus.

Definitions

1. *Army Values* – Seven baseline Army values which provide an underpinning of mutual respect and a unified culture. They are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Integrity, and Personal Courage. The first letters of each word spell the mnemonic LDRSHIP.

2. *Cadet* – A student involved in the ROTC program with the intent of becoming a commissioned officer upon graduation.

3. *Cadet Initial Entry Training*- called by the acronym CIET, it is an intense four-week Army life introduction and leadership training course with the aim to motivate cadets to transition into the Senior ROTC program.

4. *Cadet Leadership Course* – known as CLC, this course is designed to serve as the capstone event in training, evaluating and preparing cadets for service in the US Army as commissioned officers; this 29 day course builds on previous learning and takes place during the summer prior to the senior year in college.

5. *Commissioned* – The act of receiving an Army commission. At the time of graduation, each ROTC cadet that has successfully accomplished both the education and leader development requirements receives a commission in the United States executive branch to serve as an officer in the military.

6. *Contracted* C*adets*- Cadets who have entered into a formal obligation to complete college and enter Army service as an officer upon graduation. There are financial or service

obligations incurred by becoming a contracted cadet, and excusal from this obligation must be vetted through multiple levels of leadership before being granted.

7. *Leader Lab* – A weekly event during the academic year designed to provide each cadet a forum to experientially practice leadership and receive mentoring feedback.

8. *Reserve Officer Training Corps* – A military-endorsed program set within university settings to provide leader development programming for future military officers.

Summary

This research will both complement and extend the efforts of previous researchers interested in understanding the social dynamics of leader development by capturing the input of participants within an established leadership program. The research approach is novel, in that rather than attempting to explain the leadership development process through quantitative measures, a qualitative lens will "capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical" (van Manen, 1990, p. 39) and illuminate the "life world" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 48) perspective of each individual's shared leader development experience as an U.S. Army ROTC cadet on a university campus.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Constructivism theory acts as a strong underpinning to the theoretical framework of this study. As Ozer (2004) points out, constructivism is an educational approach, with its main concept based on the premise that individuals are better able to comprehend and process information constructed through interaction with the environment. The ROTC leader development program is designed to provide emerging leaders with environmental challenges along with social interactions without prescribed outcomes in order to facilitate development. Within this chapter theories by Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977) and Tajfel (1982) layout important concepts related to constructivism, social learning, and identity theory which provide the theoretical framework to leader development and leader identity. This chapter further incorporates perspectives within the related literature on military socialization by analyzing leader development literature, socialization, leader development, culture, and experiential leader learning as it relates to leader identity development; followed by a chapter summary.

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky well known for his theory of social constructivism, describes learning and development as dependent on context and socialization. Leader development is a constructivism process based on social learning because it involves the transmission of culture through language, real world situations and learner interaction and collaboration (Ozer, 2004). This includes modeling and mentoring between established and emerging leaders. In time participants develop their own leadership style and identity after a period of modeling others and receiving guidance from fellow leaders.

Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky (1978) believed that internalized learning was through social context and included scaffolding (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). He conceptualized a zone of proximal development (ZPD) in which the true capability of a learner was represented by "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under-guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). He further explained that different methods might be used to facilitate the success of learners attempting to complete unfamiliar tasks; some of these were demonstrations, leading questions or assistance by an initiating prompt. This method of teaching is exceptionally well suited for the teaching of leadership through a mentoring process.

Vygotsky (1978) viewed learning as a process facilitated by culture through signs and symbols, often demonstrated through our language and interaction. He stated that "cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57) and considered this ability for humans to internalize social and historically based learning as a unique feature of humanity and quite distinct from animals. Throughout generations, history has demonstrated that leaders have had to be adaptive and find novel ways of interacting with followers in order to remain relevant and effective. Because leadership is a higher function of societal interaction and is based on activities "such as communication, formal and informal instruction, and the use of technical and psychological tools" (Miller, 2011,p. 194), Vygotsky's (1978) view of individuals being active participants in their own learning and understanding, while having the capacity to externalize with social group members of a shared experience, is crucial to understanding leader development.

Social Learning Theory

Within the framework of sociocultural development theories, there exists an emphasis on environmental influences that are not biologically based and the importance of observation by the learner within his or her environment. Leaders become active participants within their environmental context, whether by applying influence to achieve an end state or by observing and learning from environmental players within their social sphere. As identified by Miller and Dollard, "one of the most powerful socialization forces is imitation" (Miller, 2011, p. 233). The concept of modeling was further developed by Bandura (1977), a researcher who conducted studies to evaluate how new behaviors are acquired through observation. Bandura (1977) studied the effects of environmental factors on learning and like Vygotsky (1978) believed that nonbiological influences were powerful contributors to human behavior and learning. Bandura (1977) studied how observation and modeling have a profound influence on learning, stating:

it is difficult to imagine a socialization process in which the language, mores, vocational activities, familial customs, and the educational, religious and political practices of a culture are taught to each new member by selective reinforcement or fortuitous behaviors, without benefit of models who exemplify the cultural patters in their own behavior. (Bandura, 1971, p. 5)

He concluded that after individuals have developed the capacity to learn through observation, others cannot stop them from processing what that have witnessed (Bandura, 1977). The skill of observational learning is not relegated merely to simple tasks, but is also used by individuals to adopt such cultural cues as values and beliefs. Despite the foundational principle that the environment exerts influence, one of Bandura's (1977) key concepts that Miller (2011) further illuminates is the feature of choice. Bandura (1977) explained this attentional process as

the ability of learners to select characteristics through perception.   This explanation helps to

provide a valid reason to the distinct behaviors of individuals despite poor or good leader

models. As we see and experience various leader behaviors throughout our lives, we make

mental notations of what effective/ineffective leadership looks like. These impressions provide

an internal schema regarding both what it means to lead and how to best do it. The ROTC

learning model is based on experiential learning. The program uses interactive leadership

practice opportunities during the leadership lab each week to provide varied and dynamic

leadership experiences from which the participants reference and reflect on in order to expand

their experience base, self-confidence, and ultimately their perception of the kind of leader they

are becoming. Referencing this theory will help guide the data collection and the data analysis.

Identity Theory

Despite the variety of simultaneous roles we each have in life we develop a

personal identity that is molded and characterized by the roles we hold in society and provides

personal meaning which helps to define who we are (Burke & Stets, 2009). The theories

associated with identity focus on how our personal identity is shaped by both internal and

external influences and how our membership in distinct groups has an influence on

our individual perception. Tajfel (1982) explains that there is a difference between personal and

social identity. Our personal identities are made of personal perceptions and the influences of

others within our social group, "understanding how identity is formed, is changed, and impacts

behavior is important to the emerging study of leadership development" (Key-Roberts, Halpin, &

Brunner, 2012, p.3). The majority of leadership development research has focused on obtaining

objective measurements of leader performance, necessary competencies, and organizational

needs, but there is value in researching the leader development perspective of individuals that

participate in a leader development process. Stryker & Burke (2000) describe our personal

identities as actual social constructs that fill a particular social role. The concept of individuals

forming a leader identity is not new. Literature related to leader development often references

the need for emerging leaders to reflect on their actions and belief through self-awareness. Hiller

(2006) studied how our personal leader schema and our view of leadership were influenced by

leadership experiences and cognitive self-evaluations of core beliefs, Avolio (1999) uses the

term "self-leadership"(p.8). Hiller (2006) found evidence connecting leader self- identity with

leadership phenomena. Identity theory will help to ground the data analysis in providing an

established reference point.

Related Literature

Throughout the world, diverse cultural values play a part in what is considered quality

leadership behavior, including its accompanying attributes. In many tribal and traditional

cultures, age and wisdom are seen as desirable traits, taking precedence over attributes deemed

more important in other cultures. Observers have noted that throughout Asia, leaders tend to be

deliberate and collaborative in their decision-making, while in several Western societies, namely

the United States, innovation and individualism have long been associated with effective

leadership, perhaps stemming from earlier generations of explorers and the challenges of

overcoming new frontiers.

Edgar Schein, a social psychologist, noted that as individuals, we greatly underestimate

the powerful collective influence that others transmit to us via culture. He noted that we both

share and learn culture at different levels. He used the term *level* to refer to the "degree to which

the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer" (Schein, 1992, p.16). According to his view,

levels are present in each social interaction and directly influence the formation of emerging

leaders. Within his work, he discussed the importance of artifacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 1992) in culture, and shared how leaders serve as purveyors of such cultural levels.

Perspectives on Socialization

When individuals enter a new group, they begin an adaptation process based upon socialization in order to successfully integrate and fully participate in the organization. There is a wide variety of theories related to socialized development. One such theory was developed by Grusec and Davidov (2010), who postulated that social relationships have important implications, but also state, "thus, there is no general, all-purpose principle or mechanism of socialization, but rather each form of relationship between the object and the agent of socialization serves a different function, involves different rules and mechanisms for effecting behavior" (p. 687). This idea clarifies the principle that individuals are not conditioned by a single source, but that other group members, values, and experiences all play a part in shaping cultural socialization. Group newcomers use learning and social tactics (Chen & Yao, 2014) to negotiate their transition to novel role requirements, and failure to successfully navigate this process potentially produces negative behavioral outcomes, such as interpersonal conflict or lack of productivity, psychological issues, and even physiological consequences, such as physical illness (Wang, Kameyer-Mueller, Liu, & Li, 2014). How well individuals cope with the stress of transitioning to a new group has much to do with their past experiences. Individuals that have entered, participated, and exited various teams and groups have an experience base to fall back on and will tend to do better in novel situations than those without such experiences. This is, in large part, due to their participation in the stages of team-building known as forming, storming, norming, and performing, stages developed by Tuckman (1965) in the sixties. Young adults that

have participated in sports teams not only gain the physical benefits of an active lifestyle, but they also gain experience in overcoming setbacks, working with others, and motivating themselves. With this experience, they become active agents of a group, ready to help others succeed within the group. On the other hand, because of the potential pitfalls related to ineffective team member participation, organizations have a vested interest in facilitating group integration by helping individuals effectively learn and adjust to the cultural environment (Wang, et al., 2014). Thus, integration is based upon involvement and consists of both social norms and technical skills.

As new members join an organization, they bring with them previously-developed skills and talents, which allow them to quickly contribute to the group. These skills provide a social starting point, which then helps them navigate the group entrance process, despite the normal apprehension associated with novel social settings. Henshaw (2003) notes that newcomers gain self-confidence as they better understand unwritten group rules and that the efforts by newcomers to master tasks and new skill sets associated with their responsibilities moves them from passive social recipients to active participants that gain further confidence in their own abilities. This acquisition of technical requirements promotes confidence through competence and provides the individual the ability to develop referent power. With expanded social capital, individuals are more capable of engaging within the group's social framework and contributing to the person-environment fit, "a state of consistency among various elements, often between individuals and various levels of their work environment, and therefore emphasizes the actor in interaction with the context rather than the actor or the context independently in influencing individual behavior" (Lee, Reiche & Song, 2010, p. 154).

Erikson's (1968) work focused on eight critical stages within life; of these stages, the fifth stage, identity and repudiation in adolescence, provides insights on what may influence ROTC participants because of their effort to find their true identities through campus activities, friends, religious groups, or other engagements within the campus community (Miller, 2010). Along with the transmission of culture from established group members, new members also contribute to the social exchange, bringing with them previous experiences and expectations which influence the group as a whole. While there is a constant exchange of culture by group members throughout the organization, it is the leadership of the organization that serves as a monitor and source of beliefs and values (Schein, 1992). This factor complicates the challenge of understanding cultural socialization in an organization that exists to develop leaders, such as the collegiate ROTC program.

Military Socialization Research

To truly understand the US Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) of today, 100 years after its inception, it is necessary to first review the prologue of military history prior to the establishment of the ROTC program in 1916.

As the fledgling American colonies became established, the need for armed protection from hostile tribes of natives, internal disorder and unrest, along with the foreign threats (Bogle as cited by Kennedy & Neilson, 2002) was more than apparent, so out of necessity, local protective militias were established. These militias were a far cry from the professional standing armies of Europe, comprised not of trained professionals, but instead by mutually concerned citizens ranging from farmers and tradesmen to artisans and business entrepreneurs. This model of defense proved to be tenuous at best, due to the unpredictability of personal motivations, but it has proven to be very successful when the group is unified by a common goal. For the American

colonists, the unifier was the common threat they faced in an often harsh frontier environment.

An ancient but poignant example of a successfully unified society were the Spartans, who,

though desperately outnumbered, came together with a mutual sense of duty to their homeland

and through their cultural ethos of discipline, thwarted the efforts of many would-be conquerors;

to include the well-resourced Persian army and navy.

During the American Revolutionary War, General George Washington merged the

loosely organized militia groups from each colony into an army. What quickly became apparent

was the dedicated, steadfast willingness of citizen soldiers, a trait not found in the conscripts or

mercenary armies of Europe. This personal dedication was demonstrated in a variety of trials,

including the historic winter at Valley Forge. The lack of military protocol, discipline, or

understanding of training continued to emerge as a significant issue. The farmers and craftsmen

that joined the Continental army lacked basic soldier skills. Thus, despite their dedication to the

cause, they needed direction in military organization, communication, basic hygiene, and tactics.

To remedy this shortcoming, professional soldiers like Kosciuszko and von Steuben from Europe

were hired to provide needed military training and instruction. Prior to the American

Revolution, the status quo of military leadership as a privilege of only the upper class and

aristocracy had begun to change. In France, a number of non-noblemen were admitted to

military schools, despite a royal decree "that entrance to all military schools was limited to those

who could prove they had been born of a family that had been ennobled for at least four

generations" (Hattendorf as cited by Kennedy & Neilson, 2002, p.5). Up to this point, the

military leadership of armies was based on one's heritage, with the "traditional approach [being]

for a young nobleman to receive a military education from childhood, using weapons and taking

part in hunts and other military-like sports as a youngster at home" (Hattendorf as cited by

Kennedy & Neilson, 2002, p.3). This small, yet significant, cultural shift in a long standing

European tradition opened the door to novel and distinct opportunities for leadership in the

Continental Army.

The leaders of the American Revolution were motivated to steer clear of aristocratic

military leaders after the influence of individuals like General H.H.E. Lloyd, who wrote a history

of the Seven Years' War in 1766, stating "it is universally agreed upon that no art or science is

more difficult than that of war yet…those who embrace this profession take little or no pains to

study it" (Hattendorf as cited by Kennedy & Neilson, 2002, p.6). In this statement, he was

undoubtedly referring to the endowed Prussian and general European elite that either bought or

were granted their military leadership appointments during that time period; yet despite their

important position of influence and consequence, these individuals took little interest or care in

managing military affairs or learning important tactics that would save lives or reduce the toll of

war. In a very real way, the use of willing, able citizens professionally trained as soldiers and

leaders was a revolution in itself, as it countered all proceeding methodologies and succeeded in

defeating one of the foremost world powers of its time.

Shortly following the Revolutionary War, the newly established nation quickly realized

the need for persistent security forces at home and abroad, but agreed that attempting to mobilize

a proficient militia at the onset of each crisis would be insufficient. This was notably

demonstrated in the War of 1812, when the British army successfully burned the emerging new

United States capital to the ground. As part of the founding fathers' attempt to increase the

rights and responsibility of a republican form of government, where, for the first time in recorded

history, a major state placed national sovereignty with the citizens, rather than with a monarch or

dictator (Harford, Coker & Wetzel, 2007); they formally adopted the US Constitution in 1789

and the Uniform Militia Act in 1792. This decreased U.S. dependence of foreign military

leadership support, involved American citizens, and produced a semi-professional standing

army. In 1802, then President Thomas Jefferson perpetuated this progress by formalizing the

creation of the United States Military Academy at West Point, but only after establishing the

condition that lay citizens would fill its ranks, due to the concern of creating a European-style

military aristocracy in the New World. West Point was a natural selection—first established as a

stronghold in the Revolutionary War and Washington's headquarters in 1779, it was, at that time,

being used as a base of military engineers and artillery training (Morrison, 1986) and continues

to be occupied and utilized to this day.

Despite the profound impact that the United States' military has had on history, leader

development, and the United States as a whole, there is a disproportionately small amount of

research dedicated to military leader development outside of the academies. Dornbusch (1955)

conducted a study at the Coast Guard Academy, in which he reflected on how he was assimilated

into the common culture by describing both the formal institutionalization and the informal

experiences of new cadets. While more recently, Henshaw (2003) focused his efforts on a case

study of the cultural influences new cadets experienced during their first phase of education at

the United State Military Academy. Tertychny (2013) focused on leaders' development

perspectives at the Virginia Military Institute. Much less research has been dedicated to the

Reserve Officer Training Corps, housed at over 270 universities throughout the 50 states and

territories of the US, despite its role as a major contributor to the US Army leadership

population, with over 40% of current general officers having graduated from ROTC. The ROTC

institution is poised to celebrate a century of successful progress in 2016. The U.S. Department

of Defense has established three types of ROTC programs: an Army program, an Air Force

program and a joint Navy/Marine program (Starr, 1982). These programs produce the majority of the officers within the regular and reserved armed forces branches. The US Army ROTC program defines its mission as:

> The US Army Cadet Command selects, educates, trains, and commissions college students to be officers and leaders of character in the Total Army; instills the values of citizenship, national and community service, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment in high school students. (U.S. Army Cadet Command History, para. 2)

The majority of military socialization research has been influenced by the pervasive belief that as a subculture, individuals serving in the military can be characterized as having the "military mindset" that Huntington (1957) asserted as a common trait. His viewpoint regarding the military mindset concept has been widely accepted, and for a long time, has been considered to be "the uniqueness…in certain mental attributes or qualities which constitute a military personality" (Huntington, 1957, p. 59). This belief has perpetuated the notion that a criterion for military service is a predisposition for rules, a regimented personality type, or even a violent disposition. Yet Janowitz (as cited by Goertzel & Hengst, 1971) argued that as technology has advanced and become more integrated into the fabric of our society, our societal views and culture have also evolved. He posits that the current generation of service members has become more technocratic, demonstrating characteristics similar to managers within the civilian sector (Goertzel & Hengst, 1971).

