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Small Business Leaders' Strategies for Recruiting Veterans

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Jamillah D. Stackhouse

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
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Walden University
2020

Abstract

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MBA, American Military University, 2007

BS, Stillman College, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Business Administration

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April 2020

Abstract

Small business hiring managers who fail to implement recruitment strategies for transitioning military veterans face hiring challenges with this population of workers. The results of this study provide small business managers with strategies to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans. Grounded in recruitment theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by leaders of small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. The participants for this study included 3 purposefully selected hiring managers from 3 small businesses in southeastern Virginia, who have used successful strategies to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and document review. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and 4 themes emerged: social media advertisement, local networking with military facilities, workshop and job description, and resume review and effective communication. The implications for positive social change in organizations include influencing owners of small businesses with knowledge of potential growth in local economies and supporting military veterans.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this research to my faithful God, my godly husband who has been my biggest supporter during this entire process, the late Freddia C. Johnson, my maternal grandmother, and my paternal grandparents, the late Pat and Lizzie Scott.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank God, who is the head of my family's life. Second, my dearest husband, Michael for all the times he encouraged me to continue to pray. The prayers that my husband prayed for me are nothing more than a miracle from Jesus Christ himself, as is my loving husband. To my late grandmother Freddia, I recall you saying that I would continue to strive on an educational path after you expire. I didn't see it, but my educational accomplishments are truly built on your praying foundation, and I love you for just being you. My dear granddaughter Serenity has been a blessing and a balm to my soul. Even as a child, my mother Gloria has been an inspiration by encouraging me to aim high and work hard at what I wanted in life. I thank you. My two children, Douglas and Jaz'Mere Sudberry: I always called us the three amigos. Thanks for being a part of my growth in life and helping me become the woman I am today. I strive high because I pray you will always look up to your mom. My aunt Velma Bailey who always called me Dr.—well, I finally did it, auntie. I love you and thanks for speaking my highest level of education into existence even back then. I love all of you dearly! To my best friend Angela Brown, thanks for keeping my stress level at a minimum with all the love and support. Thanks to my chair Dr. Annie Brown who has been instrumental in me getting through this process, listening to my aggressive complaints, and providing encouragement during the times I wanted to throw the towel in. Dr. Booker, thank you for guiding me through this tedious process. Dr. Cave, thanks for all your educational guidance.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Military veterans have vital skills that can incorporate integrity, experience, agility, values, and ethics to enhance the success rate of small businesses. Military veterans hold skillful jobs in human resources, medical personnel, engineering, law enforcement, logistics, and aviation that bring a wealth of experience to civilian businesses. The findings from this study will potentially contribute to a positive social change in small businesses.

Background of the Problem

In 2017, an estimated 370,000 skilled retired military personnel were unemployed, an average of 59% between the ages of 25 and 54 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Thousands of veterans who depart the armed forces fail to find gainful employment (Faurer, Rogers-Brodersen, & Bailie, 2014). An average of 300,000 skilled veterans exit the armed forces annually (Faurer et al., 2014). Military experience provides individuals with professional skills that improve and develop leadership traits (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013). Military veterans have experience in leadership and management skills, adaptability techniques, resiliency, and strategies that can increase organizations' profits; these skills are instrumental to the success of a business. Military veterans hold skilled jobs in human resources, medical personnel, and engineering (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013).

Small business leaders routinely fail to attract highly qualified employees among the population of military veterans, placing their organizations at a competitive disadvantage (Chung, Park, Lee, & Kim, 2015). Between 2014 and 2016, almost 80% of

veterans who exited the military had not secured employment in the civilian sector

(Zogas, 2017). Although thousands of businesses open each year in the United States that

account for 64% of new jobs in small businesses (U.S. Small Business Administration

[SBA], 2014), military veterans face a rocky transition to the civilian world because

managers lack knowledge of veterans' qualifications (Brown & Lent, 2013). Many

veterans face hardship after exiting the military service and find it difficult to find

employment outside of the military (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Hiring managers can

employ experienced veterans to fill vacant positions, but they tend to overlook veterans

between the ages of 25 and 50 as potential candidates (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013).

Overlooking this pool of employees could potentially place organizations at a

competitive disadvantage (Faberman & Foster, 2013).

Problem Statement

Small business leaders routinely fail to attract highly qualified employees from

the population of military veterans, placing their organizations at a competitive

disadvantage (Chung et al., 2015). Even with additional funds from the federal

government allocated to assist companies in hiring veterans, the U.S. Census Bureau

reports an unemployment rate of 5.1% among veterans in the state of Virginia (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2015). This demographic consists of qualified veterans with a variety of

skills and a workforce that includes skilled veterans, who could address adverse trends in

an organization's productivity and profits. The general business problem is that leaders of

small businesses lack strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans, which can

result in profit reductions or losses. The specific business problem is that some business

leaders in small businesses lack strategies to recruit, hire, and retain qualified military veterans.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by leaders of small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. The targeted population consisted of three leaders of small businesses in the southeastern Virginia area who have used successful strategies to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. The leaders of the selected small businesses have indicated their devotion to increasing workforce capability, production capability, and overall performance. The findings from this study may affect positive social change in organizations by influencing owners of small businesses with knowledge of successful processes for recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. Thus, small business leaders may catalyze growth in local economies, increase prosperity, and increase the opportunity to support military veteran employment.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative method for this study. Researchers use the qualitative method to understand a phenomenon, and this method is an informational means researchers use to explain human behavior (Longfield et al., 2016). A qualitative research study consists of rational, experientially descriptive data that researchers obtain through direct contact with participants (Clark & Clark, 2016). Quantitative researchers focus on numbers and data analytics, which is not the intent of this study (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative method is appropriate for this study because comparisons or relationships of variables would not address the specific business

problem. Researchers use a mixed method to combine qualitative and quantitative methods (Goldman et al., 2015). The mixed method is not appropriate for this research study because I did not intend to combine qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the experiences of business leaders in recruiting qualified veterans.

Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift (2014) defined a case study as a method to explore single or multiple cases to answer research questions. I used a multiple case study design for this study because the goal was to collect information from multiple participants. The research conducted was on recruitment strategies used by leaders of small businesses who employ military veterans. Yilmaz (2013) defined phenomenology as the study of participants' lived experiences with a phenomenon. A phenomenology study would not be appropriate for this study. Phenomenology is used to capture the lived experiences and gather information to understand perceptions of individual situations (Yilmaz, 2013). Exploring participants' lived experience was not the intent of this study. Therefore, a phenomenological research design did not align because the purpose of this research was to discover small business owners' strategies to employ veterans. Ethnographical researchers focus on exploring cultures (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and would limit the participants in this study based on small business owners' hiring strategies. The intent was to interview multiple participants using interview questions and to explore multiple cases. Multiple case design was appropriate for this study because the research was based on interviews and gathering information from multiple participants to capture strategies used by small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans.

Research Question

What strategies do small business leaders use to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to recruit military veterans?

2. What strategies do you use to retain military veterans?

3. What strategies do you use to identify veterans' competencies during the recruitment and hiring process?

4. How do you determine the alignment of workforce capability and capacity needs with the skills of veterans?

5. What were the key barriers to implementing your strategies in the process of hiring veterans?

6. How did you address the barriers to implementing your strategies in the hiring process?

7. What additional information do you want to share about your strategies to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this theory was Dunnette's (1976) recruitment theory. According to Dunnette (1976), the three constructs of recruitment theory are (a) finding skilled workers, (b) identifying individuals with the potential skills, and (c) employing the best candidates for the job. Based on the elements of this theory, understanding recruitment changes and needs while embracing the strengths of qualified

veterans may increase overall revenue and assets of small businesses (Dunnette, 1976; Farndale, Biron, Briscoe, & Raghuram, 2015). Recruitment theory fits best as a conceptual framework for this research study to provide researchers with a concrete lens for exploring the relationship between recruitment, hiring, and retaining strategies to find the best candidate for available jobs.

Operational Definitions

Candidates: Potential employees applying for a position who have met the minimum job requirements (Bäckström & Björklund, 2017).

Disabled veterans: Service members who served in the U.S. military and were injured during their time on duty and received a service connection disability compensation (Hoppenfeld, Wyckoff, Henson, Mayotte, & Kirkwood, 2013).

Military transition: The stage in which a soldier starts the transition from military to civilian life (Worthen, Moos, & Ahern, 2012).

Military veteran: Individuals who have served in and been favorably discharged from the U.S. armed forces (38 U. S. Code § 101; Casad & Bryant, 2016).

Skilled veteran: A currently serving or prior serving armed forces member who has specialized experience in a field; these skills were acquired through military training (Olenick, Flowers, & Diaz, 2015).

Small business: For-profit companies that operate with fewer than 500 employees (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2015).

Transition Assistant Program (TAP): A program that identifies members of the armed forces a year before they will depart the military and prepares members to transition into corporate America (Office U.G., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions are facts assumed to be true without evidence (Flannery, 2016). Lewin et al. (2015) described limitations as restrictions that limit the research in a study and could possibly alter validity in research. A researcher cannot control limitations. Delimitations narrow researchers' scope of research and the population they study and aid in identifying the restrictions and boundaries of the research (Yin, 2017).

I assumed the participants in this study were appropriate for exploring strategies used by small business owners to employ veterans. I assumed that all participants would be honest and thorough in their responses. I also assumed that participants had enough knowledge to provide detailed answers to the research question. In this study, I assumed the sample size was enough to answer the research question.

The limitations of this study included time constraints. Conducting an interview in a short amount of time is difficult. Therefore, interviews were scheduled during the evening hours and weekends. The results of the study are limited by the honesty and thoroughness of the participants' responses. The participants' availability to respond to interview questions in enough detail did not limit the results of the study. The availability of documentation to support the participants' interview responses did not limit the results of the study. My ability to recruit enough participants to allow for data saturation did not

limit the results of the study. Finally, participants' knowledge of the subject did not limit the results.

The delimitation boundaries of this study limited the participants to small business owners who have successfully hired military veterans in the southeastern Virginia area. An additional delimitation was limiting the intended scope of this study to three small businesses in the state of Virginia that focus on recruiting military veterans as potential recruits and employees. This study included businesses with fewer than 500 employees, which are not considered medium or large companies. Another delimitation was the location of each organization; the three businesses were located throughout the state of Virginia.

Significance of the Study

In 2016, the Department of Defense allocated a budget that exceeded $8.7 billion to train military personnel required skills needed to find gainful employment (U.S. Department of Defense, 2015). Small business owners need skilled and qualified employees to ensure high quality, performance, and production within the firm to maximize production and profits. The significance of this study may be useful for small business owners to increase recruiting strategies and capitalize on the best recruitment practices, which may reduce veterans' unemployment and increase employment among this population.

Contribution to Business Practice

This study may be of value to the practice of business because the findings and recommendations may become a tool for creating strategic, operational plans for hiring

qualified veterans. The findings of this study may provide business leaders lacking recruitment skills with the developmental strategies to improve recruitment strategies in organizations. Business leaders seek to employ knowledgeable workers who may maximize production, profits, and sustainability (Blatter, Muehlemann, & Schenker, 2012). Managers strive to capitalize on identification and recruitment methods of qualified veterans as well as their retention, allowing business leaders the opportunity to capitalize on investments, which may increase the overall knowledge in the business community and profits. The specialized skills of veterans, such as management/leadership, administration, and human resources, may generate or increase revenue in organizations by significantly reducing recruitment and training expenses. If small business leaders understand effective recruitment strategies and use that knowledge when recruiting, identifying, and retaining military veterans, they may increase the organization's overall performance level, which could potentially contribute to higher profits and sustainability.

Implications for Social Change

One implication for potential contribution to positive social change may be to decrease the unemployment rate of veterans in the United States. Effective recruitment and retention strategies in organizations might contribute to the employment rate in southeastern Virginia and the workforce and community. The improvement of business practice could improve wages and living conditions, which may increase the local community's economy.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

An average of 300,000 skilled military personnel exit the armed forces each year (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). Half the veterans who depart the armed forces fail to find gainful employment (Faurer et al., 2014). Over 573,000 military veterans face an economic challenge, especially in the jobs they desire based on their previous military work (Brown & Lent, 2013).

According to the Defense Manpower Data Center (2016), approximately 1.3 million of the U.S. population consists of military service members. Roughly 300,000 experienced service members exit the military annually (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). Of those 300,000 skilled military personnel, half do not find comparable employment in corporate America. The data in this study could potentially provide small business leaders with adequate strategies to employ experienced veterans leaving the military. The data in this study could potentially indicate if small business leaders are aware of military service members' educational knowledge, skills, and experience and how to compare military qualities to corporate organizations and how these techniques enhance benefits, increase profits, and attract future investors in a company (Clarke & Friedman, 2016).

Hiring managers find it difficult to retain service members, and managers are looking for ways to gainfully employ and retain veterans (Zogas, 2017). Both the organization and service member must adjust and make changes once a veteran is employed with the organization. Internal organizational change is essential to adjust to veterans as well as the veteran to the organization, and managers need to be well versed

in both civilian and military terminology (Zogas, 2017). Leaders should have a strategic plan intact, so the foundation for civilian employees can actively engage with service members. Stern (2016) identified perceptions regarding veterans' mental health and misconceptions related to veterans' abilities to contribute to companies' needs as frequent barriers to successful engagement between civilians and veterans. Veterans' leadership traits, skills, and competencies that inculcate are often proficient compared to regular employees in the decision-making process (Zogas, 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by small business owners to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans in southeastern Virginia. The literature review covered the following topics: (a) small business management, (b) recruitment theory, (c) recruitment and hiring strategies, (d) hiring and retention challenges, (e) support for small businesses, (f) veterans' shortage in civilian sector, and (g) training for civilian employment and transitioning. I began the literature review by searching the Walden University library. When I found limited research in Walden's library, I used the Google search engine to find peer-reviewed articles related to the research topic. I used the following databases: (a) Emerald Management, (b) Department of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, (c) Bureau of Labor Statistics, (d) Office of Management and Budget, and (e) Virginia state and local government. I used the following search terms: *military, military veteran, recruitment theory, veterans' employment, hiring and recruitment strategies, military training*, and *small business*.

I used peer-reviewed articles and journals in this literature review. Scholarly articles and journals on hiring strategies and recruitment were obtained by pulling dissertations from Walden's library and other studies published through ProQuest between 2015 and 2019. I reviewed updated dissertations from ProQuest through Walden's library; I used scholarly peer-reviewed articles and journals by gathering data from government agencies, websites, and documents that pertained to hiring strategies small businesses used. The literature review includes an examination of at least 80 articles collected over 12 months, 94% of which have peer-review dates between 2015 and 2019.

Recruitment Theory

The theory chosen for this study was recruitment theory. I considered using other theoretical frameworks for this study. One of these was human capital theory, which Schultz developed in the early 1960s and Becker then redefined several years later (McCracken, McIvor, Treacy, & Wall, 2017). However, I chose not to use this framework because the human capital theory involves exploring skilled experts, employee knowledge, skills, experiences, and abilities gained through education and training (Teodoro & Switzer, 2016). The results of empirical studies on human capital theory indicate a positive correlation between education, economic growth, and income (Choo, 2018). My focus was to research the retention, hiring, and retaining of military veterans and not the educational aspects of the organization. Therefore, human capital theory was not suitable for this research and I chose recruitment theory instead.

Dunnette introduced recruitment theory in 1976. The constructs within recruitment theory are organized in three groups: (a) finding skilled workers, (b) identifying individuals with the potential skills, and (c) employing the best candidates for the job (Ekwoaba, Ikeije, & Ufoma, 2015). Ekwoaba et al. (2015) described the recruitment phase as vital to organizations when managed appropriately. During the recruitment stage, organizational leaders know that potential qualified candidates offer values and perspectives to the life of an organization, therefore offering skills to increase organization profits (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Dunnette (1976) used the recruitment theory to identify structure within recruitment that affects employees' behaviors and identifies the right combination of recruitment activities. The best way to ensure an organization is successful is by seeking quality applicants who are suitable and possess the talent and knowledge to succeed in the organization (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). In agreement with Ekwoaba et al. (2015), Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) posited that if organizational leaders want to hire the most qualified candidates, they must expand their recruitment focus to include those who, while not actively seeking new employment, are open to the possibility of obtaining new employment. Adding support to Chungyalpa and Karishma, Ekwoaba et al. described the recruitment stage as an introduction to potential employees and making them aware of open positions within the organization. Therefore, I selected recruitment theory as my conceptual framework.

A professional environment sets the stage for candidates, regardless of their successor's failures in the organization (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Based on the constructs of recruitment theory, understanding recruitment changes and needs while embracing the

strengths of qualified veterans may increase overall revenue and assets of small businesses (Farndale et al., 2015). Recruitment theory could help highlight gaps and developmental areas and provide business leaders with knowledge of qualified veterans seeking employment; this process could enhance recruitment efforts (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). Qualified employees who have experience can produce a favorable outcome in an organization, whereas a lack of experience could have a damaging outcome (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). According to Ekwoaba et al. (2015), it is essential to be knowledgeable in recruitment to understand what talent is necessary to have a successful business that includes internal and external recruitment.

Internal and external recruitment sources. The recruitment source consists of two elements: internal recruitment and external recruitment. Internal recruitment is within the company. Many firm leaders hire current employees to fill positions by transfers, promotion, or lateral transfer (DeVaro, 2016). This method of recruitment is especially prevalent in family businesses where family members are frequently hired rather than externally recruiting more skilled hires (Gutiérrez-Broncano, Jiménez-Estévez, & del Carmen Zabala-Baños, 2017). When a firm leader hires from within their pool of current employees, they forfeit new hire opportunities (DeVaro, 2016). A current employee already has the craft, knowledge, qualifications, and experience; therefore, current employees are often a good match to open positions. Current employees are potential candidates for the job as a great asset to the organization because they already possess the knowledge needed to make the organization a success. According to DeVaro (2016), bias is an issue with firms and results in favor toward current employees. A current employee

is commonly informed of open positions through internal advertisement, organization email, or billboards within the organization.

Using a mixture of both internal and external recruitment can be beneficial to a company, but some potential drawbacks exist, and organizational leaders should be aware of them. Bringing in outside employees can upset the dynamic of a workplace, and it may create ongoing disagreements between new and old employees (Muscalu, 2015). There is always a risk that a candidate the organizational leader determined would be a great fit during the selection process may perform poorly in the actual position, which can cause unrest amongst preexisting employees (Muscalu, 2015). Business owners need to understand the delicate balance between internal and external recruiting. Business owners often need to bring in fresh workers who can provide new ideas and perspectives, but at the same time, if hiring managers bring in too many new employees, it will create low morale and tension among workers who feel stagnant (Muscalu, 2015).

Internal recruitment sources. The advantage in using an internal resource during the hiring process is that it allows business owners to acquire subject matter experts who are familiar with the company. Internal hiring minimizes the risk of uncertainty in productivity by promoting or lateral transfer with qualified current employees who possess the drive to overachieve (DeVaro, 2016). Employees tend to have long-term goals with companies; therefore, internal hiring encourages workers to gain knowledge necessary to qualify for the next level within the company. Also, the selection process is quicker and less expensive because the search committee has candidates in mind, rather than a search conducted for new prospects (Muscalu, 2015). Additionally, by hiring

internally, employers have an opportunity to observe employees for a longer period to make a better assessment of who will be the best fit for a promotion (Muscalu, 2015). Because employees are already a part of the company and are familiar with the employer's policies and expectations, internally promoted individuals will need less orientation and mentorship than completely new employees (Muscalu, 2015). When employees know that the higher-ups are watching their work, which may lead to promotion, they become motivated to work at a higher level, and the prospect of opportunities builds morale (Muscalu, 2015). Internal recruitment is particularly successful when a company has created a strong baseline of highly skilled, qualified workers to choose from (Muscalu, 2015). DeVaro (2016) posited that organizational leaders could reallocate the workforce across jobs by hiring internally.

Although there is a plethora of benefits to internal hiring, drawbacks exist. By limiting external hiring, a business owner may begin to lack a fresh perspective and suffer from a lack of new ideas (Muscalu, 2015). In addition, the promotion of one employee is a simple process, but that promotion then leaves a vacancy in the lower position (Muscalu, 2015). In this scenario, the business owner needs to go through two hiring processes, rather than one. While hiring internally can boost morale for employees, it can lower morale and build tension among coworkers who may feel favoritism is occurring (Muscalu, 2015). Employers will also need to implement management development programs to ensure that promoted employees are prepared to take on additional duties and responsibilities (Muscalu, 2015). Also, for a company dispersed over a large geographic area, it may not make logistical sense to rely heavily on internally

recruiting candidates who may need to relocate (Muscalu, 2015). Finally, because

employees succeed in their current role does not necessarily mean they will excel at a job

with more advanced responsibilities (Muscalu, 2015). This is related to the idea of Peter's

principle that people tend to climb the corporate ladder until they reach a position that

maximizes their potential (Muscalu, 2015).

In contrast, Gutiérrez-Broncano et al. (2017) stated that in the 2010s, market

competitive advantage arose from effective use of all resources, which may not occur

through internal promotion. Meanwhile, a highly skilled external candidate could bring a

wealth of knowledge to improve a firm's production.

External recruitment sources. Business owners often use external recruitment

when they have decided they cannot hire a suitable candidate internally through the

existing pool of workers (Muscalu, 2015). Leaders of growing companies to maintain an

organized environment if they wish to attract interest from highly skilled candidates

(Muscalu, 2015). Some common sources for external recruitment are schools, placement

agencies, unions, professional associations, online services, job fairs, and career days

(Muscalu, 2015). Schools and universities are great resources for finding employees.

Business owners can go straight to specific schools known for training the specific set of

skills they need for the company (Muscalu, 2015). For example, if a business owner is

looking to hire a skilled laborer, like an electrician, they can go to a vocational school

that teaches that trade and find candidates. Likewise, recruitment agencies are valuable

resources that can help provide information to prospective candidates all over the country

(Muscalu, 2015). Similarly, the use of media, such as newspapers, is a simple but

effective way to bring attention to the vacancy (Muscalu, 2015). If a business owner

needs to hire several workers for specialized short-term work, unions, professional

associations, and staff-for-lease companies are potential options (Muscalu, 2015).

Finally, special events like open days or job fairs can allow prospective hires to come

visit the company and spur competition (Muscalu, 2015).

There are several advantages to external recruiting. Business owners can use

external recruiting to help the overall hiring process as well as combing with internal

recruitment to maximize options (Muscalu, 2015). Through a variety of external sources,

business owners can attract a greater number of candidates from outside the company,

who are able to bring their unique skill sets and knowledge gained through experiences at

other organizations (Muscalu, 2015). By having a larger pool of candidates to choose

from, there is a higher chance of picking someone who is truly the best fit for a job,

versus someone who is simply a convenient choice. Additionally, business owners can

bring in professionals and experts from other countries, without having to pay the extra

expense of vocational training (Muscalu, 2015).