Whether the military mindset disposition was a precursor to military service or the intended outcome of military indoctrination training programs is less important than the shared belief that such a mindset is necessary for success in the military. In an effort to evaluate this belief, Goertzel and Hengst (1971) conducted a research study examining the attitudes of ROTC

cadets at the University of Oregon. The study evaluated the concept of a predisposition in relation to military service; and despite its limitations as a singular evaluation, they found differences in opinions of cadets. They also compared cadet opinions to the campus at large, concluding that further research was needed to "establish the extent to which differences in attitudes which may be attributed to training in different settings persist after cadets are integrated into the armed forces" (Goetzel & Hengst, 1971, p. 266).

The common contemporary view of undergraduate leadership development is based on the concept that "leadership in common terms [is] a process in which all individuals have the capability of developing" (Eich, 2008, p. 176) and is not dependent on personal background or a position of power. This view aligns well with the college ROTC model, in which recruitment is based upon participant self-selection with the premise that leadership is a skill "which any soldier should be able to perform regardless of the situation or context" (Sookermany, 2012, p.584), a skill which can be trained and improved upon through consistent practice and application. The ROTC program is an institution of instruction that teaches leadership skills based upon interactive experiential learning of material and cultural socialization. This is articulated in the Cadet Creed:

> I am an Army Cadet.
>
> Soon I will take an oath and become an Army Officer committed to defending the values which make this nation great.
>
> HONOR is my touchstone. I understand MISSION first and PEOPLE always.
>
> I am the PAST: the spirit of those WARRIORS who have made the final sacrifice.
>
> I am the PRESENT: the scholar and apprentice soldier enhancing my skills in the science of warfare and the art of leadership.

But, above all, I am the FUTURE: the future WARRIOR LEADER of the United States

Army. May God give me the compassion and judgment to lead and the gallantry to WIN.

I WILL do my duty.

(Retrieved from http://www.jmu.edu/rotc/_files/CREEDSANDSONGS.pdf)

Leader Development

In an effort to understand the phenomenon of leadership, a variety of theories directly

related to how leaders interact with followers and organizations have been developed. The

majority of research related to leadership has been focused on measurable factors and leadership

variables within organizations, thus focusing on the effectiveness of task accomplishment.

However, some theories related to leadership have focused on the individual leader capacity in

relation to traits, behavior, situation contingency, and attributions. For example, Olivares,

Peterson, and Hess (2006) distinguish between leader development and leadership development.

They state that leader development is focused on intrapersonal skills, and that attributes such as

self-motivation, task accomplishment, goal orientation and decisiveness are leader competency

musts. On the other hand, leadership development "focuses on building interpersonal

competence" (Olivares, et al., p. 79), including skills such as social networking, emotional

intelligence, coordinating teams, and interacting in complex social environments. Leader

education and development is a process, they claim, a process conducted between individuals

that must negotiate power and roles, but to best understand leadership development, one must

"better understand the nature of experiences that facilitate leadership development" (Olivares, et

al., 2006, p. 77). Kouze and Posner (2007) identified distinct social interactions that successful

leaders perform on a regular basis. They conclude that the leadership social process hinges on

basic principles of psychology and sociology, which help to explain how we interact as humans.

Whether out of McClelland's theory of needs, the need for power, affiliation, or achievement (Harrell & Stahl, 1981) the socialization that occurs in the leader development process is noteworthy to understanding what contributes to a strong, capable leader. Within this study one aspect that must be taken into consideration is the demographic of the study. Perry (1999) reviews in depth the intellectual and ethical development that occurs during the college years. It would be inadequate to evaluate the ROTC leadership program without a proper foundation of understanding the "psychosocial development and leader performance" (Bartone, Snook, Forsythe, Lewis, & Bullis, 2007, p. 490) of cadets as they develop their own identity. After several years of analysis and development, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) has settled on the concept of feedback-intensive leadership development. The use of intensive feedback promotes individual reflection, which can be performed via a variety of forms, such as evaluations, performance assessments, 360-degree surveys, self-assessment, and peer evaluation. The use of intensive feedback helps individuals reflect on key effective leadership characteristics (Tertychny, 2013) and can accelerate leadership learning.

The United States Army has its own overarching leader development model which was developed in consideration of military operations in complex environmental conditions.
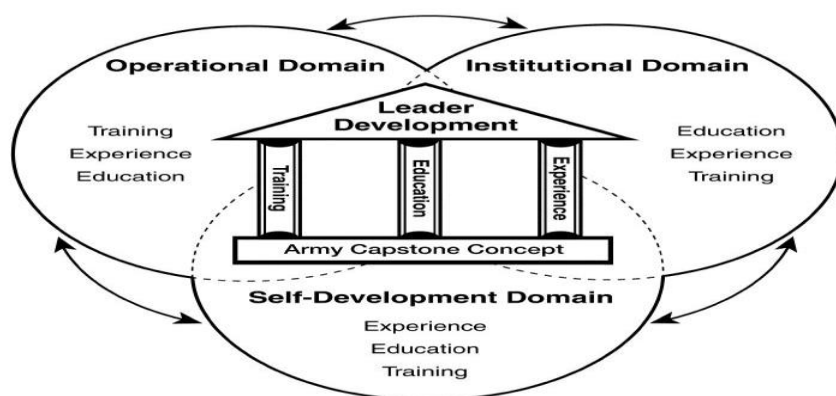

Figure 1. Excerpt from Army Leader Development Program (DA Pamphlet 350-58) "Leader development is a deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process grounded in the Army values." (p.1)

The Army Leader Development Program pamphlet (DA PAM 350-58) was published to outline the concept of the developmental model and its connection to the military doctrine of mission command and the Army Profession. The model is centered on three pillars: Training, Education, and Experience within the context of three domains, which are the Operational Domain, Institutional Domain, and Self-Development domain.

Cultural Contributions

Culture permeates every aspect of our lives—it is the essence of our existence, and it "may only be intuited or grasped through a study of the particulars or instances as they are encountered in lived experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The pervasiveness of cultural layers can be found in our beliefs, feelings, decisions, actions, and social interactions. Spindler (1974) writes, "culture encompasses patterns of meaning, reality, values, actions and decision-making shared by and within social collectives" (p. 28). His view of culture within this context gives much more meaning to the concept, in comparison to the pop culture definition of culture a group of people with some shared views. How individuals analyze and transmit social perceptions occurs through a learned cultural system. Spindler (1974) distinguishes between enculturation and acculturation, describing the latter as a change to the group and the individuals within the group, due to contact with other cultural systems. In contrast, enculturation is the process of maintaining continuity throughout generations of the same culture.

There are three basic assumptions related to culture that help to define and understand it. First, engaging and experiencing culture is a unique, yet universal, experience of humanity: unique, due to local influences and timing, and universal, in that we each will participate in the exchange of culture throughout our lives. Secondly, the shared creative interpretations of our experiences determine our daily activities throughout our lives, despite the fact that they occur

almost subconsciously. Lastly, while culture is dynamic in nature, there are organized patterns

that provide meaning and context (Schein, 1992; Spindler, 1974; Valentine, 1968).

The ROTC program within a university setting is a microcosm of a very specific cultural

orientation with the focus of producing not just new members, but functioning leaders from

within the organization. This, in and of itself, is challenging, but when we acknowledge that

humanity participates in multiple cultural systems, the question of how the process can be

successful comes to mind. One way to achieve such success is by requiring new members to

"discard their cultural anchors" (Spindler, 1974, p.8) and then receive help in deciphering key

norms needed to operate within the group (Schein, 1992) through transmissive, transitional and

transformative (Spindler, 1974) methodologies. These methodologies each have different

objectives. The transmissive method provides a learner-teacher continuity, one based on shared

information with the goal of maintaining cultural structure. Transitional transmission, in

contrast, is aimed at helping individuals make successful personal changes that will assist them

in incorporating themselves into the new cultural norms introduced by the ROTC program.

Ultimately, the transformative method facilitates interaction between both the individual and the

culture, each creating change for the betterment of the culture itself.

The phenomenon of culture is so embedded in our psyche that we often do not realize its

effects at the subconscious or conscious level, and yet we constantly act and react according to

our cultural learning. Such social learning is important because it provides a common

connection for human behavior. Our behaviors are easily noticed by others and are used by them

as predictive measures of internal values and beliefs. Moustakas (1994) contends that "every

perception adds something important to the experience…as we look and reflect, there are acts of

memory relevant to a phenomenon that reawaken feelings and images and bring past meanings

and qualities into the present" (p.53). The caveat of such interpretations is that they are fundamentally couched in the internal schema of the observer; thus, how we perceive and understand our culture is not the same as how it is understood or perceived by others. Therefore, the ability to derive the appropriate cultural meaning is often tied to whether the observer is a group insider or not. Insiders grow to develop shared meanings of the cultural essence, meanings which are difficult for outsiders to analyze.

Schein (1992) deconstructed culture into three distinct levels in order to facilitate cultural inquiry and analysis: artifacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions. He identified artifacts as the easily observable "phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels" (Schein, 1992, p.17). While artifacts are very easy to witness, they are much more difficult to understand. The reason artifacts are easy to identify yet difficult to understand is due to the individualized internal interpretation given to artifacts. While some artifacts may be universal, such as a friendly smile, others have much less obvious meanings. As a result, what often happens is artifact misinterpretation, due to applying personal meaning based upon previous cultural exposure to an artifact, whether familiar or foreign. However, the fact that artifacts are present at all levels and throughout each culture is key. Those that develop the keen ability of reading a collection of artifacts, rather than basing assumptions on individual pieces, tend to fair better in cultural exchanges. In reality, people share artifacts all the time, and, in fact, they want to share them. For this reason, we have family photos, corporate logos, and common sayings or themes in our lives. Artifacts as described by Schein (1992) are those visual and outward cues that provide a way to share culture importance without an in-depth dialogue about the cultural value attached thereto. Yet they are an indispensable aspect of every culture, helping to define it through their distinctive nature.

The next level of culture Schein (1992) describes is the level associated with goals and philosophies, of operations at the conscious level that are embodied in rules and guidelines. Values provide a framework of reference within each cultural group. As each individual has and brings a different set of values to a group, groups must complete phases of values negotiation, periods of time in which they decide which values to keep or discard. Those retained become what Schein (1972) calls "espoused values" (p. 42). Such values help guide and predict appropriate group behavior and choice. Within the Army, there are seven core values which have emerged and been codified, in other words, the espoused values of the group. They are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage, and they create the acronym LDRSHIP, an abbreviation for the word leadership, another espoused value within the Army. All members of the Army are taught and expected to live the 7-Army values, and ROTC cadets are no different. Social validations of shared espoused values are certain values that have been confirmed by group experience and involve internal relations (Schein, 1992).

The deepest level of cultural analysis is that of basic underlying assumptions. These assumptions are subconscious and at the heart of the group's beliefs (Schein, 1992). Such assumptions are so internalized that they are never questioned, and may not even be noticed by internal group members without deep reflection. Basic assumptions are powerful because they are, in fact, the very way that we reconcile our experiences in life. The powers of basic underlying assumptions are that they provide cognitive stability and reduce anxiety. Such assumptions become cemented in our psyche as facts, whether stereotypical, prejudiced, or non-negotiable. For example, a person that has only experienced a culture centralized on the family would find divorce, disowning, or departure from family inconceivable. Likewise, many Westerners cannot fathom Middle Eastern customs related to honor killings of young women

because it is such an affront to deeply-held cultural values of the worth of a life and individual freedom. Sometimes we will distort or even deny convincing evidence, due to its conflict with deeply-held personal assumptions. When this happens, people use blocking techniques to impede change, at times even to their own detriment. In this way, our unconscious assumptions can distort data, often playing on our fears of the unknown. At times, we are confronted with change that destabilizes our personal worldview and assumptions, creating cultural anxiety (Schein, 1992). In this state of destabilization, change can occur. For example, education, by its very nature, is destabilizing to previously held knowledge, as it is an attempt to share aspects of culture and knowledge that revolutionize previously-held individual notions.

With all of the complexity culture provides, it is imperative that leaders both understand and take such complexities into account as they guide and educate their subordinates. Due to the fact that the future is unknown, leaders as visionaries must guide others to a new reality. Thus, emergent leaders in the ROTC program are first confronted by their own underlying assumptions of what the military is, what leadership does, and how they fit in to the culture. Only then can they provide mentorship to newcomers. In a sense, their basic assumptions serve as an archetype of the group's culture and can be thought of as both the individual and group psychological cognition.

Schein (1992) further points out the importance that leaders have in shaping culture and writes:

> Neither culture nor leadership, when one examines each closely, can really be understood by itself. In fact, one could argue that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture and that the unique talents of leaders is their ability to

understand and work with culture…one can argue that leaders create and change cultures.

(p. 5)

There is an undeniable connection between the role of leaders and cultural creation. In a paradoxical sense, leaders create and define culture, and with time, organizations define leadership within the constructed cultural context. This mutual existence provides a basis for understanding culture in order to better understand leadership and the development of leaders who are both creators and receivers of all levels of culture.

Leadership Perspectives

Study and interest in understanding leadership can be found within a variety of subjects, including business, education, religion, military, and every level of society. Within our Western society, leadership is often couched within the realm of business and enterprise. A recent trend (Eich, 2008) at the university and professional level involves leadership classes and seminars principally based on business models revolving around leadership style. This connection is most likely derived from a basic underlying assumption related to the value of commerce, exchange, productivity, and money. The influence of leadership in our lives is undeniable; whether for good or for ill, we feel the effects of leadership in our lives. The US Army has a distinct interest in quality leadership, in that it defines leadership as "the lifeblood of an army … characterized by a complex mix of organizational, situational, and mission demands" (ADP 6-22, 2012 p. 11). The Army field manual goes on to describe an Army leader as one who, by role or assignment, inspires and influences others in accomplishing organizational objectives. Furthermore, leaders are responsible for motivating others both within and without the internal organization; they "focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization" (ADP 6-22, p. 11).

Whether leadership has been studied for business or for military purposes, researchers have often focused on attempting to understand the phenomenon through instrumental measurements. Most theories of leadership have been based and tested using identifiable variables related to effective organizational task accomplishment and subordinate interaction with the leader (Henshaw, 2003). It is this interaction that helps to define leadership; leadership includes, by its very nature, the involvement of other people and based upon influence, communication, followership, and goal progression. Avolio (1999) goes so far as to express his belief that the process of leadership can be found at any level of society, adding that in his sentiment, parents are "the most important leader in any society" (p. 2) by declaring that "in our research on life streams and their development, we have discovered that one of the most important factors is the ethical standard set by the mother as a role model for her children" (p. 208).

Initial theories related to leadership and leader competency were centered on core traits, mirroring the common psychological, sociological, and human development understanding during that time period. The first theories of leadership were focused on traits, often known as the Great Man Theory. These traits often consisted of physical attributes and characteristics (McDermott, 2011) deemed important to being a successful leader, as they were noted in many quality leaders either previously or at the time. The bulk of these traits were based on physical attributes such as stature, muscularity, social aptitude, wit, or simply being a man. Other, less-pronounced, traits were internal in nature, such as confidence, intuition, or intelligence. And while these theories proved inadequate, especially with regard to their focus on men, they served as a reference point to begin the discussion and consideration of what leaders need to possess to be considered a quality leader.

As the social sciences developed further and the understanding of behavior came to its zenith in psychology, social scientists began to construct subsequent leader theories that moved away from distinct physical features to categories based primarily on innate traits and related behaviors. This era of leadership theory was very much influenced by the behaviorism trend in psychological theory, referencing work by B.F. Skinner (1938) and other psychologists. Such theories took into account the subordinate follower, and today we find that both theories and application related to leader development have adopted the view that both traits and behaviors are necessary aspects of competent leaders.

Overall, research has shown that leaders do, in fact, possess certain common traits or dispositions which provide a basis to build successful behaviors. The concept of emotional intelligence as a leader enhancer is an excellent example of an internal natural trait augmenting progressive social learning. Within this theory, the individual must first possess the mental capability sufficient to process distinctions in human behavior and emotion. Therefore, in accordance with this premise, a person with autism would be at a disadvantage in capitalizing on this strength as a leader. Currently, theories related to leadership focus on the transactional nature of exchange between leader and follower and the transformational nature of change associated with this style of leadership. Because of the complexity and dynamism of leadership, research related to the understanding of this phenomenon has contributed to contingency theories, or situational leadership. These theories contributed to further understanding by indicating that depending on culture, historical influence, or other factors, leaders and followers could behave in very distinct manners.

Most recently, the concept of collective, informal, and attributional leadership has flourished. This stems from the realization that followers and leaders interact and that position

does not necessarily dictate leadership. Using the definition that leadership is based on influence

provides the basis that expertise, knowledge, or decisiveness can be determining factors in

leadership. While each of the distinct theories helps to explain aspects of the leadership

phenomenon, no one theory has the ability to succinctly capture all of the influencing factors that

are associated with leadership; thus, the debate continues regarding effective leaders and what

constitutes leadership.