In 2019, it is important that a business owner to capitalize on Internet recruitment.

Business owners use e-recruitment to expand their pool of potential candidates. That pool

may consist of qualified and unqualified candidates. Internet recruiting talent is one of the

most prominent methods to advertise jobs that are available to external sources (Zang &

Ye, 2015). E-recruitment is a system that business owners use generously to recruit for

available positions to save resources and increase an organization's profits with qualified

candidates. Business owners who face costly recruitment processes may fail in their

recruitment of candidates resulting in the failure of their mission statement and lost

revenue (McLean, Stakim, Timner, & Lyon, 2016). Recruitment had changed drastically

since the 1970s when job seekers were physically going to the job location and

completing the hiring process, which ranged from application to administration work

once hired. In 2019, the recruitment process was challenging and competitive, especially

when there were many organizations in search of qualified employees to fill positions.

Many organizations have outsourced the hiring process for staffing companies (Zang &

Ye, 2015). According to Bâra, Simonca, Belciu, and Nedelcu (2016) and McLean et al.

(2016), recruiting highly qualified candidates concerns business owners, and they realize

how complex the hiring process has become. Bâra et al. (2016) described e-recruiting as
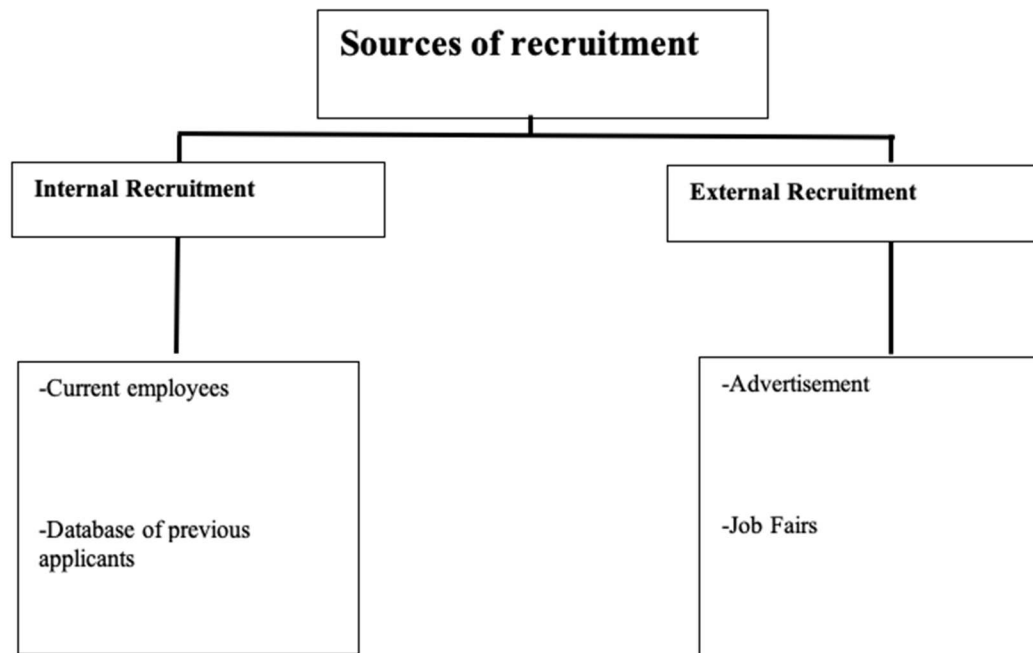
making the hiring process more complicated.

Figure 1. Recruitment sources figure showing methods organizations can recruit through
internal and external sources (Rao, 2014).

The recruitment process is the most critical function in an organization (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). In comparison, DeVaro (2016) explained how the hiring process in an organization is the most important function. During the recruitment process of employees, it is a great opportunity for business owners to display the organization's persona (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). In a competitive market, business managers' investment in recruitment is a smart decision (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). During the recruitment process, it is vital that hiring managers recruit the right candidates, with the right skills for the position (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). Business owners are only successful when they have the right employees in place, but the right employee must fit according to the job description and skill set. The recruitment process is categorized into three subcategories: job analysis, workforce planning, and recruitment and selection (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). A job analysis is a detailed summary of what the job entails. Hiring managers use job analysis to identify the duties and requirements that are mandatory for an individual to be qualified for a job (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). A job analysis takes place when the employer provides details on training needs, salary, performance appraisal, and selection process to find skilled workers that best fit the specific job (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016).

Recruitment and organizational effectiveness affect the overall readiness and climate of an organization (Demir, 2015). Business owners through the climate of an organization enhance the recruitment and retention relationship and improve social exchange (Demir, 2015). Business owners develop the overall climate of a business to enhance production and keep employees motivated. Researchers have defined

organizational theory to clarify how complex the relationship is between an organization

and its external environment (Birken et al., 2017). A successful business owner should

have a controlled and managed recruitment strategy in place because the success of an

organization depends on the recruitment process (Sameen, 2016). The recruitment

process is one of the most critical phases in the interview process.

There is a link between the success of organization and its workers (Ekwoaba et

al., 2015). An organization has over achievers and under achievers both of whom

organizations can improve or reduce revenues because of their employment. Based on

Ekwoaba et al. (2015) under achievement can be a result of organization failure if the

business owners fail to select the right candidate during the recruitment process. Hiring

the wrong people can be costly, which small business owners cannot afford, and that is

why it is vital to put prodigious efforts in the recruitment process (Ekwoaba et al., 2015).

Business owners can therefore use recruitment theory to achieve their overall mission and

strategic goals by hiring qualified candidates (Ekwoaba et al., 2015).

Small Business Management

In this section, I explored small business manager's daily issues and concerns.

Small business managers need practical and robust leadership skills to have a successful

business. Hyytinen, Pajarinen, and Rouvinen (2015) posited that small business managers

hold a variety of positions in all organizations, causing concerns about profits and

sustainability. Organizations with less than 100 employees have a high employment rate

compared to organizations with over 500 employees (United States Small Business

Association [SBA], 2018). Business leaders must invest in neighboring connections with employees to implement strategies to have a productive outcome with profits.

Small business in the United States plays an integral part in today's economy. According to the United States Small Business Administration (SBA, 2017), approximately 61.8% of new jobs were small business owners that generate positive revenues in the U.S. population and remained stable for 24 years. Jaouen and Lasch (2015) posited that the views held by owners have significant effects on the strategies and subsequent development of small businesses. A total of 79.9 % of small businesses established in 2015 survived and maintained a solid structure for at least a year; half of the small businesses survived a five-year span (SBA, 2017). For example, in 2014 there were 403,902 small businesses started, of that population 391,553 of the businesses closed within a year (SBA, 2017), which is a remaining 12,349 small businesses that survived. High technology firms' account for 98% of small businesses in the U.S. and 46% consist of computer systems design and servicing business. The SBA (2017) indicated that military veterans owned and operated 2.5 million small businesses, which accounted for 9.1% of the U.S. firms. Small businesses continue to show a solid foundation in corporate America and create jobs in America. According to Hyytinen et al. (2015) one reason new small businesses thrive is the ability of the owner and managers to maintain flexibility within their policies and procedures. The SBA (2017) noted that in 2011, 30% of veterans owned small businesses and provided the highest jobs in construction, scientific and technical services department. The following states with the highest percentage of veteran-owned businesses were: California, Texas, Florida, New

York, and Pennsylvania (SBA, 2017). Meanwhile, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, Alaska, and Mississippi had the highest percentage of veteran-owned small businesses (SBA, 2017).

In 2017, the GDP in the U.S. increased by 3.4% (SBA, 2017). There was a GDP increase averaging 1.5% between 2016 and 2017 (SBA, 2017). Small business employment played a significant role in the growth of the economy. Small businesses alone created over 1.9 million jobs during 2015; this number accounts for employing 1.1 million jobs in one year (SBA, 2017). Therefore, small businesses have a more significant impact on U.S. employment compared to fortune 500 companies. According to the SBA (2017), those small businesses that obtained the lowest return on investment were larger firms with more than 100 employees but not greater than 500.

Small business owners hold the responsibility of ensuring all daily functions in each department work efficiently. Hyytinen et al. (2015) noted that small business owners seek skilled recruits to occupy vacant positions. Small business owners need to set the right environment for the organization (Ben-Hur, Jaworski, & Gray, 2015). In a small business, owners must be marketable to compete with Fortune 500 companies (Hyytinen et al., 2015). To remain competitive, small business owners must employ experienced workers; however, the cost of goods hinder revenues and success. Therefore, small business owners must train and develop recruits to effectively communicate with stakeholders to optimize and implement policies and procedures (Gutiérrez-Broncano et al., 2017). A few concerns that affect small business owners are (a) a limited number of

employees available to production output, (b) lack of experienced worker, and (c) long

work hours (Kube, Maréchal, & Puppe, 2013).

Small business managers have a significant responsibility to make corrections in

the workforce. To boost motivation, small business managers use the decision-making

process to identify strong leadership, exceptional performance, and responsibilities in the

workplace (Bolman & Deal, 2015). The amount of time invested in the decision-making

process is vital, and business owners who employ military veterans observe increased

productivity and active production with veterans. One of the most significant tasks for

small business managers in the decision-making process is finding the right fit for the

organization (Bolman & Deal, 2015; Dubrin, 2015). Often, decisions are instantaneously

in a business. Therefore, small business owners must be able to think quickly but respond

professionally and responsibly within safety standards (Dubrin, 2015). The safety of

employees is the responsibility of the small business owner (Dubrin, 2015). It is a federal

law that employees work in a safe environment without any race, gender, or abuse

(Dubrin, 2015). It is the business owner's responsibility to ensure federal regulations are

adhered to by staff. In small organizations, Dubrin (2015) posited it is the responsibility

of managers to monitor the well-being of each employee, which is often complicated.

The task of caring for others can many times be stressful, but it is essential for managers

to monitor each employee in a small establishment. Dubrin (2015) expressed the need for

a small organization to create a safe environment that is free from abuse and

discrimination. To decrease discrimination and safety violations, managers must

implement federal policies in the work environment. The key to a successful business is

the manager's ability to be creative and create ways that will foster a highly motivated environment (Hyytinen et al., 2015).

In comparison, Bolman and Deal (2015) expressed how creativity increases employees' morale in the workplace. A small business owner may increase their success by incorporating the recruitment theory in the daily routine during the hiring process. Owners must create an environment that fosters a positive diversified climate to promote internal and external attractiveness (Lambert, 2015).

Recruitment and Hiring Strategies

The U.S. labor force is struggling with employing skilled employees (Abraham, 2015). Many managers fail to identify skilled military veterans to employ in their organization. Harrell and Berglass (2012) stated that there is a shortage of skilled workers, due to the lack of educated and experienced workers to perform at the level desired. Managers should identify talent recruits to fill a position to increase proficiency strategies in the hiring phase. Most prospecting external recruitment tools will be used by organizations (Cappelli & Keller, 2014).

In contrast to Cappelli and Keller (2014), Gërxhani and Koster (2015) suggested that external recruitment tools increase the production and credibility of an applicant. Small business owners can use external recruitment tools to identify competitive applicants' work ethics and background experience to compare with open positions (Gërxhani & Koster, 2015). The competitive market is vital to use an external source to find qualified candidates to fill vacated positions with the right experience. Business owners who are successful investors in their employees and find their employees as a

vital resource that makes their organization thrive (Lorinkova, Peaesall, & Sims, 2013).