Due to the fact that leadership means being directly involved with leading others,

leadership and leader development are inseparably linked to theories of learning (Zhang &

Brundrett, 2010) and culture. In fact, an attempt to understand leadership without taking into

account culture or learning theory will always fall short of explaining the phenomenon fully.

Deresiewicz, in a speech at West Point, quoted Colonel Scott Krawczyk in describing leadership:

> From the very earliest days of this country, the model for our officers, which was built on
>
> the model of the citizenry and reflective of democratic ideals, was to be different. They
>
> were to be possessed of a democratic spirit marked by independent judgment, the
>
> freedom to measure action and to express disagreement, and the crucial responsibility
>
> never to tolerate tyranny. (Deresiewicz, public speech, October 2009)

This articulated concept of American officer leadership, based on the values embodied

within our national culture, helps to frame our expectations of leaders within our country.

However, while these idyllic traits work for our country, they may not translate directly to every

nation and culture. Still, this fact only augments the reality that leadership may be manifested in

a wide variety of ways, as long as the principles applied remain within the appropriate cultural

context.

Key tasks for leaders to execute in their leadership roles include the creation of a vision, sharing of a goal, conducting of group progress assessments, and managing of required resources. The very basis of leadership is to provide vision of what the future can be to others and engendering motivation to make it a reality. What distinguishes the dreamer from the leader in this future orientation is the implementation of achievable goals focused on making the intended vision a reality and the appropriate distribution of resources. Good leaders are skilled in measuring out short and long-term goals, while concurrently assessing their organizational ability to accomplish these important steps. Continual assessment is critical if leaders are to be able to make decisions regarding effectiveness and resource allocation. The resources that leaders have at their disposal to manage and contribute to the intended result go far beyond the traditional big three of money, time, and people. Great leaders, such as Jesus, Dr. Martin Luther King, Ghandi, and Mother Teresa were able to harness intangible resources, such as personal charisma, group energy, motivation, ingenuity, faith, and other factors that moved people to accomplish great things.

Leader Education

Learning and education have persisted throughout the ages. In Ancient Greece, noted scholars such as Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle utilized methods of instruction that closely match methods used in our modern-day classrooms and found in today's learning theories. Just over a century ago, interest in social interaction arose and began to be discussed and published. Maximilian Weber, a prominent German sociologist and philosopher, promoted the idea that hierarchical organization was the optimal format for governing an organization. He espoused the idea that officials needed to be experts and that distinct lines of authority were necessary for efficient processing of organizational goals. Formalized education adopted these components of

a bureaucratic organization because they fit well with the emerging need to manage education at the time of transition from the one-room schoolhouse to large school systems. The formalized educational systems that were established in the West addressed the need to mass-produce competent workers that only needed basic skills for the industrial age.

Over time, psychological and educational studies and theories of individual learning by researchers like Pavlov (1902), Thorndike (1921), Skinner (1938), Knowles (1973) and Kolb (1984) developed, each impacting our shifting paradigms of how we learn and the best methods of instruction. One of the tenets developed by these modern pioneers in learning theory was the concept that adults learn very differently from children. Knowles (1973) actively promoted this concept, claiming that andragogy is based on a set of differing principles than pedagogy. Adult learners are very much affected by their past experiences, and even their personal perception of the past has an effect on their motivation and attitude in relation to learning. Other ideas he advocated with regard to adult learners are that adults are more self-directed, their educational subjects and themes need to be related to relevant life needs, and learning, for them, is more pragmatic than for children.

As theories related to education progressed, others built on the ideas of predecessors. Kolb (1984) focused on enhancing student learning by considering themes such as engagement and learning-focused teaching techniques (Eich, 2008). Kolb's (1984) work is not the only experiential learning model available today. He worked on developing an understanding of the pattern of how people learn and then developed a learning style inventory to accompany his four-step pattern of adult learning. The instrument he developed is based on four descriptions of how learners approach learning: learners are accommodator, diverger, converger, and assimilator (Hopkins, 1993). Another popular instrument related to understanding individual preferences is

the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), based on Jungian psychology. This indicator describes

personality types and character traits (McCarthy, 2010). This well-known and widely-used

instrument was designed to help assess individual perceptions and preferences and then inform

the participant how those internal factors affect decisions. Two major components of the MBTI

are Introversion (Is) and Extroversion (Es). These terms differ from popular use in that they are

indicative of personal tendency as related to how we process information. For example,

according to the MBTI, the introvert would prefer to process information internally, possibly

retreating inward to think about meaning, whereas the extrovert would have a disposition geared

toward wanting to talk with others and explore the meaning in a more social, outward forum. As

learners, we each have learning preferences and tend to perform better when we are allowed to

operate in our optimal mode.

Experiential Learning

There are a variety of experiential learning techniques, also referred to as active learning,

interactive learning, and learning by doing (McCarthy, 2010). It is generally agreed that when

students are engaged, they learn more. What often becomes the topic of debate is what kind of

engagement is most effective and to what level students need to be involved in the learning

process. The key of experiential learning is linking learning activities to their affect domain in

order to activate deeper student learning. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is rooted in the

foundational work of education juggernauts like Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget (McCarthy, 2010),

all of whom agreed that experiential learning focuses on energizing multiple senses through

engagement. This is different from cognition-based cognitive learning theories. It is also very

different from the behavioral learning process, which completely omits conscious subjective

experience. Not only does experiential learning attempt to activate the learners' senses, it also

incorporates facets of personality, cognition, behavior, and perception. According to Kolb, as quoted by McCarthy (2010), experiential learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p.1).

The US Army has used the ideas of ELT and other experiential learning models to develop a variation that capitalizes on the strengths of the theory but also adds nuanced dimensions, calling it the Experiential Learning Model, or ELM. According to this model, the learner is engaged through a concrete experience, something that is thought provoking, related to the topic, and also evokes an emotion. How the concrete experience is applied and interpreted as a component of the ELM teaching model makes it very flexible. The concrete experience serves to trigger an emotional affect in connection with the learning process. The flexibility is derived in that the activating event can be cognitive, behavioral, or participatory. It can also be directly related to the subject but does not necessarily have to be, though concrete experiences that are related to the topic often provide learning reinforcement and therefore are recommended. Concrete events help the learner draw upon past knowledge and experience and serve as a mechanism to scaffold new learning. Still, such concrete events do not always have to initiate the learning process and can be executed at any point throughout the lesson. When it is first presented, it serves to set an essential learning condition wherein the learner is poised and ready to internalize new information. A common example that many instructors use is a media clip at the beginning of class that captures the learners' attention.

Use of concrete events to facilitate learning is directly tied to Knowles's (1973) theory that adult learners need to decide for themselves the value of the education process and information. This is especially important since adult learners tend to be more questioning, more

resentful of being directed to learn, and more concerned with the question, "How does this relate to me?" Effective use of concrete events may include videos, pictures, key words, or directing students to reflect on a time in the past that they experienced. Within this educational model, it is critical for the instructor to be able to assist students in drawing connections to the concrete event and material learned.

While the use of concrete events is a very effective teaching technique, there are a variety of other methods that can be incorporated into experiential learning. Experiential learning can be challenging to implement, since it skirts the line between training and education. Some of the ways it can be successfully implemented include the use of case study work, teamwork, constructive and developmental peer feedback, and/or the use of visiting experts or field trips. All of these ways activate multiple levels of learning and facilitate the transformation of experience to knowledge.

A variation of experiential learning that also activates and engages students is expeditionary learning, as developed by Kurt Hahn in the 1930's. He, like the other progressive educators of his time, based his premise of learning on the need for students to actively direct their own learning, using teachers merely as facilitators. In this model, the role of the teacher changes to one of advisor and mentor for students, rather than merely dictating facts, as would be expected in a traditional classroom. Personal growth is facilitated as students assume leadership roles (Woelk & Weeks, 2010) working with their peers. Also, student activities are focused on problem-solving, and the classroom atmosphere promotes cooperation, wherein students contribute (Knight, 2006). Eich (2008) references a variety of publications on college student leadership, each extolling the benefits of an experiential learning model as a productive and practical way to help students learn about leadership and process personal meaning.

Leadership Learning

Leadership is an engaging activity; therefore, learning leadership is best done through experience, not recitation of theory. True leadership "means being able to think for yourself and act on your convictions" (Speech given at USMA, by Deresiewicz, 2009). Personal leadership capability occurs through the interaction of the environment and varied events (McDermott, 2011); in so doing, new understanding is developed, and the individual increases in leader effectiveness. This means that learning to be a leader is experiential in nature, and leadership training is best suited to an experiential model, despite the fact that some teachers of leadership may find that letting students discover for themselves is uncomfortable, especially when students flounder, fail, or make mistakes in the process (Wurdinger, Haar, Hugg, & Bezon, 2007).

One of the most effective methods of learning leadership is embodied within the experiential learning model's use of personal reflection and interpretation, in that reflection of "experienced based knowledge of leadership becomes inextricably integrated with the development of one's self concept as leader" (Amit, Popper, Mamane-Levy, & Lisak, 2009). Through reflection, emergent leaders are able to digest their own cultural beliefs, the interactions of different events with others, and the outcomes. While reflection by its very nature is past tense, it serves to provide a pre-event reference point, in that by pondering past events, the individual is able to formulate future considerations for similar circumstances. Garraway and Volbrecht (2011) reference Schon (1971) in pointing out that experience without reflection is insufficient to produce a deep level of learning.

There are a variety of ways that young leaders can be encouraged or directed to reflect. One technique that can be very helpful is the creation of a leader journal. Such a journal serves

as a way to capture thoughts, feelings, and memories as related to leadership experiences and can also serve as a reminder years later. Another method is what the US Army calls an After Action Review (AAR). This process includes a formal methodology for reviewing past events. It allows all participants to share their observations and impressions and has proven very effective because it opens the floor for honest feedback and is geared toward identifying ways of improvement for future situations. A variation of the AAR is called a hot wash—it is faster, simpler and generally solicits comments related to improvement pertaining to the most recent engagement. Another method is reflection through mentorship. This method is effective because mentors are trusted individuals with perspectives based on experience. Finally, the most common methodology of reflection is to simply replay recent past events mentally and consider the good and bad of each event. In doing so, the leader-learner is able to construct connections and gain a better understanding applicable to future activities. Within the context of the ROTC program, cadet-students participate in a developmental program that helps them become, know, and do those things that will help them become effective leaders.

The US Army developed the BE-KNOW-DO mantra to help leaders remember critically important aspects of being a leader—specifically the idea that leadership goes far beyond a position or title:

BE. The first aspect covered in the leader process is related to being. It is insufficient for a leader to direct or have expectations for others that he/she is unwilling to enforce for him or herself. By living the Army values, leaders young and old are able to maintain a certain moral high ground that provides referent power and a position of authority. The key to good leadership is to BE, to embody the leadership theories, practices, and skills expected of a leader.

KNOW. Next is knowing. While leadership learning is best accomplished through experiential learning, it is still very important to learn fundamentals. These fundamentals are found in the theories of leadership and the memoirs of past leaders. Reviewing case studies and vignettes related to ethics, decision-making, and other military skills provides a reference point by which each leader can then assess him or herself, especially through reflection.

DO. Knowledge without action is wasted. The purpose of leadership is to organize others through influence to accomplish a task, often something that has not been attempted or considered before. This requires action on the part of the leader and followers. Thus, leaders must be good students of human nature, resource management, and processes in order to effectively do what needs to be done.

Leadership learning is dynamic and progressive. Leadership programs throughout higher education have devised a variety of activities and methods, all designed to enhance leader development and learning (Eich, 2008). These programs are transitioning from a Western ethnocentric model to a more global model, one that is actively aware and conscious of differing cultures. Evaluations of current programs have demonstrated that social skills, innovation, and the ability to work with others are critical, along with a modern need for technological savvy. The use of technology has not only brought distinct cultures together more than any time in world history, but technology has also created its own culture. This creation of a common techno-culture requires members to go beyond mere understanding of how to interface with programs and apps. Currently, digitally appropriate protocols and behaviors are developing as individuals interact within an expanding virtual world. Participants are currently exploring what behaviors are acceptable and which are taboo. One such taboo activity is the phenomenon of bullying. While easily identified and frowned upon in the public forum, this behavior has moved

to the internet and is known as cyber bullying, an example of the extension of a temporal behavior to cyberspace. Thus, leaders must be well versed in the dual front of technology and temporal behavior in order to be effective. Leaders in the twenty-first century must develop such skills in order to appropriately navigate the new and ever-changing landscape of a global society.

Summary

Thanks to the work of social psychologists in combination with quantitative research, a baseline of student leader development has been established, and models are available to predict growth and maturation. However, what has not been equally investigated is the internal interpretation of this change from the viewpoint of the student involved within the context of cultural influence as related to leadership development. This gap provides an opportunity to investigate further the value of experiential learning and its relationship to leader development.

The lack of investigation and published research on the process of leadership development presents a gap in the literature and an opportunity to gain further knowledge in an area with far-reaching ramifications. This requires a qualitative investigation into the phenomenon of being a student and a leader by rigorously capturing personal descriptions of involved individuals regarding their experience through systematic reduction, rich description, and discovery of the essence (Olivares, et al. 2006).

Within this gap in the research lies a host of research opportunities, including the exploration of subsets and subculture groups of students and their particular experiences, whether those students are involved in sports teams, student government and clubs, or are simply engaged students. For example, the experience of being an Army ROTC cadet-student on a traditional civilian university campus, while developing a personal leader identity through the ROTC program curriculum, includes the cultural environmental factors associated with the

experience. University and college campuses are known for their atmosphere of cultural

diversity, and to a large extent, it is this community setting that draws new students. Just by

mentioning MIT, UC-Berkley, or Liberty University, very distinct schema are activated, due to

perceptions of each school's specific emphasis, whether it be research, expression or religious

character. With the continual proliferation of technology and the connectedness that the internet

provides to students and individuals around the world, educational opportunities also continue to

expand virtually. The pervasiveness of the digital world provides a completely new frontier for

both leader development and leadership effectiveness. This translates to a wide variety of

opportunities to evaluate leader development in relation to emerging trends beyond the

traditional US Army cadet leader development program by expanding into the virtual realm. A

significant component of the digital revolution is the influence of social media and how it

continues to contribute to our collective psyche as a society in ways not previously considered;

leaders now and in the future will grapple with challenges that are both temporal and virtual.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This chapter focuses on the execution of the research through the design and research questions and explains the setting, participants, and procedures. The design utilized participants from three distinct Army ROTC programs and the use of three qualitative research sources; namely observations, interviews, and journals. Data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter with a focus on creating an understanding of leadership development and social connections of the cadet participants. Phenomenology is a realistic approach to better understand the experience of cadet leader development (Olivares et al., 2006), because it not only focuses on the perceptions and roles of various group members in the ROTC program, but also it requires the recognition that "self and world are inseparable components of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 28). By interacting through onsite observations, semi-structured interviewing, and personal reflective journaling the researcher will be able to better understand and describe the culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013, p.275).

Design

In attempting to understand a phenomenon, researchers attempt to isolate contributing factors and evaluate them upon their singular merit. Often this is accomplished through quantitative analysis methods, yet such analytics are insufficient for understanding the complexities of human experience. A transcendental phenomenological approach has been selected and is key to deciphering meaning of participant life world texts, the use of participant narratives also helped to "unveil the world as experienced by the subject" (Kafle, 2011, p. 186), and to explain insights related to the leader development socialization process. Phenomenological investigation "does not produce empirical or theoretical observations or

accounts; instead, it offers accounts of experienced space, time, body, and human relation as we live them" (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). This transcendental study focused on a Husserlian emphasis to better understand each cadets' own description of the leader development experience. The process helped to "bring out the essential components of the lived experiences" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 727) of each cadet. The design of this research centered on capturing data related to the experience that ROTC cadets have as college students on traditional campuses. This was done through a consistent, principled, rigorous phenomenological process that followed an analytic and descriptive approach to deriving meaning and knowledge (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Olivare et al., 2006). Within the study of the human experience,

> Husserl was concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences in knowledge. He believed that a sharp contrast exists between facts and essences, between the real and non-real. He asserted that, "essence provides on the one side knowledge of the essential nature of the real, on the other, in respect of the domain left over, knowledge of the essential nature." (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27)

Van Manen (1990) views the study of personally-lived experiences as the conscious description and essence of that experience, a concept inextricably connected to the subjective nature of the experience as related to the question "What is?" Therefore, phenomenology is a well-suited approach to the phenomenon of leadership development (Olivares et al., 2006). Olivare et al. (2006) sum up phenomenology as a descriptive-analytic framework logically aligned in understanding leadership development, as it is based upon personal experiences.

To augment observations and improve understanding, surveys and interviews were used as a means of gathering rich narrative material and to provide a conversational vehicle for the

interviewee to share the meaning of their personal experience (van Manen, 1990). Finally, the identified trends were consolidated and evaluated for interpretation, with the intent of deriving sufficient data to summarize how the current leader development program impacts individual leader capacity and skill set development.

Research Questions

How do participants view and interpret their collegiate Army ROTC leadership development experience?

SQ1: How do ROTC cadets describe their college leader development experiences?

SQ2: How do Army ROTC cadets view and interpret their leader identity?

SQ3: How do cadets perceive military cultural influences impacting their leader development?