Business owners' ability within the human resource hiring and selection phase

determines the effectiveness of their organization (Law, Bourdage, & O'Neill, 2016). The

business owner meets their mission based on the knowledge of their employees' skills

and the expertise of human resource recruitment abilities (Lorinkova et al., 2013).

Finding the right candidate for a job is challenging for small business owners, and many

times results in the hire of employees who do not meet the business owner's expectations

(Rudman, Hart-Hester, Richey, & Jackson, 2016). The recruitment and hiring phases are

not simple tasks for small businesses, as managers must screen each applicant, align them

with the job, and then select applicants based on a fair decision (Bäckström & Björklund,

2017). During the years 2015 and 2016, business owners failed to hire experienced

workers within their organization, which caused a 50% to 200% reduction in efficiency

and a decrease in organizational returns (Rudman et al., 2016).

The task of finding the best-suited individual for an open position is extremely

important. Therefore, small business owners must increase their human resource staff to

develop recruitment strategies that are beneficial for the business, and the overall success

of the organization (Kinnunen & Parviainen, 2016). When hiring qualified applicants, it

can be challenging and stressful; thus, hiring managers must brainstorm to figure out the

best strategy to be successful (Kinnunen & Parviainen, 2016). Managers may become

overwhelmed during the hiring process because of the importance of finding qualified

candidates (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2008). A successful recruiting strategy is finding

the right candidate that aligns with the job and qualifications.

Recruitment strategy is an essential stage in the hiring process. Sutanto and Kurniawan (2016) suggested that the lack of a thoughtful recruitment strategy process will result in high turnovers and low-performance participation. In comparison, Dixon (2014) suggested that veterans should have a smooth transition from military to civilian life, with the support of community and organizations, to prevent difficulties while transitioning. To be successful, a positive recruitment strategy can boost the overall production and performance of an organization and decrease high turnovers (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016).

Business owners who develop recruitment strategies to foster an environment that is open to a variety of cultures and diversity can attract a larger pool of job seekers with excellent skills and knowledge (Lambert, 2015). Lambert (2015) discussed how business owners that welcomed diversity and culture differences had a better understanding of what audience they should attract. Business owners' success depends on recruiting and keeping those qualified employees (Sameen, 2016). Excellent customer service to clients is a critical success for businesses to stay competitive. Therefore, it is imperative that business owners employ the right personnel (Clarke & Friedman, 2016; Sameen, 2016). Business managers have limited choice when it comes to fortifying customer service staff and methods to develop active recruitment and retention strategies (Kinnunen & Parviainen, 2016). Active recruitment and retention strategies enforce problem-solving and match the right attributes and personalities together to build a favorable climate. Stern (2016) expressed with the improvement of recruitment strategies; the U.S. economy

could potentially increase in revenues, decrease the unemployment rate, and reduce homeless veterans' rate and economic difficulties.

Khalid and Tariq (2015) expressed the importance of organizations' image during the recruitment process. The perception of the organization image and historical recruitment phase is important to prospects. It is important for hiring managers to keep in mind the historical image of their organization when creating recruitment strategies during the hiring process. According to Khalid and Tariq (2015), to persuade potential employees to become part of the organization they must become connected to the organization's image and history. Recruitment and retention in most organizations is a joint effort aimed at hiring the best-qualified candidates and retaining company employees; this joint process allows the business leader to have a more significant impact collectively (Näppä, Farshid, & Foster, 2014). A work environment that fosters an excellent organization climate result in employees enjoying their job and what they do give the potential employee the drive and motivation to want to work for the firm (Aboula-Ela, 2016). According to Aboula-Ela (2016), business owners want dedicated workers who overperform and excel in the company. Small business hiring managers need to be able to identify these quality workers.

Small business owners must align their recruitment and hiring process with the firms' mission and vision by using successful strategies (Engel & Curran, 2016). Effective strategic increase investment on returns and competitive advantage in the market that is a result of an organization's hiring process correlating with employees' performance (Chung, Park, Lee, & Kim, 2015). An intangible asset that may result in

business profits is competitive advantage (Chung et al., 2015). To maintain a competitive advantage, business owners should leverage and shape their organization (Marquis & Raynard, 2015). In contrast, Odoardi (2015) disagreed that hiring managers that enforce leveraging strategies to promote a healthy environment are effective. When hiring managers implement developmental strategies, the workplace increases motivation and a sense of belonging for an employee that results in an excellent performance (Asmat, Ramzan, & Chaudhry, 2015). Establishing an efficient and effective hiring strategy process increase and empower employees and provide benefits to the organization by making sure hiring managers select qualified applicants (Asmat et al., 2015).

In comparison, Kennedy, Bathurst, and Carroll (2015) discussed effective hiring and retention practices and system increase relationships and the overall well-being of the personnel. Hiring managers use a strategic hiring process to identify and hire great leaders who have the charisma to influence organizations employees and improve personnel readiness (Asmat et al., 2015). Small business owners who support military veterans and entrust skilled veterans solicit and encourage the hiring of skilled veterans. Small business owners use recruitment theory as the foundation for hiring strategies to effectively employ qualified veterans and increase retention (Ansari, Reinecke, & Spann, 2014).

Hiring and Retention Challenges

The livelihood of all organizations is directed by human resources (Kumar & Mathimaran, 2017). In 2017, the technology used by business leaders played a vital factor by analyzing information, but it is human resources that monitor and enter data (Kumar

& Mathimaran, 2017). Business owners often find themselves in a competitive pool with other organizations. Several owners looking for the right person to fill difficult, high demand jobs, often find it difficult to find qualified applicants (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014). Many business owners find it difficult to retain employees because of the competitive market. Retaining employees is vital for companies because employees' knowledge and skills are vital to organizations in a competitive environment (Kumar & Mathimaran, 2017). Therefore, business owners must implement policies to retain its' employees.

Small business managers face challenges with recruitment (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Talented veterans exit the military daily, but small business hiring managers struggle to get the right worker for the right job; these managers need to strategize a method that enhances the recruitment process for skilled veterans. Dedicated, motivated and skilled, veterans are committed to accomplishing the task set before them. Business managers implementation to create and foster a positive environment that encourages employees to stay employed with the organization is necessary and promotes a tremendous working climate.

Service members' transition into a civilian environment is often challenging (Kukla, Rattray, & Salyers, 2015). Zogas (2017) discussed some of the many issues' veterans faced when transitioning and how these issues affect retention. According to Kukla et al. (2015), reintegration to civilian status is complicated, causing life changes for veterans. The reintegration to civilian life is complicated, and veterans must learn how to be a civilian for the first time (Kukla et al., 2015). Veterans seek civilian

employment thinking their military skills, education, and experience will surface in civilian jobs.

Veterans that seek to leverage their military jobs with civilian jobs face challenges despite medial training (Watts et al., 2016). The pilot program in place to develop transitioning service members did not assist service member and aligned them with the organizations' vision (Watts et al., 2016). Watts et al. (2016) explained the challenges as lack of state licensure. Many veterans faced challenges during the hiring phase because they could not articulate their jobs description to convert to civilian jobs (Davis & Minnis, 2016). Hiring managers lack knowledge about how to compare military jobs to civilian jobs, which cause difficulties while veterans' transition (Davis & Minnis, 2016). According to Davis and Minnis (2016), the growing diversity in the U.S. workforce has failed to understand or put guidelines in place to align military service members experience with civilian employment. The military veteran continues to be a great asset to corporate America's organization, but hiring managers lack the diverse knowledge experience, training, and skills that veterans bring to the civilian arena.

Support for Small Businesses

Small businesses are critical in the U.S. employment industry. Lechner and Gudmundsson (2014) expressed how small businesses succeed because of their knowledge and ability to enforce and sustain business practices in a small business environment. Small business owners' motivation and implemented strategies enhance business practices ensuring sustainability and success. These strategies include best practices during the hiring process (Jaouen & Lasch, 2015). Transitioning from the

military to the civilian world can be stressful (Zogas, 2017). Military veterans often fail to identify calm in their daily life; these difficulties cause barriers in veterans gainfully finding employment in civilian life (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015).

Many challenges are linked to transitioning veterans' mindsets that range from mental, physical, and gender related challenges. Many of the challenges and subsequent stress veterans experience results from drastic environmental changes (Zogas, 2017). For example, during their time of service veterans experience stability resulting from the political, organizational, and economic structures placed on the military (Zogas, 2017). Many difficulties may then arise because of the change from life in a war zone area to life in areas without conflicts. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects many veterans returning from a combat zone that hinders gainful employment in the civilian world (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015). PTSD has been significant factors that prevent veterans from gaining employment of keeping a secure job in the civilian sector (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015). Between the years of 2007 and 2012, transitioning from the military has been less intense because of the awareness of PTSD in organizations.

In November 2011, President Obama endorsed the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act; this program funded incentives for business to employ military veterans. The program allocated companies with a tax credit up to $5,600 for hiring veterans, and up to $9,600 tax credit for hiring a disabled service-connected veteran (Potter, 2016). The VOW Act encouraged firms to invest in military veterans (Bosco, Murphy, Peters, & Clark, 2015). The determination of the funds was based on the amount of time a veteran had been unemployed (Potter, 2016). The need to educate still lingers in small business.

The Department of Labor, Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs are a few of the organizations that have a plethora of resources to educate small business owners about the hiring and recruiting veterans (Potter, 2016). Each government agency has a specialized representative to assist small business owners with staffing their organization with the right vet based on their military job experience. State agencies have training available to increase small business owner's knowledge to better understand military terminology.

To close gaps for qualified veterans looking for gainful employment a total of 300 Veteran Administration education advisors were employed to assist with providing information on what benefits and services were available to service members (Devereux & Bala, 2017). The VOW Act allowed veterans the ability to gain additional education through the Montgomery GI Bill, which is education funds provided to service members to continue their education before transitioning from the military.

In December 2015, President Obama enacted the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC), which extends credits to Returning Heroes and Wounded Warriors (Potter, 2016). The WOTC program provided incentives such as tax credits to business owners who hired veterans (Devereux & Bala, 2017). The government provided initial funding of the program and gave over a billion dollars of tax credits to businesses that participated (Potter, 2016). According to Potter (2016), WOTC allows business owners the opportunity to receive up to $2400 in tax credits for each employee. A business could receive up to $12,000 tax exemption for hiring a disabled veteran annually, and if the

veteran is hired within 12 months of transitioning from the military, the business could receive tax incentives of $24,000 (Potter, 2016).

Veteran Shortage in Civilian Sector

In 2016, the military veterans' population was approximately 22 million (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2017). Of the 22 million veteran population reported, 21 million lived in the U.S. in 2015, which accounted for 10% of the U.S. population compared to the year 2011. In 2011, small business comprised approximately 9% of U.S. business, which generated over 1.2 trillion in revenue, employed more than 5.8 million of the U.S. population, and had an annual payroll that exceeded $210 billion (SBA, 2012). In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau (2015) report analyzed a breakdown based on military veterans' demography, to include pre/post 911 population. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that 3.4 million of the U.S. working population consisted of pre 911 Gulf War veterans who had served during the years 1999 to 2001, almost 3% of the U.S. population during 2015.

The armed forces are one of the highest employers of men and women in the U.S., which ranged from 10% to 12% in the U.S. populations. Another nine million of the U.S. population were Vietnam, Korean War, and World War II veterans who constituted nearly 4% of the U.S. population; these veterans served during wartime and peacetime. Chamberland (2015) described military veterans as often seeking continuous research efforts in both military and civilian environment to better their knowledge. After the Gulf War about 1.5% of military veterans accounted for the U.S. population, and before the Gulf War, 3% of the U.S. military veterans represented the U.S. population. The SBA

(2017) quantified 200,000 veterans' transition from active duty each year into the civilian community. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) statistics showed that approximately 71% of veterans employed post active duty earned wages in private nonagricultural organizations. Spiro, Settersten, and Aldwin (2016) posited a higher rate of veteran members resulted in a high homeless rate.

Training for Civilian Employment and Transitioning

Military veterans are equipped with specialized training that is acquired during their tenure in the military. The training and expertise a military veteran possess could increase an organization lifespan and could decrease the training budget (Thomas & Taylor, 2016). Business owners are often aware of the knowledge that military veterans possess. Therefore, higher education was an interest to the military population, to prepare them for civilian jobs. In 2015, The White House revamped the Tuition Assistant program to aid service members in the transition into corporate jobs (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2015, January 9). The Transition Assistant Program (TAP) is a program that service members use to assist with educational needs, training, and credentialing (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2015, January 9). Government authorities were presented with information concerning the disconnect of veterans gaining employment and the high percentage of unemployed military veterans. Therefore, leaders focused on the development of programs to influence business interest in military members and get veterans gainful employed (Chamberland, 2015). The Department of Defense spearheads the TAP to assist veterans with developing

employment searching skills and methods to obtain a job that matches their military skills.

Most veterans will transition smoothly based on the leadership and adaptability traits service members possess even if they are unable to find comparable jobs in corporate America (Bennett et al., 2015). Hennekam (2015) explained a departing military veteran as motivated and eager to start a new career outside of the military. Having the motivation to enter a world full of new career opportunities, veterans must be resilient, adaptable, and confident (Hennekam, 2015). Integrating to non military careers should be a smooth transition, not a rocky one. Therefore, there are many educational programs in place for transitioning members of the armed forces. Casad and Bryant (2016) expressed the need for veterans to have the opportunity to integrate personal and professional identities, to improve work environment and disabilities. In comparison, Black, Meshberg-Cohen, Perez-Ortiz, Thornhill, and Rosen (2018) described work like activities that allow the veteran to cope with transitioning fears.

According to Osborne (2014), veterans separating from the military are more likely to be career-orientated and seek long-term employment. The transition phase is a stressful period for departing military service members, as they must adapt to a civilian lifestyle, both cultural and social factors. Chamberland (2015) discussed the report of challenges military faced because of disabilities from deployments. Member of the military disabilities reported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2017) was connected to mental issues such as PTSD and economic stress.

Transition

In Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study I included: (a) background of the problem, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) nature of study, (e) research question, (f) theoretical framework, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (i) significance of study, and (j) literature review. From the literature review, I identified strategies small business managers use to recruit, retain, and hire military veterans. In the literature review section, I covered the following topics: (a) small business management, (b) recruitment theory, (c) recruitment strategies, (d) hiring strategies, retention strategies, (e) transition, incentives, and support for small businesses, (f) military veterans' shortage in the workforce, and (g) training for civilian employment.

Tactical, technical, and proficient, military veterans are highly qualified and hold experience that is valuable to small businesses. Using a multiple case study design is suitable to measure strategies used by the three companies in southerneastern VA to recruit, retain, and hire veterans. The finding in this study may affect positive social change in organizations by influencing owners of small businesses with knowledge of successful processes for recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans.

In Section 2, I provided the research method of the case study design based on the research question and the (a) role of a researcher, (b) research method and design, (c) population and sampling, (d) ethical research, (e) data collection instrument, (f) data collection technique, (g) data organization technique (h) data analysis, and (i) study validity. In Section 3, I resented the findings of this research study and its practical application to professional practice.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I provide a detailed explanation of the steps I took to explore strategies small businesses in southeastern Virginia use to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans. This section included the discussion of an approach to ensure the quality of the findings. This section covered the following subsections: (a) purpose statement, (b) role of a researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection, (i) data analysis, and (j) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by leaders of small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. The population consisted of three leaders of small businesses in the southeastern Virginia area who have used successful strategies to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. The selected small business owners are devoted to increasing workforce capability, production capability, and overall performance. The findings from this study may affect positive social change in organizations by influencing owners of small businesses with knowledge of successful processes for recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. Therefore, small business leaders may catalyze growth in local economies, increase prosperity, and increase the opportunity to support military veterans' employment.

Role of the Researcher

For this research study, my responsibilities included recruiting all participants, facilitating interviews, analyzing data, interpreting data, and sharing the findings.

DuBois, Strait, and Walsh (2018) addressed positive attributes to sharing qualitative data, which are being candid and the ability to share data that already exist. Sutton and Austin (2015) described the role of the researcher in qualitative research as collecting information from participants based on their thoughts. The researcher's role is to ensure transparency, high ethical standards and morals, and present unbiased findings (Roller, 2015). A researcher must abstain from prejudgment or perceptions. To mitigate bias, I used the bracketing technique during interviews with participants. According to Arslan and Yildirim (2016), researchers must understand their roles and prevent *backyard research*, a term used when a researcher exhibits bias. Fischer (2009) described *bracketing* as a technique to minimize bias or backyard research, and bracketing is an ongoing process researchers use during the research process. I used bracketing to reduce any bias I may have had and to monitor the research process. I had no direct contact or relationship with any organizations or persons I asked to assist me in conducting my study.

In 1979, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, established regulations that researchers must adhere to when sharing data and protecting participants' right in *The Belmont Report*, (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). *The Belmont Report* consists of three principles: (a) respect the participants' wishes to remain anonymous, (b) justice, and (c) beneficence to harm none. I adhered to an interview protocol (see Appendix A), which ensured participants were aware that what they shared would remain confidential. Stake (2013) recommended the use of a consent form to ensure participants understand it is their right

to opt out of the research project at any time, without risk of repercussions or retribution. To adhere to *The Belmont Report*, I used an informed consent form and ensured each participant understood their rights, potential risks, and benefits of data collected.

Participants

I used a qualitative multiple case study. Yin (2017) stated that participants must possess an abundant scope in the field the researcher is exploring and information about the research question. The study criteria for participants were that they must be a small business owner (a) in the southeastern, area and (b) with fewer than 500 employees who have successfully used strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans. I identified small business owners as participants by contacting the SBA in southeastern Virginia area to obtain a list of small business owners who employ military veterans. I obtained the business owners' physical addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and public social media pages to gain access to potential applicants.

I used the Internet for obtaining contact information for business owners who met the criteria for small businesses and veterans' owned business small businesses in the southeastern area. I selected three small business owners who have successful strategies in recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans. I contacted the recruiting representative at each of the three businesses. I inquired if the business owner was willing to take part in an interview about recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans. As suggested by Yin (2017), to build rapport and maintain transparency with the three business owners, I sent detailed instructions and a consent form to the business owners who met the criteria determined during the preinterview phase of the research. Only

participants who endorsed the consent form proceeded with the interview process; if a participant did not agree to sign a consent form, the process with the participant stopped.

<div style="text-align: center;">**Research Method and Design**</div>

I used a qualitative method for this study. The design I used was a multiple case study on successful strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. In this section, I examine the principles of research methods and design. The qualitative method aligns with the purpose of the study, and I used it to increase my understanding of the strategies used by participants to correct issues and develop practices designed to identify concerns and better align veterans with their jobs. I selected a qualitative research study to interview participants about the strategies they use to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans.

Research Method

I used a qualitative research method for this study. Researchers use the qualitative method to understand a phenomenon, and this method is an informal means of thought that researchers can use to increase efforts by explaining the behavior of humans (Longfield et al., 2016). A qualitative research study consists of experientially descriptive data that researchers obtain through direct contact with participants to examine events, record data, explain why and how a phenomenon happened, and to verify how the event affected people and organizations (Clark & Clark, 2016). Quantitative researchers focus on numbers and data analytics to determine correlations, which is not the intent of this study (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate for this study because comparisons or relationships of variables would not address the

specific business problem. Researchers use a mixed method to combine qualitative and quantitative methods (Goldman et al., 2015). The mixed method was not appropriate for this research study because I did not combine qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the experiences of business owners in recruiting qualified veterans.

Research Design

Hyett et al. (2014) defined a case study as a method to explore single or multiple cases to answer research questions. I used a multiple case study design for this study because the goal was to collect information from multiple participants. Thomas (2015) noted that a case study is relevant when the researcher incorporates comprehensive methods by using several data collection processes, techniques, and analytical approaches to focus on how and why questions to understand a phenomenon. Researchers use a case study to explore different circumstances to gain perspectives and obtain an overall balance of a phenomenon. I used a case study design to explore the recruitment strategies used by small business owners who employ military veterans.

Yilmaz (2013) defined phenomenology as the study of participants' lived experiences with a phenomenon and the gathering of information surrounding the phenomenon to understand the perceptions of individuals. My intent was not to explore the participants' lived experiences. Therefore, I did not use a phenomenological research design because the purpose of this research was to explore small business owners' strategies to employ veterans. Ethnographic researchers explore participants within their cultures based on behaviors in their environment (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I did not focus this study on exploring cultural experiences. Therefore, ethnographic research

would limit the participants in this study based on small business owners' recruiting, hiring, and retention strategies. My intent was to interview multiple participants based on interview questions and to explore multiple cases. Researchers use a multiple case design to develop ideas collected from participants' responses to open-ended interview questions and give an idea of how and why the organization operates (Yin, 2016). To reach data saturation, I asked questions during the interview until no new data or themes emerged. According to Saunders et al. (2018), data saturation occurs when participants have no new information to share. I allowed participants to review a summary of the information they discussed with me during and after the interview to affirm accuracy or to add additional information.

Population and Sampling

The population included three small business owners in the southeastern, area who have implemented successful strategies in recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans. There is justification for using three participants because this number is enough for both collecting data and achieving data saturation for a qualitative multiple case study. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), the use of three participants aligns with a purposeful sample and gives access to the resources needed to conduct the study. To answer the research question in this study, I collected data through interviews with three small business owners with best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans. Yin (2016) described a multiple case study as seldom having a purposeful sample, and participants should make use of limited participants or resources (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

In comparison, researchers use a purposeful sample to obtain in-depth information from participants to gain knowledge on a specific topic to identify cases relevant to the phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). I used a purposeful sample to gather information from participants at three different locations in southeastern Virginia. Palinkas et al. (2015) defined purposeful sampling as a method for accessing information-rich cases to gather related data on a research topic of interest.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) described data saturation as a combination of data that are compared and show similarity in patterns among each other. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016) explained that data saturation is a sample size element in a qualitative research study, which often increases within smaller groups. Malterud et al. (2016) expressed the high significance of data saturation with small number groups. I reached data saturation when I interviewed a sample size of three organizations. I conducted face-to-face interviews in a quiet and relaxed location that was practicable for the participants. In this study, I reached data saturation through the interviews of the three chosen participants; there was no need to interview additional participants. As indicated by Morse (2015a), one method for acquiring additional participants is asking those contributing to the study for colleague recommendations.

Ethical Research

Ethical research is the rights and privacy needed to protect ones' identity and integrity prior, during, and post interview to protect participants' confidentiality. The ethical standards and guidelines were followed according to Walden University IRB ethical standards and *The Belmont Report*; this ensured the confidentiality of participants.