Setting

The study was conducted at three distinct sites: the first location is the Swoop University ROTC Program, then the Cougar University ROTC program, which also includes an associated site at Wolverine University. These sites have been selected based on their proximity to each other and to the researcher. By using three relatively close but distinct school sites it was believed that the data collected was able to show commonalities and differences that are not influenced by geographic distinctions. All three sites have a similar population base of students and participants in the ROTC program. Within each program there is a staff of instructors that serve as the senior mentors and are responsible for meeting specified developmental program requirements and maintaining the integrity of the program. They also serve as the liaisons for materials and support from the schools. Within each of the programs the cadets are divided by their respective year in school and work and function as a team during training events.

Swoop University is set in a large metropolitan area; the school is well established and known for both world-class research and nationally-ranked sports teams. The university includes a large medical research campus and is widely known for innovative research related to healthcare, thus cementing its role as a prominent member of the community. This institution also boasts over 30,000 students. The student population is diverse and caters to a large out-of-state population, due to its notoriety and affordable pricing. The ROTC program at this university is larger than most programs and oversees another satellite program at a nearby smaller private university. This factor extends the program's influence and footprint within the community and contributes to the program's long and significant history.

Cougar University is a large-scale private institution, a traditional school with extensive research facilities. The school and the ROTC program have a distinguished legacy and attract top students and faculty from around the globe. The surrounding area includes an enclave of towns and medium-size cities, creating a semi-metro suburban corridor with close to 250,000 residents. The university itself has a population of approximately 30,000, consisting of freshmen through post-doctorate level students. The ROTC program at this school enjoys a long-established history, has strong funding, and shares the prestige with a world-class university. This program is deeply involved within the campus community and is noticeably present at key events like Homecoming, football games and has a distinct program for Veterans Day.

Wolverine University is located in a medium-sized urban area surrounded by suburbs and has an active population of over 30,000 students. The school population consists of traditional on-campus and commuter students. Due to its open enrollment and low tuition, the school draws a variety of students. Some students are attracted to the school due to lacking the credentials or the finances for more prestigious institutions of higher learning. The ROTC program at this site

is moderately sized in comparison to the other programs, and functions as a satellite program to a long-established program at another nearby university.   Despite the ROTC program being smaller than other programs, it has a strong ROTC graduation rate. This is due in part to the U.S. Army Reserve concurrent enrollment population, which is already serving in the military and then also joins ROTC.

Participants

Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) was used to select candidates who were most likely able to provide data-rich experiences and to provide a thick description of the phenomenon of being a cadet-student. Enrolled cadet students were invited to participate via an email distributed by their faculty advisors.   Between 4-5 participants were selected and invited to participate from three distinct university settings, with the intent that a minimum of at least four individuals from each site join the study. With four or more participants chosen per site, I encountered one dropping out of the study, but a previously-identified alternate was substituted. Specifying the parameters of participation as seniors who are contracted and prepared to commission created a level of convenience but was also necessary to ensure that the description provided was based on a full cadet experience, including the Cadet Leader Course (CLC). Each of the programs has roughly 100 student cadets, yet only cadet students who completed CLC and are participating in their senior year of ROTC were considered for participation. The majority of the students were between the ages of 18-24 and come from a variety of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Procedures

Data collection began following the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, which was received during the early fall of 2016. This facilitated data collection

throughout the fall semester at each of the designated sites. In keeping with qualitative research methodologies, multiple sources of data collection were used to triangulate emergent themes. The research entailed semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and journaling (Creswell, 2013). The interview process took place following observations in order to allow co-researchers the opportunity to share personal meaning and assist with member-meaning validation. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted at the ROTC site within a classroom or the campus library, which provided an appropriate meeting location at each university. Through the use of direct observation, I attempted to not become an integrated participant but rather strived to witness unbiased interactions of the participants and derive meaning through watching, rather than participation. The observations took place during one of the many programmed leadership lab times at each location. During the leadership labs, senior cadets taught and mentored junior cadets in military skills. Finally, the journals allowed participants to actively reflect upon and annotate their personal insights. The journals served as a reference during the interviews, in which clarifying information was obtained from each participant.

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary researcher performing observations, interviews, and discussions of clarification with participants. My intent was not to influence outcomes or behaviors but to garner meaning from the actors themselves. As a veteran ROTC instructor with over 18 years of Army officer experience, I brought my own worldview of military culture socialization and ROTC; therefore, I had to be cautious not to integrate or insert my own understanding of the program's nuances. That being said, having graduated and commissioned through a well-established ROTC program in 1997 and thereafter serving in various units, I have a strong

personal schema of the ROTC leadership program, and thus, I was well-suited to conduct a descriptive review of the influences of these foundational experiences.   My past experiences include both teaching at the military academy at West Point and in ROTC, which provided an added perspective in identifying subtle cultural differences in both programs, as related to the cadet experience in leader development on a college campus. Previously I worked at a similar ROTC program site, approximately 2.5 years ago. I did not anticipate that there would be any cadets at any of the sites that knew, as I was not their previous instructor.

Data Collection

A well-rounded approach was used to collect data; research included three major venues for capturing information related to the socialization of leadership and development of a leader identity by each participant in the respective ROTC programs used for this study. Each of the methods has distinct advantages and assisted in providing an overview of the attitudes, values, beliefs, and artifacts involved in the subculture studied.

Observations

The use of observations was the first data gathering method. This helped to provide some background, familiarity, and insights which assisted in the subsequent interviews.   When conducting observations, I worked to maintain a close observational stance that "involves an attitude of assuming a relation that is as close as possible while retaining an alertness to situations that allows us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations," as described by van Manen (1990, p. 69). I used both descriptive (capturing behaviors) and reflective (attributing meaning to words and behaviors) notes, organized using an observation protocol (see Appendix E) during my scheduled three-hour observation periods. Each of the identified sites with a ROTC program conducts weekly leadership labs. During these

programmed labs, the senior cadets train junior cadets on various military skills; these experiential learning sessions provide an excellent opportunity to observe social interaction, leadership dynamics, and knowledge transmission. The observations conducted during these prescribed interactive labs also helped facilitate follow up questioning during each interview.

The first observations of the leader labs were used to observe and gain a perspective of the leader-follower interactions. Subsequent observations of leader labs were used to observe differences in socialization between initial observations and to compare leader-follower interactions. These observations took place during the same semester of school. I discovered that the long period of each leadership lab was often sufficient to capture such interactions and did not require that a second observation period occur at each site, but this greatly depended on the data gathered whether it became necessary to observe a second time at a later date.

Interviews

Interviews with the participants were based on semi-structured interview process which allowed participants to freely answer prescribed prompt questions, while at the same time it created a condition in which a conversational relationship allowed for an open discussion about the meaning of their experience (van Manen, 1990). In keeping with the transcendental phenomenological interview purpose explained by Moustakas (1994), I also used the interviews to gather experiential information related to their perspective of being a cadet and student which helped me gain a deeper understanding of their experience. Following IRB approval, it was important to conduct a pilot of the interview questions with a small sample prior to execution in order to ensure that the questions were clear and solicited the appropriate information. Scripted outlined interview questions (see Appendix F) were used to identify perceptions of leader development among cadets. Scripted outlined interview questions helped to focus the

discussion, but the interviews maintained sufficient flexibility to allow participants the ability to

share their feelings and thoughts openly. The interviews were a valuable opportunity to gain

personal insight and clarify themes identified by participants and learn more about the

perceptions of leader development among cadets. The purpose of the interviews was to gain

greater information and perspective related to the central research question and each of the

subsequent supporting questions.

Reflective Journals

The collection of participant journal entries took place after the observations and

interviews were complete; this afforded each participant extended time to reflect and write down

his or her thoughts. The journal format was digital, allowing me to send reminders and

encourage the participants to be diligent in providing personal thoughts in their digital journal.

Due to the nature of individuals to forget or become otherwise occupied, a small token of

appreciation for their effort was be used to entice them to fully participate. The journaling

exercise allowed them to note thoughts and feelings on a personal basis, rather than the

immediacy that was required in the interview or observation period. This assisted in capturing

the individual voice of each participant over a period of time, not just a moment of time.

Participants were instructed to journal about their experience as a cadet and to reflect on their

personal journey as a leader on campus participating in the ROTC leader program. Periodic

checks of the electronic journal allowed me to monitor progress and content and provide prompts

as needed. The intent of this data collection method was to capture insightful information that

participants identified on their own, outside of interviews or activities. Reflective journaling

contributed to a better understanding of SQ1: How do ROTC cadets describe their college leader

development experiences?

Data Analysis

Prior to the proper and deliberate analysis of the data, organization of data through comprehensive notes with dates and locations was paramount. Essential to producing findings that contribute to applicable knowledge was the ability of coding identified patterns (Merriam, 2009) and expanding these into themes. The theoretical framework for this study helped provide a guide to describing the phenomenon. Bevan (2014) suggests that the inductive process of coding is best accomplished through bracketing participant themes by setting aside the personal attitudes and allowing the voice of each participant to emerge. Successfully accomplishing this created the capability of isolating the most relevant information, processing it in a way that provided meaning. Ultimately, the information gathered and organized can have a positive influence on other leader development programs in education.

The analysis process consisted of coding, reviewing, and computer integration. Initial reviews of participants' words and actions provided data for open coding, and further grouping of such themes through axial coding helped determine core information clustered into themes. To facilitate the data analysis some of the information was entered into NVivo$_{®,}$ a digital qualitative research program. This program assisted in data management and facilitated further connections and understanding of the information. Proper field notes were crucially important to contextualizing cultural cues related to leader development and reconstructing the experience into a narrative form with significant information (Bevan, 2014). Through the use of reduction, categories developed which helped create a descriptive narrative. The narrative was derived from a structural description that focused on describing factors related to each participant's experience. A reflexive research journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) served to help me as a researcher reflect on my observations of participants and describe meaning which was based on

the perspectives of each participant. These descriptions aided in understanding each participant's point of view within the process. Finally, personal reflection of all the data collected allowed me to assemble an "exhaustive description of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 194).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). My intent was to use a combination of criteria to achieve qualitative research trustworthiness, which was achieved through data triangulation, member checks, direct quotes, and prolonged engagement with the participants.

Credibility is a rich layered data set based on multiple sources, which is based on concurrent data collection and analysis. Credibility was established by identifying parallels between participant comments and observations, then through the use of triangulation to accurately describe reality. The dependability of a qualitative study is the ability to explain variations in the research and ensure there is a level of reliability within the database (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); it provides consistency. This was achieved through the use of member checks and prolonged engagement. By using multiple data sources such as cadet viewpoints, observations, and clarifying interviews an important level of triangulation was achieved.

Confirmability is associated with how well the inquiry and findings are supported by the collected data. The importance of maintaining an audit trail is that it allows data collection to be traced to the source and conformability is achieved; the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations can support an audit of research outcomes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of peer debriefings and proofreading helped keep the research findings objective and neutral and assisted in maintaining conformability. The depth at which this study represents the expressions

and intentions of the cadets came from the prolonged engagement process achieved on two different fronts. The first front focused on observations. The second was the analysis and use of journaling by the cadets.

Transferability was achieved through the resulting rich, thick description, allowing this study to be applicable to a wide range of applications and audiences within the realms of academia and specifically within those involved in ROTC programs. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state "it is not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability; it is his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability possible on the part of potential appliers" (p. 316).

Ethical Considerations

Regardless of the method employed in qualitative research, "social research involves ethical issues" (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012, p.1) because it deals with humans. Thus, considerations that were addressed within the IRB and throughout the study are confidentiality, security of personal data, and participation consent. The confidentiality of participants was maintained through the use of pseudonyms in order to protect individual information. Due to the use of electronics in today's research, maintaining secure digital data is another key ethical concern, one which was addressed through disciplined data management and maintenance of all electronic archives in password-protected files and physically-secured computers. Non-digital information maintained personal privacy through the use of pseudonyms and was kept in a maintained secure office space. While the idea of consent from participants is elementary, it was also important to consider the consent of all contributors during the observational phase. This includes others in the area during observations, most of whom gave consent verbally. It also relates to the ROTC programs and even the universities the students attend. Such matters were

taken care of appropriately and in accordance with university bylaws. Another ethical

consideration in research involves the management of gatekeeper expectations (de Laine, 2000).

Within educational qualitative research exists a variety of individuals that may influence the

researcher. Careful attention to such influences must be paid in order to stabilize the voice and

findings of the research. An example of such influences may include conditions set by the IRB,

or dissertation chair. It was never observed or felt that ill or malicious intent was harbored by

any of the gatekeepers, but it was, however, important to remain mindful of such considerations.

Summary

Chapter 3 outlines the tools, process, and method to be used throughout the research

study. Of great importance was the maintenance of an audit trail, reflexivity journal, the

interview transcripts, and observation notes, along with the participant journal comments.

Continual reviewing, coding, and comparison facilitated the identification of key themes and

patterns.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Within this chapter, the findings of the study are methodically identified and covered, and the sections of this chapter cover the participants, results, and summary. Throughout the chapter themes associated with the research questions are presented through the use of narrative examples as presented by the participants. The participants were senior cadets within three distinct university ROTC programs. Each of the participants contributed to the presented data by agreeing to be observed while executing leadership roles. Personal interviews followed the observations to further understand their perspectives on their ROTC leadership experiences. And finally, the participants voiced their thoughts through journaling which helped capture their views on leader development and leader identity.

This qualitative study focuses on the understanding of questions related to individual leader identity, the influence of culture, and how participants describe their leader development experience. The study helps provide information to educators and leader developers in all organizational systems. The findings based on the perspective and experiences of participants engaged in the Army ROTC program can help create a better understanding of the leader development process and enhance student leader development experiences.

Participants

One reoccurring fact across all of the participants, despite their varied lives, was that they were deeply engaged individuals. They were not just attending college and happened to be in ROTC, rather they were motivated self-starters and had personal goals in which they saw ROTC as either part of their personal plan or a way to effectively achieve their ambitions. In order to keep the privacy of the individuals, pseudonyms have been used. Often within qualitative studies researchers will attribute such pseudonyms based on aspects related to the culture of the

study. In keeping with that tradition and also to reflect the nature of the study, I have opted to use the military phonetic alphabet to represent each participant; although I did consider the use of military "Hollywood" call signs as pseudonyms for the participants' names.

Table 1

Army ROTC Leader research participant demographic information

	School 1	School 2	School 3
	Swoop University	Cougar University	Wolverine University
Male	2	4	5
Female	1	0	0
Prior Service Experience	0	1	2
Current ROTC Leader Role	2	1	2

Note. Prior Service Experience relates to having participated in military service in some capacity prior to participation in the Army ROTC program.

ALPHA

A very large, young man, he enjoyed a certain level of confidence that worked well with his participative leadership style. Alpha was a male student participating in the ROTC program through a satellite school program. He joined the ROTC program at the beginning of his college experience, and he is studying accounting. He joined the program because of his father's service in the military, and he felt that the leadership experience would be beneficial in his future endeavors. His nature and demeanor were relaxed and inclusive. During my observations, I decided he would be an interesting individual to interview because his behaviors were atypical to the stereotypical Army leader, but he nevertheless seemed quite effective. A quote he provided

that gives insight to his personal character was "never tell someone to do something you wouldn't do yourself."

BRAVO

Bravo is best described as a self-assured young woman. In her own words, she described herself as "very stubborn," confident, and "ready to fly". Because of her organizational skills and personal drive, she was selected to serve in the 2nd in command position of the Cadet leadership at her school. In observing her interactions, it was obvious that she had a caring personality but was also respected by her peers and the other 100+ cadets because of her blunt directness. It was interesting to learn from her that despite her responsibilities in ROTC she dedicated time to work as a responder for an abuse hotline. Her future goals include serving as an Army Reservist, so that she can pursue her desired profession as a therapist working with abuse victims. The sentiment I got from talking with her is that she joined the ROTC program to learn how to be a better champion for those too weak to represent themselves. Bravo described herself as kind of the mom, but went further in explaining her view, stating " I find I'm usually the leader, or at least the 'reassuring voice' in group situations…I would be the one to calm my team down and ensure that projects were completed with minimal panic."

CHARLIE

The third participant from the same school was Charlie. He was very helpful from the first time I met him. He had a more reserved and quiet personality, but from the moment we first met during my observations at the leadership lab he was available to guide me and help me find my way around. I was impressed by his maturity and military bearing. Although he presented himself as a quiet, somewhat timid individual he was quite sociable after a few minutes of discussion. I feel that one of his personal strengths was his insightfulness; he never rushed to

answer questions that I asked, but he paused and deliberated upon his responses. Charlie shared his thoughts about his own development as a leader and ROTC; "ROTC helped me develop myself and my ability to develop others, improve my command presence, helped me strengthen leadership characteristics, and helped me improve my critical thinking skills and being adaptive."

DELTA

I found Delta to be a quiet, competent individual. When I first saw him, I noticed he was surrounded by peers and was providing instructions to them. A quiet, intellectual individual, he is humble and approachable. His field of study for his undergraduate degree is in electrical engineering, and he serves as a TA for the engineering department; developing and correcting homework and course material. Currently, his goal is to attend graduate school after graduation and serve locally in the National Guard as a Signal officer. His decision to remain in school and serve in the National Guard is tied closely to his efforts to support his young wife. In his personal description, he talked about himself before ROTC and after participating; "before my ROTC experience I was definitely a very timid person that didn't really approach problems or talk to people really. And ROTC has allowed me to kind of immerse myself in the atmosphere where it forces me to be more outgoing, to take the initiative more."

ECHO

Echo speaks Portuguese which he learned while serving a two year proselyting mission in Brazil. He has also participated in an ROTC program called CULP (Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency) in which he visited Angola and served as the translator for the group. A competent individual, he holds himself and others to a high standard. This includes his efforts on campus, in the laboratory working as a molecular biologist. "Having been in the program and figuring out how to position myself and how to work with others…I really feel that even if I

don't know what's going on I could fake it till I make it and that's something that I've absolutely developed over the last couple of years

FOXTROT

Foxtrot was jovial and talkative. An avid reader of military history, he possesses an opinion on a wide array of topics. While he did not feel like he was the smartest civil engineer student in his program, he did have confidence and shared that he was more known for helping and mentoring others. He really liked people and in the course of interviewing him about leadership, stated "people aren't objects", as he explained the importance of understanding individuals. He is married to a fellow student. His concern for people came out with his statement "I like people and I care about, I generally care about people and I think that is important."

GULF

Is a young man with an easy going demeanor despite managing a very full and hectic schedule. He, like his counterparts is involved in a variety of activities; including a young family, school, ROTC and serving as a mentor in an extracurricular team called the Cannon Crew for football games. He has served on a proselyting mission in a Spanish-speaking country and felt that this two year experience provided him more than just proficiency in a second language. He felt that his mission experience provided him a unique cultural perspective and understanding of others. H

HOTEL

He was a very outgoing and patriotic individual that as a student falls into the nontraditional college student criteria based on age and family. He is married, with children and on top of school and ROTC responsibilities has a job to support his family. He is one busy guy.

But, while talking to him it was easy to see that his motivation is rooted in service: service to his family and country and service that he feels is important to contribute as a citizen. Some of the maturity that he demonstrates is not only due to his age, but also experience, he is a member of an esteemed Field Artillery unit within the Utah National Guard and has served for over seven years. His view of leadership included the idea that good leaders are good followers, "when I 'm in a following role, I give my 100%."

INDIA

India is an outgoing individual; he grew up in Utah, a state known for outdoor mountain and desert activities. He enjoys being active in outdoor activities, playing sports, and is one of six kids. He also enjoys movies and watching sports or hanging out with his three nephews. He plans to graduate in business management, enter the National Guard, and ultimately work in the business field doing marketing, HR, or sales. India's self-reflection statement was " I'd say that I've developed the ability to be in front of people a lot more. I've been pretty shy and quiet for a while, but being able to come to ROTC and learn how to be in front of people and be able to be confident in the things I say and when I'm in front of people."

JULIET

He entered college and the ROTC as an older student, having served in the Army for 6 years, during which time he deployed and served a variety of capacities. As a senior in college he found that he was very busy not just on ROTC requirements but also due to having two little girls; the oldest was four years old, and the second was one year old. He participated in the National Guard and will serve as a military intelligence officer after his graduation. He is interested in continuing his education and entering into the social services field and has considered working for Veterans Affairs. In keeping with his interest of others, he felt that

listening was a key leader attribute, stating "I'd say one key attribute is to listen. I mean not to be persuaded by other who you know have and opinion when you're trying to lead them, but actually listen deep down."

KILO

As I got to know Kilo better it became apparent that he was a serious minded individual, deeply religious, and that he consciously worked to be inclusive of others. He is a goal-oriented individual and is working to graduate this year so he can contribute to making the world safer and improving lives as a service member following graduation. It was easy to note that he holds himself to the same high moral standards that he expected others to maintain, as this was apparent by his strong work ethic. Kilo, shared that he felt that "integrity and work ethic are two aspects that help me on a daily basis" as a leader needing to set the example.

LIMA

He introduced himself as an intellectual. He seemed to have at least as many questions about the study as I had to ask him for the study. He seemed a bit disenfranchised by ROTC and the Army and expressed his cynicism generally in relation to the whole organization. Later in talking with him I found out that he had experienced challenges with enrolling into ROTC and this has soured his enthusiasm. Especially as he had been so excited to join, only to be delayed and from his point of view, "rejected". His sentiment was one of feeling like he now was trapped in a system or mindset that he did not agree with and he'd personally not be a part of if he had a choice. He was a newlywed, a senior and studying English with the aspirations of continuing on into law school. He saw himself as being an example as a leader, "on campus my leader role is being an example, especially in uniform. How to act, interact and common courtesy."

Results

Three separate data collection methods were used to collect participant views related to

leader development with the Army ROTC experience; namely these were the use of

observations, personal interviews, and participant journaling. Through the use of these three

investigative procedures the phenomenon each individual experienced developed into

informative themes associated with their leader development experience. Throughout the

process of data collection, data was sorted and organized using an open coding system. Specific

codes were developed by reviewing transcripts and captured in margin notes. This system of

summarization and synthesis provided a descriptive link of concepts and themes as they

emerged. These emergent clustered themes were then used as a benchmark across all three data

collection methods in order to derive clear, consistent themes that reflected the participants'

voices. The research questions were helpful in facilitating theme development by providing an

initial framework and helped to minimize a common problem associated with coding in

qualitative research, which is over coding or investigator bias. Moreover, the process of review

and refinement provided a foundation that allowed new interpretations, insights, and follow on

connections that emerged through the data.

Theme Development

This section of theme development helps to further explain significant themes that

emerged through the data collection process. The themes were captured through observations,

interviews, and journaling. These themes are central to the participants' leader development.

Theme 1: Leader Experience. Repeatedly participants expressed their views of the

critical role experience played in their leader development.   Specific sub-themes related to the

concept of learning leadership through experience include the following: (a) failure or failing (b)

reflection and learning, and (c) adapting. When participants were asked to consider how ROTC

had contributed to their personal development as a leader, every one of the participants used the

word experience. The pervasive use of this word across all participant members easily identified

leader experience as a main theme related to leader development. Many times throughout

interviews and journaling, personal experiences were referenced in stories using a variety of

phrases and words that related to the words leader experience (see Appendix A). My

observations corroborated this as I witnessed each of the participants functioning in different

leadership roles.

I witnessed examples of this was while watching cadet interactions during their leader

labs. I also saw the importance of leadership experiences during a training event, in which small

teams of 10 negotiated the Field Leader's Reaction Course. The obstacles of the course were

designed to test leadership and teamwork. It became apparent that some of the cadets within

each team had either seen a similar set up or previously negotiated the obstacle. Regardless of if

that individual was the designated leader, his or her experience gave referent power, and as such

he or she became involved in leading.   At times, it was very apparent who was in charge

because they were directly involved by giving verbal commands or demonstrations. But, at other

times it was subtler, in that the leader played a more supportive coaching role.

These types of dynamic leadership experiences are what each of the cadets referenced

within their journals and during interviews as part of the study. Because they experienced short

intense leader-centric scenarios throughout their four years of ROTC, they had a broad base of

leader experiences in a very condensed amount of time. One of the most important aspects of the

ROTC leader development program is providing participants continual leadership experiences,

which accelerates their leader growth and maturity. Their interactions with peers and

organizational subordinates demonstrated their ability to adapt their behaviors to the appropriate audience. Within this section are quotes and descriptions from participants related to this theme in their natural unaltered dictation, without grammatical corrections. During our interview, Alpha described his feelings related to his experience performing as a leader in the following manner:

> to me it feels, it feels good. It's a good feeling to be in a leadership position. I think it's a lot of pressure, I wouldn't say it's a bad pressure, I'd say it's like a um pressure forward presses you to go try harder, do better things. Um I'd say that's about it though um you know good pressure is what I feel most of the time. Happy when I do things right obviously um you know it's really a rewarding thing at the end of the day if you've done a good job to have a soldier say you're a good leader. Not in those words obviously, but to tell you they like what you're doing to continue what you're doing. So it's very satisfying feeling also on top of that pressure.

It was easy to see as he talked about his leader experiences that he felt pride in himself for having grown in his leadership abilities. It also was apparent that he enjoyed the challenging nature of working with others to derive solutions as a leader.

Bravo talked about her feelings on the value of performing in leadership roles despite personal challenges, because she felt being an example is so important as a leader, she shared "don't ask your followers to do what you're not willing to do…so don't lie and don't lie to yourself and deceive yourself because when the time comes that you need to be honest with yourself it's going to be really bad for you". She went on to further share a personal experience when she really wasn't sure she could physically handle participating in a team event called ranger challenge due to an injury the previous year, but was called upon suddenly to lead the

group and managed to pull through, giving herself and the team greater confidence. She further discussed the need for challenging leader development experiences in order to grow, stating "you can do things that you don't think you're able to do. Like don't doubt yourself so at least try it and if you fail you'll learn something from that experience. Don't shy away from potential leadership development experiences simply because you think you don't have the ability to do them because otherwise you're not going to grow as a person or a leader". In her journaling, she reflected on how ROTC has pushed her mentally and physically; recognizing how those challenging leader experiences had helped her to grow "as a person, an adult, and a leader." In her statements, she acknowledges the fear we often feel of failure and the associated stress. Charlie added his own view on the same topic; during our interview, he stated "before ROTC I did not really, um really, really have many experiences to be a leader" and "it was a little stressful" but he feels like it has helped him improve, "it's good to get that kind of experience" as part of leader development. I found his comments interesting, in that when we first met I perceived him to be quiet and confident. And at that time, he did personify those characteristics, but it was through his leadership experiences that he overcame the stress of leading others and developed the ability to manage his reactions. Delta explained that his leader experiences have been positive in that,

> ROTC has allowed me to kind of immerse myself in the atmosphere where it forces me
> to be more outgoing, to take the initiative more. So I think it has really helped me with
> my interpersonal tact and my confidence, helped me develop those". In his journaling,

he answered the question of how ROTC had impacted his leader development, writing the following: "ROTC provides me with the atmosphere and opportunities needed to challenge me and force me to develop myself. There are a lot of literature and programs about leadership, but

the theory without the experience is insufficient." His comment relates back to the subtheme of reflecting and learning, helping to illustrate the power of practice, not just theoretical reflection. Learning about leadership is not the same as learning leadership through action and then reflection. Echo discussed how he reflects on his leadership experiences in ROTC and the change he feels within himself. His comments are a great reflection of how he used adaptation and reflection to gain greater self-awareness, and now he feels more confident because of his leader experiences:

> Um, willingness to uh pretend to be confident. I know that sounds kind of goofy uh but you know before I started doing the program and everything it was a lot of lack of confidence when it comes to being in front of a group, being in front of a uh panel or leading anybody to do anything. I was always kind of the follower, I was always kind of that guy um one to put out hard work but never took the lead took the initiative. Um having been in the program and figuring out how to uh position myself and how to you know work with others and what not I really feel that uh even if I don't know what's going on I could fake it till I make it and that's something that I've absolutely developed over the last couple of years.

Foxtrot described his leadership experience of adapting and learning, based on ROTC leader opportunities:

> Advanced camp was a pretty huge experience for me. I went there in summer it was kind of thrown in a group of you know I think the entire brigade I didn't know anyone and I was able to see a lot of different leadership style and a lot of good leadership styles. And a lot of cadets that I keep in touch with today and people who um whose leadership attributes I'm trying to develop in myself.

He had a positive outlook on his experience despite the unknown of what might be assigned or the outcome. The experience of approaching unknown situations creates a requirement to be flexible and adaptive, both important attributes for leaders:

My perception I guess is the whole ROTC program is designed so that everybody gets as many opportunities to serve and to learn and to fail as possible. You know when we're out you know doing labs or doing a uh FTX, everyone gets switched around basically every 3 or 4 hours and everybody gets a chance to see what cadet Snuffy did worked really well but what cadet Smedlef (Snuffy and Smedlap/lef are fictitious names often used in the US Army vernacular as examples, without naming a specific person) did went over like a lead balloon. But I can learn from both experiences and in 8 hours I'm going to be in charge of doing the same thing so I'm going to adjust according to what I learned. So I think that that for me is a lot that has made ROTC a positive experience that I've got. You know I haven't really put that many hours into it, you know being a full time student it would be hard to put a ton of hours into it, but I feel like most of the time that I've put into the ROTC program has been profitable for me. I feel like I've learned stuff every time that I've gone to class and every time that I've gone to lab.

Foxtrot's view was that although he may not have been as dedicated to leader self-development as he would have liked, due to competing requirements between school and ROTC leadership, the program's design afforded him the opportunity to try leading multiple times and watch others as they functioned in leadership roles.

Gulf felt that leadership attributes were best developed through experience and shared the following, "Um one moment. Oh ok. So um they gain leadership attributes…I'd say ok here's

what I'm going to say then. They gain leadership attributes through um through experience and through uh through examples." Hotel, recognized the power of repetitive opportunities to practice leader skills and during our interview shared:

> ROTC, it gives you the leadership experience and the opportunity by repetition, if you've never gone through the experiences before um you really don't know how you're going to react in a real life situation so that's why I think it's so needed, the ROTC, you are given the opportunity to learn so that later on in your career you have a better chance at making correct decisions.

One of the profound reasons that the ROTC leader development program is so effective is due to the repetition of leader roles and responsibilities. The participants are given so many different leadership experiences during their years of participation that they achieve a proficiency level that exceeds traditional standards over the same amount of time. The best example is to compare their leadership experience to a collegiate athlete that participates in multiple competitive events and maintains an intense training cycle. Because of the sustained emphasis, both are able to hone their skills and become exceptional performers.

It is important to note that not every leadership experience is considered positive, but they all provide learning. Some of the leadership experiences that the cadets referenced were more than just challenging, they were negative. Such experiences of failure helped to solidify the important role a leader can have on influencing outcomes. India related an experience, in which he learned leadership through mistakes that were made:

> So we went to a lab and I was acting as um a 1st sergeant, cadet 1st sergeant and we went out there and I thought everything was fine you know to start going out, gosh I'm sorry I was platoon sergeant. And then what happened was I was missing a bunch of stuff and I

didn't realize I was and so when I had everything listed all of a sudden we had to spend an extra 15 minutes or 20 minutes or even longer to figure out where it was and what was going on and then we finally went out and the whole lab was kind of um wasn't as good as it could have been; you know we ran out of time on a lot of things, we weren't able to go as far as we wanted to. That was something that I learned was how important it is to be prepared and I've always been as prepared as I can be since that time and made sure I had all the stuff I needed and thought everything through thoroughly. That was something I've been working on too for sure was just being able to be prepared for things and being able to adapt as well.

The lessons learned from failure can at times be more profound than the lessons when everything goes smoothly. Kilo illustrated that with the right attitude challenging leadership experiences can also be positively invigorating:

Yeah um so at Fort Knox this summer um we were adequately prepared for um, for all the events that we were going to have, but you have a number of leadership training courses that kind of help you, immerse you with other cadets and see how you work with them or what not but I think one of my favorite experiences was with an obstacle course that we had to compete as a squad and it really kind of shows you who's a greater leader within your squad because you know it's gotta deal with communication and how clear and concise you can be in a short allotted amount of time. Um and with that where we're really able to see you know who needs to work on what and you know pros and cons of that situation but those types of experiences, and especially in the ROTC, have really given me a better understanding of how to lead properly.

In the end, he developed a stronger view of himself, because of the leader experiences he had:

I think it shows, it teaches you how to deal with stress in times where you know you have

a pressing calling or anything like that but it gives you the ability, like now I feel more

confident in myself that I know that as long as I have other people that have the same

goal in mind I feel like I know how to get my opinion across and we're able to get things

accomplished.

Lima had a very pragmatic view of how his leadership experience has been helpful "It has given me opportunities to apply in a practical situation. You can't test a leader without a person, given to lead." Throughout interviews and journaling each of the participants responded with comments related to the value of hands-on experience as a very important part of their leader development experience and the belief that leadership is gained through experience. One of the strengths of the Army ROTC program is the continual rotation of leader responsibilities among the participants and the continuous emphasis on personal leader development.

Theme 2: Mentorship

Within the study, I searched for examples and asked about the influence of mentors on their leader development. Each participant shared the important role a mentor played in his or her life in one form or another. In sharing their views on mentors, an unexpected idea was revealed. It is that the participants often had a feeling that they now had a responsibility to become a leader mentor and develop someone else in the way they had been helped. It was not a burdensome thought or feeling; rather it seemed to permeate from the idea that good leaders mentor others. And in reality, there is a lot of truth to the idea that leaders help new leaders grow. In an effort to better understand the importance of how critical mentorship is in leader development, our discussions centered on their experiences as a mentored individual. As they shared their thoughts the following sub-themes emerged for this section: (a) example, (b) caring

and understanding, and (c) support. Along with these sub-themes different words and phrases were repeated among the participants (see Appendix B). The appendix provides a graphical representation of how some of the ideas expressed were associated to certain sub-themes and to the theme of mentorship overall.

The cadets gave examples of formal and informal, distant and close types of mentors. Formal mentors are assigned, or the mentoring relationship follows organizational parameters. Whereas informal mentors are usually selected by the individual being mentored due to an attribute the mentor possesses. Close and distant mentor roles are directly tied to the proximity of the mentor to the mentored individual. In some situations, a mentor can be informal and distant and may not even be aware of his or her role as an influencing mentor. An example of this scenario is a professional athlete or celebrity serving as a role model for someone they have never met.