Each research inquiry comes with its own set of specific ethical requirements. I did not

initiate the interview or collect any data from businesses until I received approval from

Walden University Institutional Review Board. After obtaining IRB approval, I provided

potential participants with an informed consent form that outlined the purpose of the

study, the inclusion criteria, and the procedures used during the interview process, as well

as the voluntary nature of the study and their freedom to opt out at any time. If

participants elected to opt out of the interview, they could have done so via a phone call,

email, or in person before the interview started, during the interview, or afterward.

I did not offer any incentives or monetary funds to participants at any time prior,

during, or post interview. I will store the data in a safe and secured area for a minimum of

5 years to protect the participants' confidentiality and rights. After 5 years, I will delete

all electronic data and shred hard copies of the interview data. I did not collect any data

before Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The Walden IRB

approval number for this research study is 10-31-19-0480539, and it expires on October

30, 2020. To ensure the confidentiality of participants and secure their identities, I

assigned the codes P1, P2, and P3.

Data Collection Instruments

In a qualitative research study, the researcher is the primary data collection

instrument. The researcher is the primary data collection tool, and it is mandatory that the

researcher does not separate themselves from the research, but rather acknowledge their

part in the research process (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I conducted all primary data collection

in this study and therefore did everything I could to be aware of any bias to limit any

inauthenticity in the findings. The researcher must interpret a phenomenon (Fusch & Ness, 2015). For this study, I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews, analyze archived data, and conduct observations. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) during the interviews to conduct open-ended interviews as a method of data collection. The use of open-ended interviews provides researchers a way to understand the participants and to see their personal views, interpretations, and opinions (Silverman, 2017).

In comparison, Rohrer, Brümmer, Schmukle, Goebel, and Wagner (2017) indicated that researchers use open-ended questions to collect pertinent data that could not have been obtained in closed-end questions. As a part of the interview protocol, I have listed the open-ended interview questions I asked participants (see Appendix B). Once I asked the participants the open-ended questions, I paraphrased their responses and shared them with the participant to ensure accurate interpretation.

I was the data collection instrument that annotated responses during the interviews from the three participants. According to Cope (2014), the researcher usually collects the data and acts as the data instrument. When acting as the instrument, the researcher interviews participants, collect data, and shares findings (Yin, 2016). A researcher collects data from a variety of sources as a data collection instrument (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2014).

I used reliability and validity as a data collection instrument by using member checking. Researchers use member checking to ensure that participants' feedback will validate and enhance the credibility, accuracy, and transferability of participants'

responses (Malave, Diggs, & Sampayo, 2019). I conducted member checking by synthesizing each question and response, and asking probing questions after the participant responded to the question. Reliability refers to consistency in research and means that the results are both dependable and replicable (Zohrabi, 2013). Reliability will ensure consistency when interviewing participants. Researchers must conclude with similar results from the interviews, to maintain and ensure data is reliable (Zohrabi, 2013). Validity in research includes creditability and trustworthiness for both the researcher and the participant. Zohrabi (2013) explained validity as accurate research that proves its claim.

Data Collection Technique

I used semistructured interviews during the interviews. Researchers can obtain data several ways in a case study (Yin, 2016). Researchers most commonly use semistructured interviews and document review as the data collection technique in a qualitative case study (Cleland, 2017). Semistructured interviews allow participants to answer open-ended questions and allow the researcher to gather insightful data (Grossoehme, 2014). This research study involved three small business owners. The interviews were semistructured and recorded. All interview questions were face-to-face and open-ended. All interviews took place after IRB approval. I researched historical data for each organization, as both face-to-face and historical data have advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage of a face-to-face interview is the ability to establish rapport and gestures, and the researcher can see the actual person they are speaking to. Open-ended

questions during the interview allowed the participant to share learned experiences in a

quiet setting at the best time that fit participants' schedules. The disadvantage of face-to-

face interviews included the time it takes to sit and share successful strategies. To

overcome the disadvantages and challenges, I conducted a time that best fitted the

participants and in a setting where they felt comfortable. I used QSR NVivo Version 11

software to organize data that was collected. The disadvantage in reviewing documents

included dated information, bias behaviors, and unavailability of resources (Booth, 2016).

Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained ways member checking can boost a qualitative

study constancy. I used member checking to analyze participants' relayed data. I used

member checking to enhance the reliability and validity of the interview results. To

complete the member checking process, I scheduled a second meeting with participants

and reviewed the responses with them and made any corrections that was needed.

Through this method, I ensured an accurate understanding of each participant's response

and solidified the data, to include data saturation.

Data Organization Technique

Alsaawi (2014) discussed the importance of keeping data organized during

qualitative research that consists of data and transcribed interviews. During this research

study, I took many steps to organize data techniques. I used a case study database, which

Yazan (2015) stated is a formal method of assembling evidence used in research, to track

and gather information in this multiple case study. Researchers use the case study

database to organize annotated bibliographies, historical documents, future interviews,

and transcripts. I used my personal computer to download and translate electronic audio

files to protect and preserve research data. All handwritten information from the interview was transferred to electronic files on my personal computer. I used the NVivo 11 software to transcribe data, to help sort information, store, and code interview information. All raw data is stored on a digital folder on my personal computer, which is password protected for the next 5 years. After this time, I will delete the electronic data and shred the hard data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a system used to arrange, evaluate, consolidate, and review all research from the data collection. Data analysis is time consuming and is used by qualitative researchers to improve research study findings and quality (Stuckey, 2015). Rowley (2014) identified the critical components of data analysis as (a) inspect and organize, (b) data familiarization, (c) classify data, (d) data coding and interpreting, and (e) presenting and writing data. I conducted interviews after I received IRB approval. Next, I interviewed the participants.

Yin (2015) explained the data analysis tool triangulation as the use of at least two sources to validate research in a study. Researchers use methodological triangulation to increase validity in qualitative research through interviews, observation, surveys, and documents to support research findings (Denzin & Giardina, 2016; Heale & Forbes, 2013). Morse (2015a) expressed the necessity of using a methodological triangulation in the data analysis process to triangulate data. Two types of triangulation research typically used are methodology or data triangulation. I used data triangulation to interview multiple sources and examined archived records and documents. I organized all

information that was recorded from every interview, ensured the data was adequately coded, analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated to reach data triangulation. I used data triangulation to assist me with identifying themes. I coded data manually and entered data in the NVivo software system to collect themes from the interview data. I used the NVivo software to analyze, organize, and code the data from interviews until themes emerge. To reach data saturation, I asked probing questions after each question until no new data or themes emerged. According to Saunders et al. (2018), data saturation occurs when no new data emerge from participants. I reviewed the responses and summary with each participant on the information they shared with me during the interview to affirm accuracy.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers use reliability and validity in research to enhance the findings from their study. Leung (2015) stated that researchers use reliability and validity to confirm accuracy and precision in research. In comparison, Morse (2015b) discussed how researchers must show credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability in a qualitative research study, making sure the study findings are reliable and valid. In this section, I discussed details about how I achieved reliability and validity to support the findings from my research study.

Reliability

Reliability warrants quality and increases the reliability of findings in a qualitative research case study to prevent errors (Hess et al., 2014). According to Taylor (2013), researchers measure reliability as the quality and efficiency of the findings from the

research study. Fusch and Ness (2015) recommended that researchers use member checking to solidify dependability and reliability of findings. Member checking in a qualitative research study increases reliability and validity (Foley & O'Connor, 2013).

In comparison, Yin (2015) recommended that researchers use member checking to confirm findings and clarification of data. I used member checking by relying on participants to clarify data or validate the reliability of the information given. I used member checking to add objectivity, reliability, and dependability by allowing participants to review my interpretation of their responses and ensure accuracy of the data.

Validity

The validity of research is based on the credibility and trustworthiness, dependability, and transferability of the findings from the study (Cope, 2014). Morse (2015a) stated that member checking is a method used to validate data. Researchers establish credibility through observation, member checking, and triangulation with research to ensure the accuracy of research data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I ensured credibility by using triangulation and member checking of data from interviews with participants. I recorded all interviews conducted. To verify accuracy, I met with participants to review a summary of their transcript that I recorded during their interview.

Anney (2014) described confirmability as an external investigation of a research study. Researchers use confirmability to interpret the findings from a participants' response without interjecting the researcher's thoughts and potential bias (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I thoroughly explored the notes taken from participants prior and after

each interview for confirmability. When a researcher reaches a point where there is no additional or new information or related themes emerging, data saturation has occurred (Constantinou et al., 2017). To reach data saturation, I examined and coded each participant's responses multiple times.

Dependability is the consistency of data and findings (Anney, 2014). Having consistent evidence is an example of data triangulation (Noble & Smith, 2015). Dependability is repetitiveness in the findings so that all findings are consistent (Sutton & Austin, 2015). To ensure dependability, as recommended by Yin (2018), I followed an interview protocol.

Cope (2014) explained that transferability of research findings consists of multiple groups or situations during a study that other researchers may use. Detailed reports from the interviews will reveal if appropriate information is transferable (Noble & Smith, 2015). I recruited participants in managerial positions like others in managerial positions, which added to transferability. Transferability is the external verification of research (Daniel, 2018).

Researchers achieve data saturation when they have analyzed all the data, and no new themes emerge. According to Constantinou et al. (2017), data saturation happens when the research has no new data or related themes to describe the phenomena of the study. I checked for data saturation during the interview process by examining, analyzing, and coding data received from the participants.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I presented the overview of the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participant, research method and design, study population, and sampling method, and ethical in conducting a research study. The instruments for collecting data, reliability, validity, and the process of using NVivo 11 software application was used as listed in Section 2.

In Section 3, I re-introduced the purpose statement and a summary of the findings in the study. The results covered the purpose statement, research question, and the finding of the study. The following subtopics are listed in Section 3 (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) researcher reflections, and (f) conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by small businesses leaders to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. In this section, I present the findings and discuss the themes that emerged. I discuss the application to professional practice, implications for social change, the recommendation for action, further research, personal reflections, and my conclusions. I conducted semistructured interviews with hiring managers from three businesses in the southeastern Virginia area to obtain information on small business leaders' strategies for recruiting veterans. I conducted semistructured interviews in a quiet and confidential area so participants could be comfortable. After the initial interview was completed, I met with participants to conduct member checking. Member checking was conducted with participants by meeting with them to discuss their responses to the initial interview questions. This practice allowed participants to verify all data were accurate. I used NVivo 11 software to organize, analyze, and identify emerging themes.

My findings included four themes relevant to supporting the recruitment of veterans: (a) social media advertisement, (b) local networking with military facilities, (c) workshop and job description, and (d) resume review and effective communication. As Yin (2018) described, I was able to generate comprehensive details from participants. I also reviewed the organizations' historical hiring and retention data, which supported each participant's responses in the interviews. Participants advertised job vacancies through social media, military post advertisements, human resource boards, and small

business administration. Of the three participants, each participant agreed that the labor force hiring process consists of competition with other civilian entities.

Presentation of the Findings

In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews to gain an understanding of strategies leaders in small businesses use to recruit, hire, and retain qualified military veterans. The research question for this study was: What strategies do small business leaders use to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans? I applied the recruitment framework to investigate the strategies small businesses use to employ transitioning military veterans. I collected data to answer the research question by conducting interviews with participants and reviewing company documents such as hiring assessments. I conducted semistructured interviews with three participants from three different small businesses; participants will be identified as P1, P2, and P3. I conducted interviews in a quiet and confidential area where the participants felt comfortable and relaxed.