One of the significant observations I made related to mentorship was when I saw Bravo sitting down with a few other female cadets. It was obvious from their interaction that the others had complete faith in her as a leader. It was apparent that they looked up to her and that she was genuinely concerned about their success. She coached and mentored them prior to executing a task that would prove to be another leader "crucible" (Bennis and Thomas, 2002) in their development, one she had successfully navigated. Her actions reinforced the aspects of being a supportive, caring example in order to be an effective mentor. Of note is that not all the influential mentors that the cadets referenced were within the ROTC program. Alpha shared how he felt his father filled the role as a key influencer in his life:

> he was an enlisted corporal, he was infantry. Um he really influenced me to join the
> military. Um and he definitely is the most influential person on my leadership because I

think ROTC obviously have some affect. Cadre members and friends in the program but um at the end of the day my dad really knows how to steer me on a personal level and kind of explain it how I understand. Um so I think that's definitely brought the most influence; his ideas and…Yeah the way he lives and his morals play on mine.

Not everyone had a specific name of an individual mentor ready to share, but they did have qualities and examples. Bravo, shared the following related to qualities of a mentor:

acting like they care. Like taking the time out to just talk to you and to personally mentor you and give you encouragement. I think that makes a really huge difference. But also they know they're stuff. They really know what they're doing, they're really successful. So they don't just talk the talk they actually walk the walk.

Later in her journaling Bravo shared her view of the qualities of a mentor based on her experiences, reflecting on how mentors helped her:

Mentorship plays a huge role in leader development. In fact, if I didn't have mentors to confide in, ask advice from and vent to throughout this process, I have no idea where I'd be. It makes a developing leader feel like they have an ally through their 'growing pains'.

An important part of the mentors' influence was demonstrated in how much the individual felt he or she was cared about as an individual. Echo, goes on to say the following about an officer mentor in his ROTC program. He felt that this mentor had "really walked me through and helped me prepare for FTX and even in my personal life we've sat down and talked a whole bunch about how to deal with relationships and stuff so." Some attributes that impressed Echo was his confidence "if he doesn't know something he knows where to look it up and that's helped a lot… I feel like I can approach him about almost anything. And that is

something that I look up to." Foxtrot remembers being taught on a regular basis by his mentor the importance of him being a mentor to others; he was impressed by the responsibility to care for others; "when you really get down to it its people. Um you need to understand how to help people and how to work with people" (Foxtrot). Hotel shared his leadership experience with a mentor that influenced him by focusing on his needs:

> he was very involved in the program, um and even on kind of a one to one basis. He would go over your goals, your plans and every single PT session, every single kind of extracurricular even he was there leading the way or showing by example what a leader was.

Hotel also shared his feelings related to frustration when mentoring did not go as expected "so that's kind of been helpful, but at the same time kind of negative. I feel like I still want that mentorship; people showing us how to find these things instead of us trying to go in blind." He continued and expressed his feelings of being supported by others because of his participation in ROTC. He felt that this acknowledgement of his willingness to serve contributed to his need to be a role model to others:

> on campus um people see you all the time and in our program you wear your uniform when you're going to class, going to your classes on Fridays. And people see that and you're an example not only of you know the ROTC program but a soldier in general in the military and people see that and they look up to you and people are always thanking you for your service regardless of whether you were or deployed. If you're an ex cadet people are still coming up to you and talking to you and thank you for your service or the future service you are going into. So I think it's a, you are definitely a role model.

India, related how he felt his boss at work was a good mentor. His ability to recognize

the value of mentors outside of ROTC shows personal maturity:

> my boss of my job right now. Um she's always giving good input on whatever I need to
>
> do. She gives input on what she expects of me. She makes sure that I know what I'm
>
> doing and then she you know she gives me knew ways to do things if I, or new ideas or
>
> something that maybe I don't know what to do.

In a different twist Juliet, shared a leader experience where he felt he learned the most

from a mentor that was willing to let him learn on his own and even fail, but then provided

insights that ultimately helped him become better:

> pretty much let me fail because I didn't ask for help. Then we get into a conversation
>
> afterwards I ask why he didn't help me, he looked at me and he goes you didn't ask for
>
> help. I wanted to give you this, I wanted to tell you this but you didn't ask for help
>
> because you wanted to do it. So for me I didn't ask enough questions, I didn't look to
>
> anyone else who's done it before. I had to do it on my own. I think that's a positive thing.
>
> He let me fail even though it hurt him to watch me fail.

Juliet went on further to share how he wanted to mentor others in the same way, by being

available but not wanting "to spoon feed people" as they went through their own development as

a leader. When Kilo reflected on and answered about his leader mentor he referenced Jesus

Christ:

> Ok. Well um I uh I guess for this one not to get crazy religious or anything but I'm very
>
> involved in my religion and Jesus Christ's example from you know a biblical sense is
>
> someone that I try to mimic my actions off of on a regular basis. Um you know I'm not
>
> perfect by any means, but I think if we you know act in a manner that's good towards

others and not doing things to expect things in return. Just being you know charitable or

whatnot you're able to really get the trust and the uh involvement of others around you

and it's contagious, it really is.

His mentor example solidified the idea that mentors can come from many different facets of life.

Lima felt that his mentor was tough but "helped on how I could lead others, kind of tough

love relationship, so progress through trial." He saw "mentorship is necessary to encourage

leadership growth". Participants clearly articulated the importance of having an influential figure

serving as a mentor; whether they push, pull, or indirectly support, a mentor is a force multiplier

in leader development.

Theme 3: Character

The concept of character manifested itself in a variety of forms while observing,

interviewing, and reviewing the participants' journal entries. Many of the attributes expressed

by participants were positive in nature, but the character they described was mostly oriented

toward being a capable leader; rather than reviewing a list of values that leaders need. One

reason that they focused on personal capacity rather than discussing values is due to the

inculcation of the Seven Army Values that they simply accepted as a baseline for all leaders.

Rather the theme of character that emerged was related to being capable, not quitting, pushing

past limits, and regulating internal conflicts of emotion and feelings. Psychologist Angela

Duckworth has studied and written about such determination and coined the term "grit" as a

predictor of success (Duckworth, 2013). Some of the prominent sub-themes related to personal

character and leader development are: (a) confidence, (b) perseverance, and (c) responsibility

(see Appendix C). In the course of interviewing Alpha, he expressed his feelings related to being

accountable and responsible as a leader, referencing his belief that Army leadership is different.

He went on to talk about how he had previous leadership experiences, but that they did not create the same sense of responsibility, continuing he said, "well before ROTC the only leadership I'd ever had was in athletics, football, basketball, baseball, um, and that I think is a very different, uh leadership than the Army." One of the differences he saw was the magnitude of decisions were different in the different leader roles. He felt that both leadership roles required the leader to motivate and empathize, but that a sports leader focused on the specific short term goal of winning, whereas his role as a leader in ROTC was much more comprehensive. As he talked, he clarified what he meant by different leadership referencing the moral responsibility leaders have to others, stating:

> I don't know if anywhere else you can get something so uh, so much dedicated leadership you know. To have subordinates be so dedicated to your word and um, your ideas and morals kind of thing. So I'd say ROTC, it really has taught me that a different kind of leadership.

He continued to share his thoughts on having the confidence to be a responsible as a leader:

> being mature about your life and what you have to do and um acting like an adult you know above because it you know people get old, you know older and sometimes they don't get more mature. But I think leadership; leaders should be mature people who can really handle themselves.

Alpha then concluded his comments related to persevering as a leader of character:

> it's been so engrained in you what correctness looks like that uh you it really becomes just a part of you because of those 4 years you've just you learned what right should look like and what wrong looks like and you just don't you don't do it if it's wrong.

The comments made by Alpha help to demonstrate how he views himself as a leader. His leadership experiences have helped him mature and now he has that same expectation of other leaders. He recognizes the difference between his past leadership experiences and the ROTC ones, referencing "what right should look like;" his right is based upon his experiences within ROTC, framed within a military paradigm. His discussion of what a responsible leader is like is in essence his affirming reminder of how he sees himself as a leader.

As Bravo described her experiences, she related feeling completely lost during the initial stages of her leader development process, but with time and effort, as she describes herself "I'm very stubborn even if I'm really struggling through something I will see it to the end…that really helped me develop as a leader overall." Now at the conclusion of her preparation, she is poised to graduate and has a completely different viewpoint, "I feel like I've um, prepared myself as well as I possibly can now so that I can tackle the future." Within her reflective journal writing she wrote about the confidence that she now has, "I'm much less timid, particularly in comparison with other females. I'm not apologetic about my opinions or knowledge, and I often take the initiative to speak or present an idea where others don't." She has a positive mindset despite her sobering realization that she will be put into challenging situations and shared her thoughts on her future leadership responsibilities, as such:

> that you do come to understand later in your ROTC career essentially that you are going to have soldiers' lives on your hands. And it is extremely important that you become a leader and you live the Army values in all aspects of your life…I think a lot of people don't realize that what we're doing is going to have huge impacts on our country and on other people and we're gonna have huge responsibilities.

Her confidence that she will be successful in her leader responsibilities is founded on her determination to live the Army values and diligently serve to the best of her ability.

Charlie felt that "ROTC helped me understand organizational leadership, which helped me when I had leadership positions in different clubs and with my church." He felt empowered and responsible to use his knowledge of leadership principles in settings outside of ROTC. Charlie's application of leadership across different parts of his life shows that he has adopted a leader persona character that he applies across different roles in his life, not just ROTC. As Delta reflected on his own growth and experience he recognized a change in his personal confidence that developed through working through leadership challenges, while he did not use the words resilient or confidence he described this thoughts and feelings he experienced as such:

> Definitely I was a little timid, a little fearful because I didn't know how things were ran or how it functioned. I was definitely uncomfortable at first just cause I was very unfamiliar with it, but as time progressed and I began to see how the camp functioned I began to feel more comfortable in that situation. And that allowed me to actually perform better from the end than I did at the beginning. I think it's helped me want to uh allow myself to adapt faster in situations that I'm unfamiliar with because it helped me know what I need to do in order to thrive better in that situation. Um I would say I probably, it also helped me to be able to work under unfamiliar well hmm, how do I say this? I've learned to work better when there are more unknown variables or unknown circumstances.

Echo listed confidence, resiliency, and the willingness to lead from the front as key attributes any leader needs to be successful. And Foxtrot expressed his feelings that leadership is not always

fun or easy, but that maintaining a positive attitude has an indelible effect on how a leader reacts in tough situations:

> I think I'm a little bit tougher than I was before and I'm able to kind of do a better job at kind of sucking it up. If I'm not having fun, if I'm not enjoying myself I think that applies to whether its academics or whether it's you know whether if you're out in the woods and dripping wet and you're just you know you want to be done I'm able to kind of suck it up and drive on a little more effectively. And I think that's one of the biggest things that I've noticed that's changed through my years in ROTC.

He also shared that he felt it was very important for leaders to value others, having a "need to recognize the humanity in others and recognize that of course other people are fallible but other people are also you know human beings, they have great potential and frequently they'll have great ideas," not taking them for granted. He then related a personal story that had a very strong impact on him as he reflected on his behavior and attitude and its effects on others:

> Alright in advanced camp I was a squad leader. Uh we were moving out, we were just, uh not really important what the mission was, but we were going to make a movement and then we were going to stay in place overnight. Um and I paid attention during every single brief and we went over the plan and we did you know sort of map rehearsal and when we got to the location everything fell apart. Whether it was my fault or whether it was someone else's fault. I'm not entirely sure. I know afterwards there was plenty of blame to throw around, but mistakes were made. Um and things kind of fell apart and just my almost complete lack of humility and partially because of tiredness and partially because I was sick and tired of weather among other things. Lead me to kind of act in sort of a flippant way or to my platoon leader which was you know I never really got yelled at

for it but I felt very, very badly about it um until I had gone to that guy, gone to that cadet

and I apologized and got things ironed out because there was really no excuse for it. Um I

first off I acted in way that wasn't appropriate and didn't help at all and it didn't fix any

of the problems and uh that I think showed me that I wasn't as strong and I wasn't as you

know humble or teachable as I needed to be and kind of shook me up a little bit. I said

hey you still have a crap ton to learn if you pardon the French sir. So I think that's

something that still sticks with me. That caused me to check myself am I acting like a

tool again or am I alright.

His review of the situation has caused him to consider his responsibilities as a leader in a

follower role and how his demeanor is directly associated with his leader character.

When discussing key attributes of a good leader Gulf was very concise, citing the need

for leaders to be confident, competent, and have charisma and character. As he described a

recent personal experience, he felt he embodied these attributes in the scenario, he related "Um I,

and this may sound somewhat prideful, but I feel like outperformed the majority of students in

that class who were also presenting their research because of my leadership experiences in the

army ROTC." India demonstrated a similar level of confidence but added his view that leaders

need to continue to learn and have a responsibility to continue their development as a leader:

being able to learn and wanting to learn and just to know that you're not the perfect

leader, you're not the perfect person…always willing to change your style you need to,

like your leadership style so that you know you're continuing to improve.

Confidence is important, but like all characteristics an overemphasis of one attribute over another

can lead to imbalance. Juliet admitted to feeling frustrated at times when others seemed to

question him despite his confidence:

um I'm very confident in when I say something now. It's almost to the point where I

sometimes get upset when people don't understand what I'm trying to say or they don't

trust what I'm saying. I very much trust in my leaders above me, so I put that trust in my

subordinates.

Another strong character attribute that Juliet felt he possessed was perseverance. He

explained how he felt his determined mindset was a character strength, "I never fail in my head;

like yeah I fail tasks, but I always learn from that task so the next time I test it I'll complete it."

Kilo saw character as important to leadership and because leader development is an ongoing

process, "you have to be tough skinned and be open minded, because no one is perfect when they

come into any leadership position." His perspective reflects a leadership perseverance that is

consistent over time, "as a leader you're are always learning and you're always, um, getting a

new perspective." Lima supported this concept of perpetual learning, sharing his belief that

leaders need to have a certain level of humility in order to learn.

Research Question Responses

Within this section are responses by cadets related to three supporting questions on

leadership experience, identity, and the impact of the ROTC military culture. Their responses

illustrate how they view themselves as leaders and their personal interpretation of their

experience in Army ROTC leader development.

SQ1: How do ROTC cadets describe their college leader development experiences?

Cadets describe their leader development experience through stories of significant events

that had a strong effect on their leader psyche. Some of the leader experiences were positive and

some were not, yet all left a lasting impression. The short story that Alpha related, describes

questions he had about himself as a leader and his personal leader abilities. He questioned,

whether his experiences were sufficient to help him in novel situations. In his own words, Alpha described how he is currently using his leadership skills from ROTC at a local Reserve unit, and has realized that his previous experiences provide a strong foundation for success:

> the best leadership experience I have had is as a SMP cadet, um, simultaneous membership program. I'm in a platoon of about 22 people um and our platoon leader left uh last month so I've been the stand in platoon leader as a cadet. I can't do all the paperwork and things but it's a real world experience of being a leader.

Field training experiences was noted by several cadets as a key vehicle used in ROTC to provide cadets opportunities to take charge. The field training events are unscripted, dynamic, and require participation by practicing active experimentation of leader principles. These leadership experiences were some of the most salient for cadets because they required constant adaptation and had a real potential of failure. Delta noted that one of his:

> biggest opportunities to develop myself was when I went to advanced camp during the summer. That for me that situation I wasn't comfortable with, but allowed me to know myself better and also to get feedback from um from people who have never known me before and so they were able to see a different side of me and a perspective that helps me evaluate myself also to learn and grow.

Leader experiences that were unfamiliar helped cadets like Kilo work and grow in new ways:

> So at Fort Knox this summer… you have a number of leadership training courses that kind of help you, immerse you with other cadets and see how you work with them or whatnot but I think one of my favorite experiences was with an obstacle course that we had to compete as a squad and it really kind of shows you who's a greater leader within your squad because you know it's gotta deal with communication and how clear and

concise you can be in a short allotted amount of time. Um and with that where we're really able to see you know who needs to work on what and you know pros and cons of that situation but those types of experiences, and especially in the ROTC, have really given me a better understanding of how to lead properly.

The power of mentorship in leader development was expressed in a variety of ways. The examples given by the cadets helped to confirm theoretical concepts such as scaffolding by Vygotsky (1978) and social learning by Bandura (1977). Charlie felt that the instructors were key to his leader growth experience, "our cadre are really helpful, they kind of help us, they teach us leadership theories, give us sound advice." While Foxtrot recognized the valuable power of peer mentoring as part of his experience in ROTC:

I certainly kind of turned to people that I knew had um expertise on certain things. There were several cadets who were prior enlisted. There were other cadets that were National Guard or SMP cadets and it was really valuable for me to be able to work with those people.

The value of experiencing challenges and failure was noted by each of the participants. Bravo describes it as:

Tripping and falling on your face. I think making mistakes is huge. Um in ROTC there tends to be a lot of judgement between cadets as far as like oh this person doesn't know what they're doing and they're making all these mistakes, but if you're gonna make them… if you're not going to make the mistakes now I would rather you make those mistakes now than make then in the field when you're actually like on deployment or something and you have soldiers' lives on your hands.

Other cadets agreed that ROTC provided "the opportunities, opportunities to fail, to learn" (Hotel), and Juliet related how even in failing leaders learn "most people fail in their own minds, but they don't realize they pass. They succeed the mission, they get everything done" and although not perfect the experience contributes to their development as a leader.

SQ2: How do Army ROTC cadets view and interpret their leader identity? A variety of descriptions were used by cadets to convey their views related to the question of leader identity. Character was the common theme, and confidence to act as a leader surfaced as the top attribute. The majority of the cadets referenced confidence directly, with statements like "key attributes of a leader, uh, confidence," (Echo) or "be able to um, be confident in the things I say," and "I feel more confident in myself" (Kilo). Others discussed confidence in general terms, "know yourself and know what kind of leader you want to be and decide and once you make that decision follow that decision" (Alpha). Bravo shared an experience when she initially felt unprepared and afterward gained confidence in her accomplishment and closed her thoughts with:

> I can keep calm in potentially stressful situations um and that I'm a lot more able to like step out of my comfort zone. I'm very ok. Like maybe I don't know what I'm doing in this situation but moving forward I know that I can tackle situations that are somewhat ambiguous or unknown.

Charlie's confidence and character as a leader permeated his interactions outside of ROTC, "I feel like I have to lead by example and can do everything right, so everyone else can kind of, um, model themselves off me."

Observations of the cadets as they functioned in different roles demonstrated their confidence as leaders. Their perception did not extol superiority to their fellow students and

peers, rather they recognized that because of their exposure to a leader development process in the ROTC program that they were more practiced, very similar to the difference between someone who plays sports and someone trains on a competitive team. Delta provided the following example:

> So I think the biggest way I see myself as a leader pertains to my job as a teacher teaching assistant on campus. ROTC teaches you; you begin to identify the purpose of the leader or the effects of the leader and why it's necessary. And I've seen this on numerous occasions in group projects or just in my work where there needs to be something done and people are hesitant or it seems like people are hesitant to tackle that problem or that difficulty. And really all they need is somebody to step up and to start organizing something even if it's very simple. And I think ROTC has helped me become aware of those situations in where there's a lack of leadership.

Delta further described differences in his experiences related to leadership. He felt that in scouts "the adults really decide on everything" but that in ROTC he experienced he learned "how to actually have effective relationships." Within their leader identity some cadets referenced their role as a leader being centered on service to others; "I kind of realized that you know, you should help people even if you don't like them" (Alpha). From a journal entry, he further explained his transformed view of leadership:

> I see leadership now as a practice, as before I did not. Before ROTC leadership to me was just a position to someone now I see leadership as a trait that someone has. I consider myself a leader in everything I do, I see a leader as a contributor to a group and someone who can make decisions and steer a group onto a successful path.

Foxtrot, identified his role as a mentor, while at the same time recognizing that he had areas of improvement as a leader, "I guess as a mentor for classes I feel like I'm able to do some leadership…I definitely feel like I have strength and weaknesses."

SQ3: How do cadets perceive military cultural influences impacting their leader development? The cadets were completely aware that through their participation in ROTC they were preparing for a uniquely specific career within the military. In our discussions about culture they shared more about their awareness of the impact different cultures have on situations as a leader and focused much less on the impact of the military culture on their leader development. In observing the cadets, it was obvious that they had inculcated the military culture. Their use of "Sir and Ma'am," how they stood, the uniforms they wore, and the ever present sense of urgency all suggested that their leadership style was impacted by learning leadership in a military setting. The participants did not seem to perceive a military slant on their leadership due to their responses about culture being so general and their behaviors so specific. This indicates that their leadership experience in ROTC was so ingrained, that for the most part they were not conscience that their leader perspective was based on a military leader mindset versus a general leader mindset.

When participants considered the impact culture has on leadership, they shared strong beliefs of its importance and interesting personal stories about their experience with cultural influences as a leader. Through ROTC, Bravo had the opportunity to travel and work within a foreign military culture:

in Madagascar this summer, I had the opportunity to work with the Malagasy military. In particular, I worked with the officers. Their leadership approaches differed dramatically with ours. For example, they tended to take much more passive roles. Also, the

Malagasy concept of time is very different than ours.   As leaders, they don't feel the same time pressures that leaders in the U.S. military do.

Through her ROTC leader experiences Bravo has adopted viewpoints related to time, effort, and leader quality. Her comments about good leadership illustrate this, "good leaders have the power to inspire" and "I know what I value in a leader and what I don't respect." Her ROTC experience has had a direct influence on her expectations and perceptions of leadership. Charlie's views on organizational culture also demonstrate cultural norms that he has learned in ROTC. He has noted differences of organizational culture within the Army, "I've see combat arms, and their leadership styles are much more authoritative. In the Reserves, the culture is more laid back" (Charlie). His ROTC leader education and observations contribute to his viewpoint of the military.

Other cadets recognized the power cultural influences have on groups whether informal or formal groups such as a military unit. Echo related this effect, stating:

You know, the cultures influence everything from who we act to how we speak to, uh, what we do every day. So working with a large group of people and in effective leadership you have to be cognizant of culture. I'd say 100%.

Kilo's comments of culture and his ROTC experience, serves as a great summary of his personal viewpoint:

I think that's a great attribute the ROTC has. You know you learn about different cultures and how important it is for customs and stuff in other countries. You know we gently touch up on key leader engagements and what those are but I think culturally um you become very diverse in the fact that you respect other people's

freedoms. Because that's what you are fighting for, um and that's what you know

everything kind of stands for that you're in.

Summary

Throughout the leader development study participants shared stories of their leader

experiences and viewpoints. Observations coupled with reflective journals from the participants

provided an augmentation to the narrative of the phenomenon of leader development within the

ROTC program. In the process of methodically analyzing the narratives of participants a variety

of loosely connected categories emerged.   Subsequent analysis of these categories gave way to

consistent clusters of related themes on the importance of experiencing leadership, having a

mentor, and developing leader characteristic throughout the leader development process. This

helped to provide a greater understanding of the central research question of how participants

view and interpret their collegiate Army ROTC leadership development experience.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The aim of this study was to generate a greater understanding of how college Army ROTC cadets interpret their leader experiences while developing a leader identity. A Husserlian phenomenological philosophy was the guide in taking into account the unique descriptive experiences of each cadet in the study. This chapter contains six distinct sections beginning with the overview and then followed by a summary of the findings as they relate to the central question of participant views of leader development and each of the supporting questions. The discussion portion of the chapter is dedicated to the findings in relationship to the theoretical frameworks reviewed earlier in Chapter Two. The final three sections discuss implications of the findings, delimitations and limitations of the study, concluding with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The research questions of this study were designed to support the central research question: How do participants view and interpret their collegiate Army ROTC leadership development experience?

In an effort to better understand the central research question, supporting questions were developed to inform significant aspects of the leader development experience. Using, SQ1: How do ROTC cadets describe their college leader development experiences? Cadets were questioned in a variety of ways during the interview process and in journaling prompts about their thoughts on leader attributes, mentorship, and leader development. A recurring theme that each of the participants shared through their stories, testimonies and reflective statements, was that the Army ROTC program had provided critically important experiences that helped them develop as a leader. Each of the participants noted that experiencing success and failure with authentic

mentor feedback was more impactful than simply learning about differing leadership theories. One of the reasons the impact was so great on their leader development was the fact that they had their own personal leader experiences to reference rather than esoteric vignettes from others. Many of the cadets shared memories of difficult and challenging situations. Yet, despite these rough times, they felt that their overall leader development experience had been positive and helped them to become a better leader; influencing quite a few of them to extend that leadership to other facets of their life.

In review of SQ2: How do Army ROTC cadets view and interpret their leader identity? One prevalent perception that ROTC participants referenced was the magnitude of their decisions as leaders in the Army. This idea is deeply influenced by the military culture within their ROTC experience. They espoused the concept that their leader development was more impactful due to the potential consequences of being a leader in the Army rather than in a corporation or school setting. The predominate thought was that as an Army leader, the very lives of others are in their hands, in that decisions made by ROTC graduates could in fact cause another to die. While this is absolutely a reality of service in the military, investigation would demonstrate that leaders at all levels and all organizations make decisions that have significant effects on the lives of others. Their perception did not adequately take into account that leaders outside of the military also have to make a tough decision with life altering effects. Some examples are: a manager that must terminate an employee or a school official that must withhold a graduation diploma. While these are often not directly associated with life or death, in the way a military battle plan is, such decisions do impact the livelihood of individuals. In fact, a loss of job or lack of education can have serious effects on the quality of life for individuals for years.

The question of how military culture impacted the participants' views on leadership was addressed in the following SQ3: How do cadets perceive military cultural influences impacting their leader development? It was noteworthy in observing and talking with cadets in interviews how deeply they had adopted the military mindset, despite limitations of their ROTC participation due to life as a full time student. Although the cadets did not directly profess their transformation of mentality, the terms, phrases, and descriptions they used were all indicative of a military mindset. Of interest is the different approach that military basic training programs and the military academies have in developing a military identity through intense focus, in contrast to the ROTC programs where it seems to achieve the same mindset despite being a minority on their respective campuses.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the study findings in relationship to both empirical and theoretical literature within Chapter Two. By using systematic data collection methods to develop accurate knowledge, the theories referenced in chapter two were validated through careful descriptive observations of the phenomena (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010).

Empirical Discussion

The research and findings within this study provide support that leader development can be effectively conducted through a program of instruction. Vygotsky (1978) held the view that learners are active participants in their learning when provided a supportive social context. The participant statements in this study support Vygotsky's (1978) theory. Their comments demonstrate the value of being active participants as they described the importance of experience as a leader, with statements like "I would say that experience was really helpful so I can you know, become a better leader" (Charlie) and "real hands on experience" (Echo) was more

impactful than theoretical learning. Participants also confirmed the importance of mentors in creating a supportive environment. Key quotes such as, "mentorship played a huge role" (Bravo) or "people need someone to compare their leadership to" (Charlie) help to articulate this common theme. Mentorship has been identified as important in many other studies. What adds to the importance of understanding related to mentorship is the that cadets found mentorship from peers as helpful as those senior themselves. Often mentors are considered to be in a position of superiority, but in the study time and again the most significant and authentic mentorship was derived through peer interaction and feedback.

Another key finding of this study is the strong relationship between the development of a leader identity and self-reflection. In chapter 2, previous research on identity was based on considerations that individuals have personal identities related to social roles. This concept was confirmed by the participants as they recounted their leader development experience within the context of ROTC. But, theories by Tajfel (1982) and Stryker and Burke (2000) focused on an identity in relation to a role within a social context. The findings of this study demonstrate that while the participants did in fact develop their identity within the social context of the ROTC program, they did not confine their leader persona to that single context.

Throughout the study participants shared data related on how they grew in character, by gaining confidence through leadership experiences. The ROTC program used the Seven Army Values as a basis to help military members have a common reference with regard to values. The seven values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal courage and spell out the acronym *LDRSHIP*. It was very apparent that the cadet participants all had adopted these basic values early in their leader development process, to the extent that they simply took them for granted as common and requisite leader values. With this basis, their

growth in leadership and a leader character was significantly more advanced and mature than what would generally be expected of peers in the same age range. With each leader experience, they internalized a lesson about themselves as a leader; they crafted an internal schema through a self-identification process described by Schlenker (as cited in Klenke, 2007). Avolio and Gardner (2005) use the concept of authentic leadership to focus on the deep sense of self and self-awareness associated with mature leaders. The phenomenon they experienced, contributed to the creation of an internal schema which I call their leader psyche. Charlie's declarative statement, "I consider myself a leader in everything I do" perfectly captures the essence of arriving at an internal leader psyche. Once each cadet developed his or her own leader psyche he or she no longer depended on the social construct of ROTC to provide the role of being a leader, rather they transported their self-image as a leader to all social contexts and situations. This is to say that initially they were dependent on the social role of being a leader to provide them the scaffolding to grow, but once they adopted the mindset that they were a leader, their confidence and leader psyche permeated all settings in which they engaged. Once they "became a leader" in their mind they never stopped being one. It is who they are, an innate fact and part of their current life. Once adopted they simply adapt to the appropriate role or situation, whether they are designated as the leader or not, they maintain their internal leader identity within their psyche.

Theoretical Discussion

The system employed within ROTC for leader development actively uses mentored progression; in that senior leaders assist novice leaders often modeling desired behaviors. This methodology is founded on the idea that leadership is a learned behavior and is not due to specific biologically based traits. Social Learning Theory as developed and described by

Bandura (1971) focused on environmental influences, specifically modelling social and cultural cues that are imitated. This study found that the principles of a socialized process (Bandura, 1971, 1977, 1986) were identifiable through observation and within the comments of cadet participants. A particular example was observed during a briefing. Three of the senior cadets stood at the front of the room, arms folded and quiet while their peer spoke. This cued everyone else that they should also stand quietly and listen, and some even folded their arms in the same manner. Bandura with colleagues Ross and Ross (1971, 1977) tested the power of modeling in 1961, using the now famous Bobo doll experiment. They concluded that observational learning is powerful. While Bandura's experiment focused on learning patterns of children, the implications derived by witnessing college age students learning more complex cultural norms through similar methods adds novel information to the extent that modeled behavior influences our learning.

Vygotsky's (1978) belief that social context has an impact on internalized learning is also supported by findings within this research. The concept of a zone of proximal development was (1978) postulated that learners could compensate for the gap between their actual developmental level and their potential through the guidance of capable peers.

During one of the observation periods, the cadets prepared to leave on field maneuvers. Although instructors and cadre were available, their absence during the packing and preparing phase was noticeable. Instead, what was noticeable was the very concept theorized by Vygotsky (1978) as it was employed. Specifically, the more senior cadets walked around and showed and taught the junior cadets how to pack their equipment efficiently and provided encouraging words of wisdom based on their previous experiences. Other similar observations and data gathered further support the Vygotsky's (1978) theory and its application in leader development.

Implications

The findings of this study provide practical, theoretical, and empirical implications. These implications when taken into consideration can serve as a roadmap of leader development.

Practical Implications

Based upon participant views, a very important and practical application to any leader development program is the opportunity to experience the stressors of leadership to include failure. Stress is a powerful force in learning because of its physiological and emotional impact which contribute to deep impressions and long lasting learning. Donald Meichenbaum (1985) contributed to the development of a cognitive-behavioral approach called stress inoculation training. This training is often applied in the military, law enforcement, or other fields that can expect the need of high performance in stressful environments. The training consists of developing resiliency through a series of successfully managed exposure to stressful events. The ROTC program does exactly that, by providing participants real scenarios to practice leadership, gain experience, develop self-confidence, and gain stress resiliency without life threatening consequences.

Equally important is setting time aside to digest leadership experiences, and allow emerging leaders the ability to reflect as part of the process. The importance of reflection enhancing leader development is shared by Day (2001) with the statement "leadership development is enhanced to the extent that structured opportunities for individual and group reflection are included as part of action learning" (p. 603). There are a variety of ways leaders can reflect, whether through journaling by providing a notepad or tablet to capture ideas and feelings, or group discussion centered on reviewing certain scenarios, or simply providing

dedicated time to introspectively digest their leader experiences. It is the act of reflecting on leadership experiences not the method that is critical to the creation of a leader persona. The implication is that quality leader development programs need to incorporate these two critical components. Programs focused on leader development need to provide an environment for learners to experience and then have time to review, if deep learning is to occur. Going further, it may be inferred that programs related to leadership that do not involve experiential learning or provide sufficient emphasis on reflection may not adequately meet a threshold sufficient to produce quality leaders.

Theoretical Implication

Administrators of leader education programs whether in industry or education need to evaluate their programs based on the effectiveness of incorporating components of social learning theory and the experiential learning theory. The principles of active experimentation and of reflection are critical to leader growth and are found within the construct of experiential learning. Passive learning methods such as reading or listening are insufficient as stated by participants of the study. The use of an experiential learning approach in leader development may help students see the relevance of lesson material and increase motivation because of engagement. (Ambrose, et. al., 2010). The findings of the study provide support of sociocultural development theories like Bandura's (1971) social learning theory as impactful to leader development programs. One of the key tenets of this theory is the idea of modeling. By engaging novice leaders with strong, caring role models, the developing leaders have a ready reference to emulate. Such theories can help inform leader development programs by providing an outline of fundamental components necessary for successful leader growth and create a greater impact.

Empirical Implication

Colaizzi (1978) is credited with formalizing seven steps in the phenomenological research process. This empirical process achieves an exhaustive description, by aggregating theme clusters, extracting significance, and returning transcripts to participants for review (Edward & Welch, 2011). Through the use of a well-established phenomenological qualitative research method, results validate participant experiences related to leader development. This study shows that participants are impacted by their participation in the Army ROTC leadership program. They develop as leaders through experience, mentorship and reflection. The findings further demonstrate that not only can leader development be appropriately studied using qualitative methods but that other social science phenomenon can be too.

Delimitations and Limitations

Within every study there are parameters that must be taken into consideration. Such limitations and delimitations are discussed more fully in this section.

Delimitations

Key delimitation factors associated with the target population are related to each participant's status as a cadet. ROTC is a four-year program, in which the first two years can be considered exploratory; during those years, participants do not have to be contracted. This study focused only on cadets within their senior year, having completed the initial years of the program. Such a focus ensured that participants were contracted, have completed the Cadet Leader Course and had been in the program sufficiently long enough to have experienced the personal growth associated with participation. Senior cadets also have a more robust experience to draw upon than more junior cadets; as they reflect upon their leadership, school and personal experiences. This study was specifically focused on Army ROTC cadets, rather than cadets in

general, which could have included Navy and Air Force ROTC participants, as those programs also have cadets. The study was conducted exclusively in Utah, involving cadets from three universities.

Limitations

Some of the limitations are related to the generalization of the findings. While the research produced rich qualitative information based upon personal perceptions and experiences, this information is based on the limited participant sample. With the variety of collegiate settings across the United States nearly an infinite number of variations is created that could change results, confounding the ability to derive the same results with a replication of the research. The study design creates other limitations often associated with qualitative research. Such as the potential of a lower level of credibility to those not familiar with such a study, or of researcher bias. Having studied, taught, and lived leader development both as a former cadet and throughout my military career, bracketing my personal perspectives/biases related to leader development was critical. This was necessary to minimize impact on interactions with participants, and the manner in which data is collected and interpreted.