After collecting data, analyzing interviews, and coding data, four themes emerged: (a) social media advertisement, (b) local networking with military facilities, (c) workshop and job description, and (d) resume review and effective communication. I compared the data collection relationship between recruiting, hiring, retaining military veterans, and aligned the themes using the conceptual framework study of recruitment theory (Dunnette, 1976; Farndale et al., 2015). I describe how the findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge aligned with the literature review. I gained knowledge on recruitment changes, needs while embracing the strengths of qualified veterans, and

how each relates to the conceptual framework used in my study. I have listed the four

themes from the in-depth examination in my study in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Main Themes

Themes	Occurrences
Social media advertisement	P1, P2, P3
Local networking with military families	P1, P2
Workshops and job description	P1, P2, P3
Resume review and effective communication	P1, P2, P3

Theme 1: Social Media Advertisement

The first theme identified was social media advertisements from all participants

(P1, P2, and P3). Erdoğmuş and Çiçek (2012) discussed social media as a platform that

has a positive effect when properly used. Social media marketing received attention from

academia and practitioners in the new era (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek). The participants

identified social media advertising as a vital tool in recruiting veterans for their

organizations. Zang and Ye (2015) described Internet recruiting as one of the most

prominent methods to advertise job positions. P1 stated that,

> They depend heavily on social media for a high number of qualified veterans.
>
> They use sources like Indeed, LinkedIn, and others to reach the masses of
>
> veterans, and the great thing about that is, it gives us business intelligence in
>
> terms of veterans. So usually, when the veterans put their application in on Indeed
>
> or LinkedIn websites, they have already identified themselves as veterans, which
>
> is the focal point organizations look for when they are going to employ for open
>
> positions.

According to Zang and Ye (2015), a powerful method to use as an external source is Internet recruiting, which is a prominent way to advertise jobs. P3 stated, "that they always look at the veteran's preferences." In comparison, P1 stated, "that they review veteran's military background." Al Ariss et al., (2014) expressed the challenges with recruitment in small businesses. Organizations experience significant challenges with recruiting, hiring, and retaining military veterans (Schiemann, Seibert, & Blankenship, 2018).

P2 added, "Our recruitment department heavily uses social media to capture military veterans that are transitioning, in transit, or recently separated from the military to identify potential candidates to fill our vacant positions." The Veterans Administration released a policy in 2011 that encouraged the use of social media (Brewin, 2011). The change in the Veterans Administration policy filtered through to veterans seeking employment and encouraged veterans to search the Internet for job vacancies. P2 shared, "LinkedIn has been a vital and significant social media tool that identifies the pool of population their organizations looked for, which is the military veteran population." Campion, Ployhart, and Campion (2017) stated that recruitment is a process organizations use to fill positions, and organizations may advertise through several methods to reach qualified applicants. According to Teo et al. (2018), it is reasonable to see military veterans use social media to reach a variety of U.S. companies looking for qualified applicants. Gërxhani and Koster (2015) stated that small business owners could use external recruiting mechanisms to identify potential candidates who are competitive and have the qualifications to fill available positions, which aligns with this theme.

P3 shared that they "have an excellent outcome by using social media." Social media minimizes their recruiting department's worktime because sites like LinkedIn and Indeed identify the pool of potential military veterans they are seeking. P3 also posited "that 75% of their employees are military veterans that were identified through LinkedIn or Indeed." Hayati (2019) shared that job advertisement is the primary recruitment tool to find qualified applicants searching for employment, which aligns this theme to the recruitment conceptual framework theory. P3 expressed the "high ratio of veterans that are vetted and hired through social media has allowed the business to flourish and save financially." Advertisement is necessary for businesses and social media allows organizations to reach the masses (Campion et al., 2017). Villeda and McCamey (2019) stated that social media sites are used to recruit and select qualified candidates and organizations benefit by reducing cost, decrease time recruiters spend on each employee, reaching the masses of potentially qualified applicants, and the ability to minimize passive applicants. Therefore, the job descriptions and veterans transitioning workshops align with the literature review and recruitment theory. This theme also confirmed the findings of Muscalu (2015), who asserted that business owners had a larger pool of candidates to pull from external recruitment sources, resulting in a pool of qualified applicants from around the world that best fit the advertised job opening. Table 2 shows a brief description and aggressiveness of each participant's recruitment involvement with social media advertisements.

Table 2

Social Media Advertisement Analysis

Description	P1	P2	P3
Use social media to find applicants	100%	100%	100%
Use competitive analysis to get resumes'	100%	100%	100%
Use social media to advertise vacant positions	100%	100%	100%
See an upward trend with veterans using social media	100%	100%	100%

Theme 2: Local Networking With Military Facilities

P2 shared "the effectiveness of networking locally and with military facilities, to get the maximum flash to bang (short timeframe) with employing qualified military veterans for open positions." P1 shared, "The key barrier is access to military facilities and influence as a veteran." P1 has access to the military bases and military facilities, and prior service gives them familiarity with service members and military locations. P1 continued, "Other companies do not have access, and the process they go through to get that access on military posts to attend job fairs and other transitioning events becomes more of a challenge." All three participants use TAP to filter qualified veterans. External recruitment sources are valuable resources that can assist in providing quality candidates (Muscalu, 2015).

P2 stated, "Local networking with military facilities is all about being exposed because there are so many veterans transitioning—that is, it is almost like a tsunami of information, especially when we do not have a military background." Zoli, Maury, Fay (2015) explained the leading gap in military veterans' transition from the armed services is a lack of collaboration, coordination, and collective purpose. Networking with local facilities' program coordinators has allowed P2's company to produce quality workers

who are all prior military service personnel. P2 explained, "The hiring managers look directly into those programs that provide military personnel as they transition from the military. P2 stated, "There is a significant military presence here." The organization makes sure they are engaged and have a presence with local military facilities and initiatives on each military base or other supporting organizations that have job fairs for transitioning veterans. P2 shared, "We look at what best aligns with our company's strategy." The company visits military bases monthly to attend job fairs. This company has direct access to job fairs and events on military facilities.

Participants discussed the return on investment of using local network strategies with military facilities. All participants identified local networking as a strategy that enhances business growth and sustainability. Building relationships with local military facilities increases the organization's structure and learning abilities. Each participant fostered a relationship with local military facilities to identify qualified military veterans who fit open positions in their organization. In alignment with this theme, Farndale et al. (2015) stated that organizations that are well-diversified on recruitment and can embrace qualified veterans' skill sets might increase the overall impact of the business. Table 3 displays the results of each participant using local networking strategies at military facilities to interact with transitioning veterans.

Table 3

Local Networking with Military Facilities Analysis

Description	P1	P2	P3
Use social media to find applicants	100%	100%	0%
Use competitive analysis to get resumes'	100%	100%	0%
Use social media to advertise vacant positions	100%	100%	0%
See an upward trend with veterans using social media	100%	100%	0%

Theme 3: Workshop and Job Description

Participants shared information on how they attend workshops to mirror their job descriptions. P1stated, "They attend multiple veterans' workshops or events where veterans will be present because the workshops are veteran focused." So, that is the first thing compared to other companies that may not go to those events. P1 shared that "other companies tend not to attend workshops because they do not see the need." Keeling, Kintzle, and Castro (2018) expressed the importance of veteran's integration and how military personnel should receive transitioning into corporate America during the TAP process by veterans who have transitioned. The participant makes attending the event our priority because that is how they get contact with veterans, and because it is a broad base or military presence, the military work very well for them. Lambert (2015) emphasized that business owners that invested in developing a robust recruitment strategy by openly embracing multicultural and diversity would attract educated, talented, and knowledgeable applicants in a broad spectrum. Secondly, participants contributed in the Skill Bridge Program, which is spearheaded by The Chamber Hiring Vets Now. The Chamber Hiring Vets Now allow veterans that are within 1 to 6 months from transitioning to do an internship with a commercial company. P1 stated, "Right now, the

veterans have to go through Prance, which is the most popular business for these veterans, especially those veterans with an Information Technology (IT) background and cybersecurity that can do a fellowship at the participant's company." Currently, P1's company has five fellows, and the PRANCE program enhances skill traits that align with the organization of the P1 job description.

Small business businesses hiring managers with networking skills who are social media savvy are great assets to organizations that are looking to employ experienced military veterans transitioning from the armed forces. All participants expressed the need and importance of networking with local military facilities and using social media as a recruiting tool. All participants shared that they depend heavily on social media to recruit for their positions. Participants reinforced Ahmed, Ramachandra, Jadav (2014) discussion on taking advantage of external recruitment resources, which aligns with the conceptual framework in the literature review. Zang and Ye (2015) explained how external recruitment is one of the most effective ways for organizations to advertise open jobs.

Participants confirmed workshops and job descriptions as a bridge to gain access to a larger military service group. Dunnette described the recruitment theory as finding an experience applicant that is the perfect candidate for the position. P1, P2, and P3 shared that their organizations provided detailed job description when attending workshops, which has been a tremendous help with placing qualified candidates in the right positions. This theme aligns with Ramhit (2019) recruitment theory and literature review that job descriptions are vital to getting the right employees who will be successful and ensure employees are familiar with their daily job duties.

Holzer (2017) discussed ways organizations could approach recruitment through workshop training and technical educations; therefore, this theme aligns with recruitment theory. P1, P2, and P3 shared their organizations benefit from attending workshops, presenting job descriptions during the presentation, and advertising available job descriptions on social media. In alignment with this theme, Ekwoaba et al. (2015) indicated that the recruitment stage is given potential employees an introduction to open positions, position descriptions, and required qualifications.

They depend heavily on social media for a high number of qualified veterans. They use sources like Indeed, LinkedIn, and others to reach the masses of veterans, and the great thing about that is, it gives us business intelligence in terms of veterans. So usually, when the veterans put their application in on Indeed or LinkedIn websites, they have already identified themselves as veterans, which is the focal point organizations look for when they are going to employ for open positions.

P2 stated, "They start transitioning anywhere from 1 to 6 months out, and not only does that help with recruiting and narrowing down the job description they are eligible for, it helps us to be able to demonstrate the services and other future service members caliber, quality, and the experience that they get from working with a business like ours."

According to P2, "TAPS makes the transition phase much easier for their organization during the workshops by identifying qualified veterans by job description." Wintle (2007) stated that during the recruiting process it is crucial for businesses to have job descriptions when adverting jobs and during the interview so applicants know what

the job entails, which aligns with the literature review. Kanagavalli, Seethalakshmi,

Sowdamini (2019) posited that organizations that adopted the latest recruiting process

such as workshops has been successful in find the best candidate for the organization,

which further align this theme. If a veteran is applying for a job in IT and they have been

an IT technician in the Army, Navy, or Air Force, their competencies are tested based on

their certification, which goes back to our job description. Military veteran's skill set, and

their specific jobs, are identified by Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), which is

converted to civilian organizations job description. Those same credentials that veterans

possess through the Department of Defense are the same at our business.

P3 stated, "they would assist veterans with increasing professional development,

networking, sponsorship, and mentorship to better align the veteran to the job position."