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Recommendations for Future Research

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Considering the topic of leadership and in consideration of the findings of this study, there are multiple options and directions for future studies on the subject of leader development. Conducting a case study is one recommendation for further research on the topic. A qualitative case study is well suited for the evaluation of leader development; through the use of focused questioning it would be possible to achieve theoretical saturation (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010).

Another opportunity is based on a limitation of this study. The focus of this study was on students within their senior year in college and preparing to graduate after participating in the

ROTC program. This limitation provides the opportunity to expand a similar investigation into Army ROTC university programs conducted over time. A longitudinal study of subjects over the full four years would provide deep insights into participant leader growth and development. Such a study would capture and help illustrate the developmental process of participants. Another related possibility with a simplified method would be to investigate involved students at each level of the process. This method would provide a cross section of experience, but it would be limited to the snapshot of time when the investigation occurred. Whereas, using the same participating individuals all four years would accentuate the rich description of each individual as he or she progressed in personal leader development.

Lastly, using the same study but expanding it across students in different leadership roles across campus would provide further insight into the student leader experience. Such an investigation might prove to be more relatable educational leaders due to the variety of experiences evaluated.

Summary

This study presents qualitative evidence that the Army ROTC leadership experience is unique, effective, and functions harmoniously with theories of socialization. Participants openly shared their personal perceptions and experiences related to their individual leadership journey and the development of a leader psyche. Their narrative provided important data used to discover patterns related to the phenomenon of leader development. Personally, I learned new insights related to the process of leader development and have come to a better understanding of my own development as a leader.

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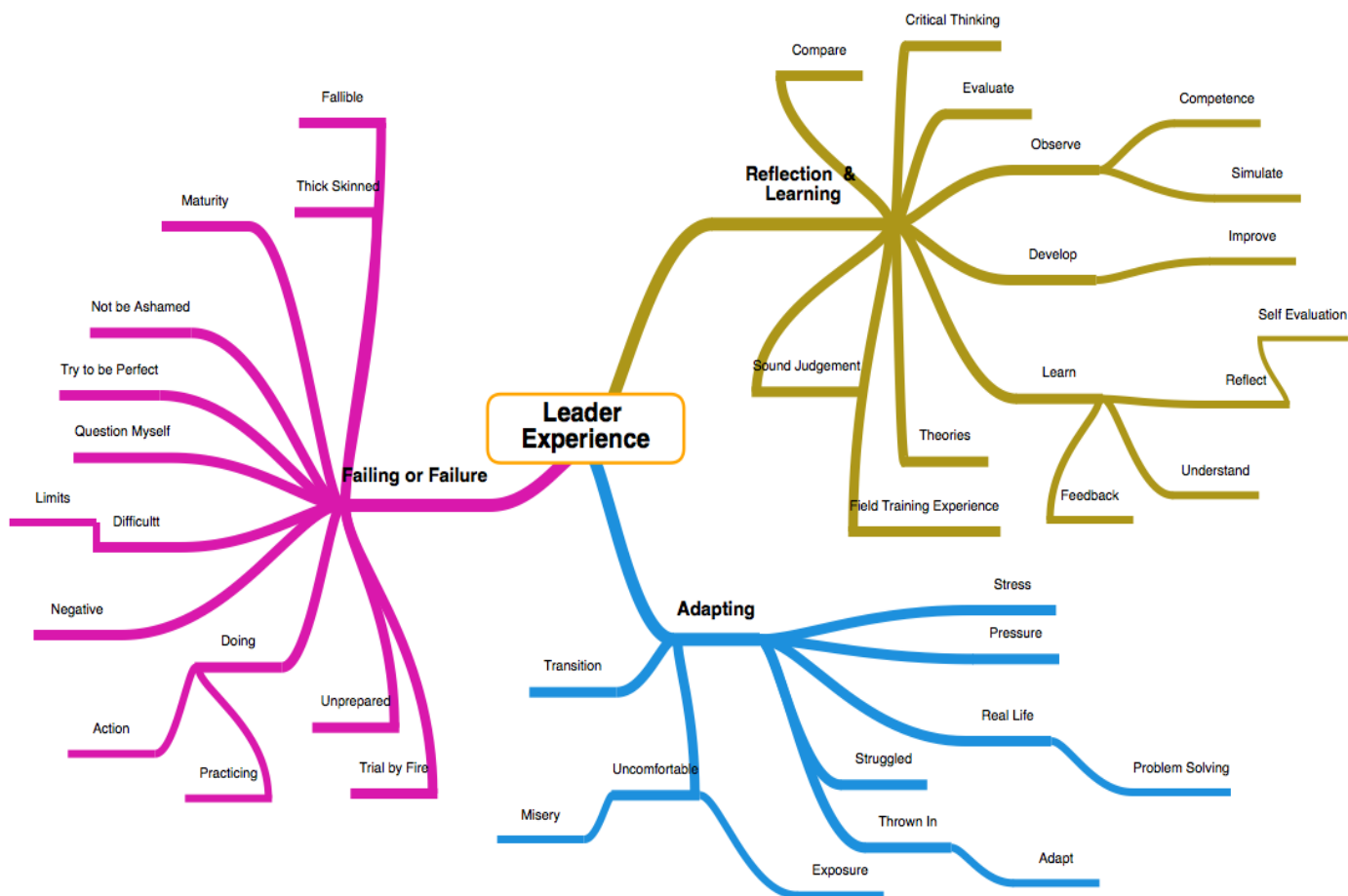10.1177/1365480207078048

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Figure 2. A graphical depiction of terms selected through the coding process; representing the words and phrases used by participants that yielded the central theme of leader experience.
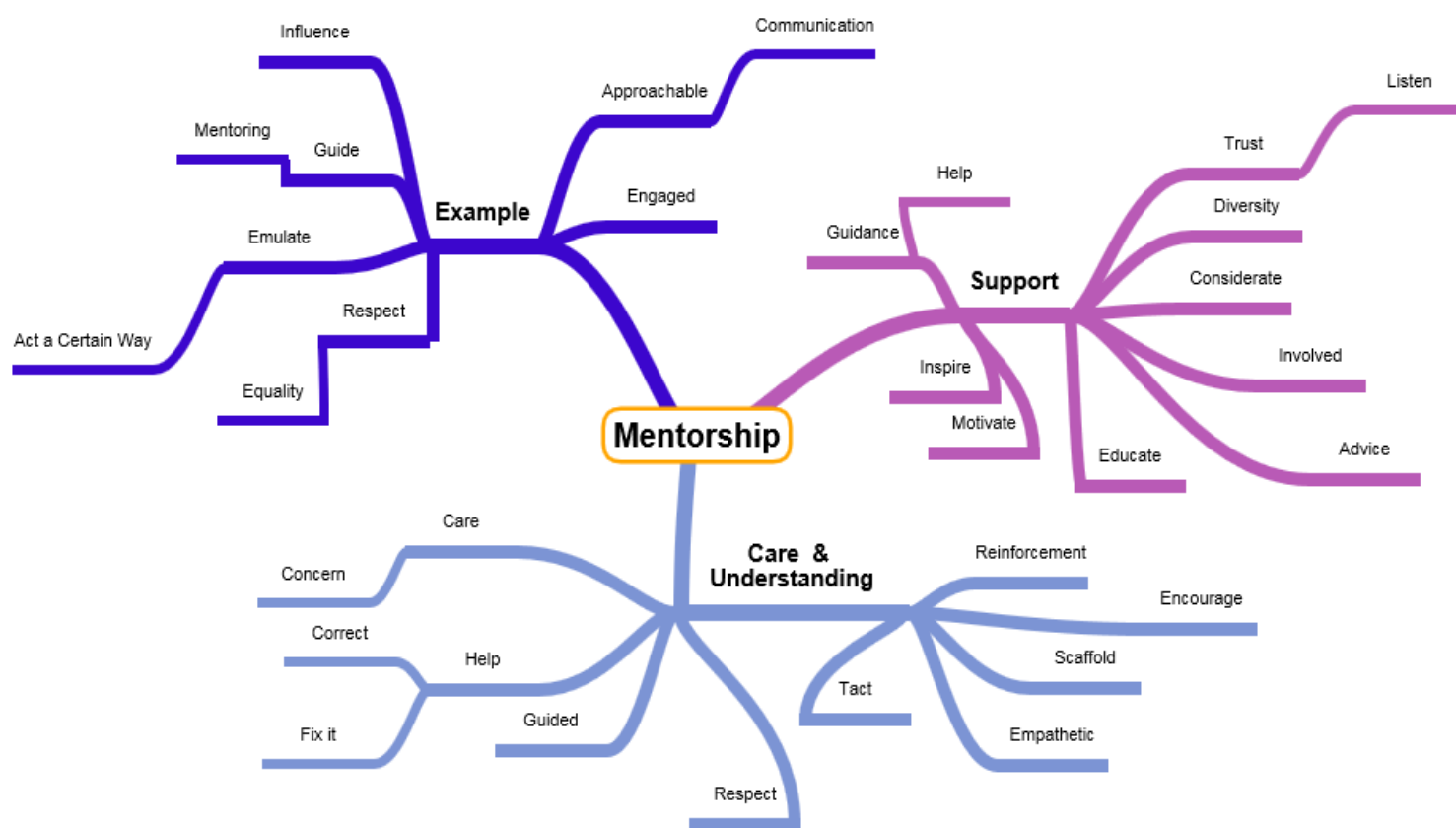
Appendix B

Figure 3. A graphical depiction of terms selected through the coding process; representing the words and phrases used by participants that yielded the central theme of mentorship.
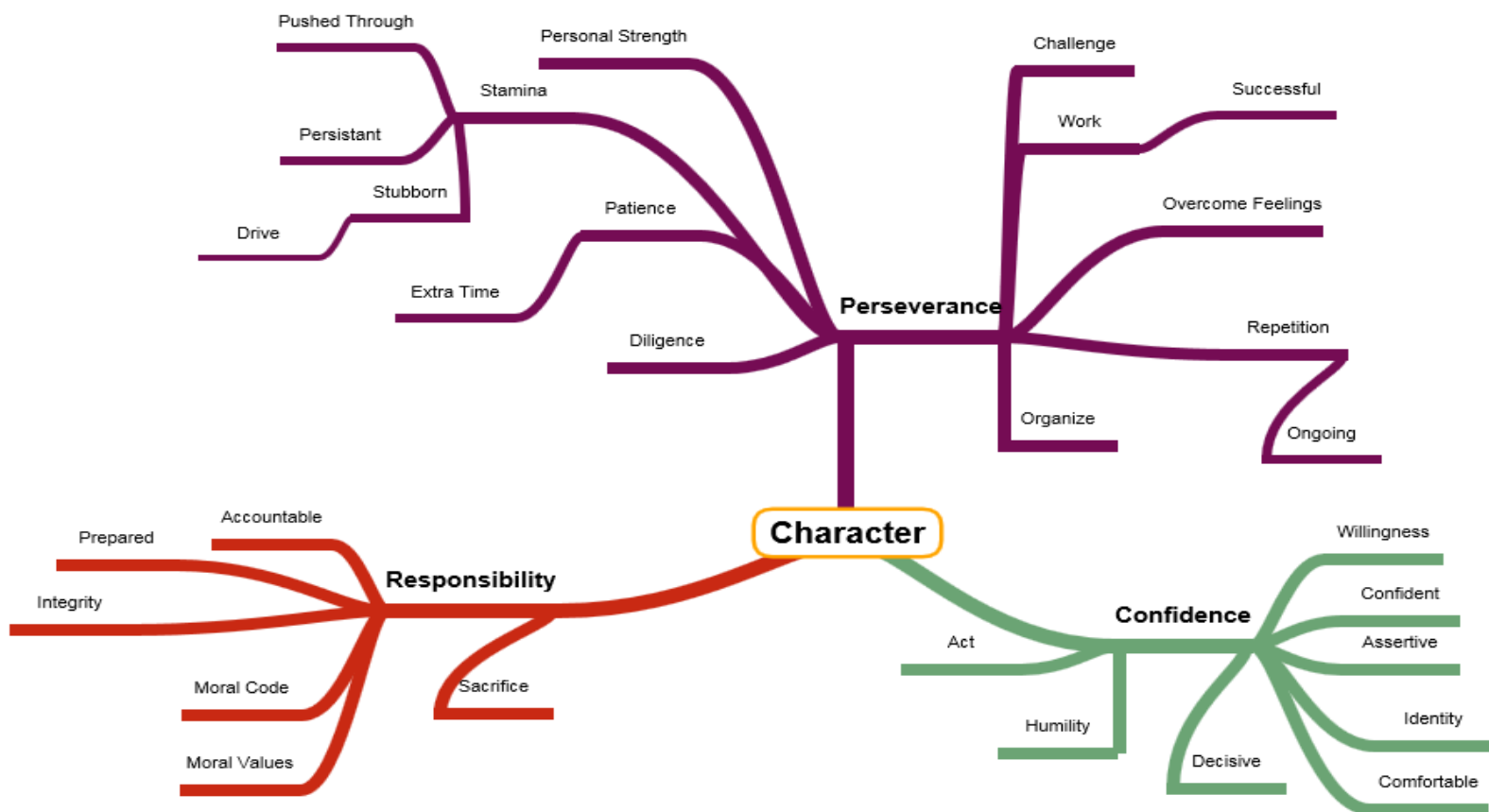
Appendix C

Figure 4. A graphical depiction of terms selected through the coding process; representing the words and phrases used by participants that yielded the central theme of character.

Appendix D

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 14, 2016

Ammon Campbell
IRB Approval 2602.101416: Socialized Leader Development: A Phenomenological Study of the College Army ROTC Student Perspective and Experience

Dear Ammon Campbell,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,
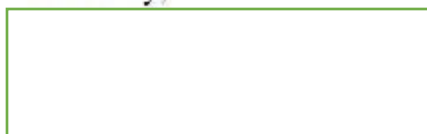
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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Appendix E: Observation Notes Procedures

Method 1: Observations of Thursday afternoon leadership labs

The ROTC labs are conducted each Thursday from 1330-1600hrs (1:30pm-4pm). Each lab is part of an established program of curriculum created prior to the beginning of the school year. The senior cadets implement the training/teaching objectives for each week. My observation methodology shadowed senior cadet leaders during each lab session. This allowed me to have insight as to the intent and objectives of the lab, and observe the leader-follower outcomes during the actual lab. I conducted observations from a distance, asking questions of clarification if needed. The cadets were observed by cadre during each lab, so my presence will not create any apprehension or attempts to "please the observer." I labeled the leaders using pseudonyms in order to capture consistent data on individuals that can was used to identify patterns or trends. Also, it was helpful to break the notes page into 10-minute increments, because this helped in researching the notes after the observations and recognizing potential trends that may be time-sensitive.

Following suggestions by Leedy & Ormrod (2001) related to the execution of observations within qualitative research I identified the best data recording method for myself, had someone introduce me before conducting observations and remained relatively quiet out of the way while using my observation sheet to capture my observations and interpretive comments.

Observation Sheet

Observation	Comments

Location:

Date:

Page:

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Method 2: Semi-structured Interview questions for cadets

I will ask cadets the following questions in order to better gauge and understand their personal interpretation of leader development, leader identity and personal progress.

1. Share what you think are key attributes of a leader? (SQ2)

2. Describe a significant leader development experience that you have had as a ROTC cadet? (SQ1)

   What are some of the feelings you associate with that experience?

   How does that experience effect you today?

3. What leader attributes do you see yourself having now that you did not possess before participation in ROTC? (SQ2, SQ3)

4. What do you think has contributed to your personal capabilities as a leader? (SQ3)

5. Who do you consider as your leader mentor? (SQ1)

   And what attributes or actions make them a mentor?

6. How do you think ROTC has contributed to your own leader development? (SQ1)

7. Describe how being in ROTC made you a more aware leader? (SQ3)

8. In what ways do you see yourself as a leader in ROTC and on campus? (SQ2)

9. What would you describe as critical to leader development? (SQ1)

10. As you reflect on your leader development experiences have some experiences been negative but still effective in helping you develop as a leader? (SQ3)

    Discuss what made the experience negative and what made it effective?

The following questions are to help illicit meaning from the participants.

1. What key attributes do leaders possess? (SQ2)

2. How do cadets gain leader attributes? (SQ1)

3. What are the most influential experiences of ROTC for cadet leader development? (SQ3)

4. Do you think cadets more aware of leader characteristics by participating in ROTC than students who do not? Why do you think that is? (SQ1, SQ2)

5. How important is it for leaders to understand the influence of culture on organizations? (SQ3)

Appendix G: Reflective Journaling

Method 3: Reflective Journaling

The following are prompts that will help participants reflect and answer questions related to their personal leader development.

1. How does the ROTC program help develop leaders? Describe the process from your perspective and experience.

2. Share an experience from a class or activity on campus that your ROTC leader training helped you with.

3. What are some of the differences you have noticed about yourself and fellow classmates with regard to leadership?

4. After participation in ROTC, how do you see leader behaviors and leadership differently than before? And in what ways you consider yourself currently a leader?

5. Describe a recent experience where you noted how culture impacts leadership.

6. In what ways do you think that your leader development has been impacted by participation in ROTC?

7. Do you see yourself as a leader in the campus community? If yes, how? If no, why not?

8. What is the value of leadership?

9. Describe what is your goal of participating in ROTC?

10. How does mentorship contribute to leader development?