Boudreau and Rynes (1985) posited that recruitment theory could identify gaps and equip

hiring managers with knowledge of what qualified employment veterans are seeking. The

TAP program has assisted with making sure transitioning veteran's qualifications meet

the organization's job description. Harrell and Berglass (2012) discussed the importance

of workshops and job fairs by saying, the two help bridge gaps between employers and

transitioning veterans. The findings identified results that indicate advertising job

vacancies with a detailed description is an effective strategy for attracting qualified

veterans (Dunlap, 2014). The participant found it useful to a job description to seek the

best candidates. Farndale et al. (2015) stated that the constructs of recruitment theory

would help organizations understand recruitment changes while embracing the power that

qualified veterans possess that may increase business revenues. Table 4 includes

responses from participants that relate to the workshop and job description.

Table 4

Theme: Workshop and Job Description

Participant	Response
P1	We face challenges filling positions, and we have to make sure job title and description aligns with each other. The organization wants to make sure we advertise all that the position entails getting a quality product candidate.
P2	By advertising the job description with in-depth detail, it allows us to get a candidate that can over-perform in the position advertised. Attending the workshop has been a success for our company with getting quality military veterans that know what they are doing and are eager to be a part of our team.
P3	We can get anyone to fill our positions, but by attending workshops at local military facilities and having a detailed job description available have been rewarding. This process has filled over 85% of our positions that were available with quality military veterans.

Theme 4 Resume' Review and Effective Communication

Each small business owner reviews resumes' and places qualified applicants on

an order of merit list (OML) to determine the ranking of a qualified applicant. P1, P2, and

P3 shared that they were highly knowledgeable on reading veteran's resumes and how to

convert military skills to civilians' job openings. Dunnette (1976) posited that the

recruitment theory focuses on systemic approaches of leaders to identify qualified

workers that fit the organization's needs. Organizations prepare themselves with the best

business practice to successfully hire veterans by making sure staff get additional

communication training to communicate better and build trust with military veterans

(Kneeling, Kintzle & Castro, 2018). To further align this theme with the literature review,

Kanagavalli, Seethalakshmi, Sowdamini (2019) asserted that through effective

communication with applicants throughout the world, organizations could find the right candidate for available positions. P1 stated that by his organization's competency in understanding the military veteran's resume, they had been successful in identifying the right applicant that fits all their open position. This theme aligns with Bolman and Deal (2015) recruitment theory statement that recruiters must find the right candidate that fits the criteria of an organization.

All participants had a similar response to how they maintain a high retention rate with veterans because of effective communication. P1, P2, and P3 stated that military veterans they hired had been loyal and motivated employees. The results revealed that the organization's close relationship with veterans played an essential part in retention. P1 stated that by effectively communicating with their veteran employees, the employee quickly realized they work for military-friendly companies, and that type of communication is what keeps the retention rate high. Participants responded on how effective communication has a high employee retention rate.

The organizations expressed by them being able to communicate with personnel once hired effectively has been a great asset to increased retention rates. To further align this theme, P1 shared a variety of ways an organization could be successful in recruiting military veterans. P1 expressed that their strategy consisted of making sure their employees understand the use of their benefits. The company found out that most of the veterans they employed were not aware of their available benefits. The homeowners and business loan benefits were two significant benefits veterans did not know about, and by P1 exposing and communicating the information to veterans, was able to retain several

employees. P2 posited that through effective communication with their employees, they have been able to increase the retention rate by 42%. The organization invests in their veterans and uses effective communication by providing monthly and quarterly training and educational service. P3 organization make sure their veterans are committed to long-term employment once exiting the service by providing performance goals, incentives, support systems, sponsorships, and mentorship that is tied into veterans achieving quarterly goals. The open communication has allowed veterans to reciprocate and effectively communicate with their employer. Organizations that invest in their employees tend to see the business thrive (Lorinkova, Peaesall, & Sims, 2013).

P3 stated, "that there are so many entitlements veterans are entitled to, and they do not know, just based on where they are at during that time in their lives." The organizations shared three to four years later benefits such as the veteran's hospital care is available, and their employees did not realize they were eligible because they were too young and did not need the services. P3 shared, "that veterans who have service-connected disabilities are educated by P3 human resource staff on their entitlements, which is a result of effective communication between P3 and the veteran." P3 retained veterans because the veterans realize the company is user-friendly, have a direct focus on veterans, and they can get information veterans may not be able to get from external sources. There are several executives at all three participant's locations who were prior service members and were able to communicate with employees and external sources to meet the veteran's needs. A successful organization creates positive recruitment

strategies to minimize high turnovers (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016), further aligning this theme

The findings in this study correlated with existing literature and aligned with the recruitment theory. Participants shared comparison in the themes could increase small businesses hiring strategies with military veterans. Participants shared that they conduct monthly training with staff on effective communication strategies to communicate with veterans. Lee, Idris, and Tuckey (2019) described effective communication as the ability to enhance employee's knowledge, skills, and to effectively perform daily tasks in a working environment, which aligned with Dunnette's recruitment theory.

Application to Professional Practice

The results of this study could be beneficial to current and future small businesses hiring managers by learning strategies they can use to improve daily operational practices with military veterans. The results of this study could improve small business productivity and performance. This study is of value to the practice of business because the findings and recommendations may improve strategies for operational plans when hiring qualified veterans. Four themes emerged during this study: (a) social media advertisement, (b) local networking with military facilities, (c) workshop and job description, and (d) resume' review and effective communication. Small businesses in the local area could benefit from this study as a recruitment tool, to implement strategies in their organization that will align qualified military veterans to positions that the business has available. Dunnette (1976) identified three constructs of recruitment theory, which are (a) organizations need to find skilled workers, (b) identifying qualified applicants, and

(c) hiring the right person. Therefore, organizations should embrace recruitment changes, which could increase the overall company's revenues (Farndale, Biron, Briscoe, & Raghuram, 2015). This study could increase the hiring manager's hiring, recruitment, and retention awareness with military veterans.

Additionally, this study could increase small businesses recruiting awareness and reduce businesses' failure when hiring, recruiting, and retaining military veterans in the state of Virginia. The findings from this study could contribute to increased awareness and collaboration of local military facilities coordinators and small businesses in southeastern Virginia area in identifying transitioning veterans earlier in the process to align qualified veterans to the best job. Small businesses in the area may be motivated to build working relationships with military facilities to ensure a smoother recruitment process and have an effective networking process. Klettner, Clarke, and Boersma (2013) expressed the importance of small business owners to implement strategies that reduce business failure.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study could help improve small business owner's recruitment strategies and understanding of the military veterans transitioning process. Hiring managers could apply the findings from this study to implement and improve recruitment strategies when hiring military veterans, which could improve the organization's production. The implications of positive social change from this study could reduce recruitment failures and strengthen the hiring process. The social change from this study could impact a small business by allowing hiring managers to become

knowledgeable about the military transitioning process, how to identify qualified military veterans, and methods to retain their military veteran's employees, which will help sustain small beyond five years.

Implications for social change include increasing the recruiting and retention population. If a small business adopts strategies based on the findings from this study, the business could potentially benefit through sustainability and increased profits. Therefore, the local community's unemployment rate may decrease, resulting in stabilizing the local economy. The results of this study could help fill gaps in the literature on what strategies small businesses use for hiring, recruiting, and retaining military veterans in the southeastern Virginia area.

Recommendation for Action

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by leaders of small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. The specific business problem is that some business leaders in small businesses lack strategies to recruit, hire, and retain qualified military veterans. Based on the findings in this research study, I recommend the following actions that may enhance small business recruitment strategies. Small business hiring managers should gain knowledge on four themes to support the recruitment of veterans: (a) social media advertisement, (b) local networking with military facilities, (c) workshop and job description, and (d) resume' review and effective communication.

Hiring managers should use social media advertisement to seek qualified candidates. The use of social media advertisement will also ensure that the job vacancies

reach the masses of the transitioning veteran's populations, and to get the best candidate that is suitable for the open jobs. Secondly, organizations should maximize their networking by collaborating with local military facilities, attend workshops, and other events that may be available. Thirdly, I would recommend open communications with hiring managers and candidates during the resume' review and as an employee. These open communications create and foster a positive work environment that enhances the company's growth.

The findings from this research are relevant to a small business owner's ability to survive in a competitive economy, which is essential to business sustainability. If small business hiring managers are knowledgeable about the hiring process of military veterans, their organization could potentially sustain in a competitive economy. I recommend that small business hiring managers use this study to improve identified strategies used to hire, recruit, and retain military veterans. I intend to publish this study through ProQuest database, peer-reviewed journals, professional conferences, training seminars, business leaders, students, researchers, and workforce organizations where leaders share practical strategies to recruit skill veterans to sustain the organization's profits.

Recommendations for Further Research

I conducted a qualitative multiple case study to explore the strategies used by leaders of small businesses to recruit, hire, and retain qualified veterans. The research population consisted of three businesses in southeastern Virginia area. The expectations were that findings from this study would fill gaps in the previous recruit of military

veteran's literature and promote a positive social change in areas that are so rich with military populations. Future research study could address more participants in a broader area besides two cities in southeastern Virginia. Future research could also concentrate on larger companies. I had enough participants to reach data saturation, but additional participants could be used to gather a plethora of emerging themes.

Reflections

In this research study, I explored small business leaders' strategies for recruiting veterans. My participants were identified from three small businesses in the southeastern Virginia area. The majority of the participants were prior service members and therefore passionate about their answers to my research questions. The participants were well versed in the process of hiring military veterans and were knowledgeable in creating a positive work environment for veterans to transition. I am a veteran and this research was something that interested me because I wanted to see if there were effective strategies in place for transitioning military personnel to corporate America. I formed a close relationship with participants because we had many things in common. My passion for this research could have posed possible biases or preconceived ideas because of my opinions. The participant's responses increased my knowledge of best transition practices when Soldiers exit the military.

The DBA program was tedious and complicated at times, but the results are rewarding. I have had a great learning experience during this doctoral program. I relied directly on Walden University and the IRB's protocols. This research study allowed me

to think critically and remain unbiased because this research revealed rich data, ideas, and methods to effectively mentor military veterans as they transition.

Conclusions

In Section 3, I present the research findings, applications to the professional practice in small businesses, implications for social changes, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflections. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore small business leaders' strategies for recruiting veterans. The conceptual framework that aligned with this research study was the recruitment theory. The study findings that emerged included four themes. The themes were (a) social media advertisement, (b) local networking with military facilities, (c) workshop and job description, and (d) resume' review and effective communication. In conclusion, the finding from this study may identify strategies used by businesses to recruit and retain veterans as employees, which could then be used by other organizations interested in employing.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Small Business Leaders' Strategies for Recruiting Veterans

The face to face interview will begin by introducing myself and the research topic.

A.   I will greet the participants.

B.   I will ensure the environment and surrounding location is secure and private.

C.   I will give a detail brief on the consent form.

D.   I will remind participants that the interview will be recorded but will remain confidential.

E.   I will start the recorder and begin to speak clear and begin the interview.

F.   I will explain member checking process and will contact participants to verify data accuracy of information collected during the interview.

G.   I will comprise all data collected from interview, which was verified by participant and concluded the interview by letting participants know how appreciative I was of them participating in my research.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1.   What strategies do you use to recruit military veterans?

2.   What strategies do you use to retain military veterans?

3.   What strategies do you use to identify veterans' competencies during the recruitment and hiring process?

4.   How do you determine the alignment of workforce capability and capacity needs with the skills of veterans?

5.   What were the key barriers to implementing your strategies in the process of hiring veterans?

6.   How did you address the barriers to implementing your strategies in the hiring process?

7.   What additional information do you want to share about your strategies to recruit, hire, and retain military veterans?