

2015

# Success Factors of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

Kenneth Joseph Chamberland  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Kenneth Chamberland

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2015

Abstract

Success Factors of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

by

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

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## Abstract

Small business failure rates equate to 30% within 2 years and 50% after 5 years. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies that veteran-owned small businesses used to sustain a business beyond 5 years in central Florida. Using a purposeful sampling technique, 13 central Florida veteran small business owners consented to interviews about their operating processes. Analysis of the veteran-owner managerial practices revealed common nodes and themes regarding small business longevity factors. Based on constant comparison coding, 4 small business themes emerged: business operating practices, market research, business adversities, and external small business assistance avenues. The experiences of veteran small business owners emulated the general systems theory and the triple-loop learning theory in identifying, organizing, and initiating process changes for small business operational permanence. This study has social change implications for aspiring veteran small business owners: Successful veteran entrepreneurship can promote positive social values, stakeholder satisfaction, and employment opportunities by exploring small business operating strategies, conducting market analysis, overcoming adversities, and petitioning external small business veteran programs.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wife, Elizabeth. Thank you for your continued prayers and support in assisting me through this educational journey. I could not have done it without you. Yo te Amo!

## Acknowledgments

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	iv
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem .....	1
Problem Statement .....	1
Purpose Statement.....	2
Nature of the Study .....	2
Research Question .....	3
Interview Questions .....	4
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	7
Assumptions.....	7
Limitations .....	7
Delimitations.....	8
Significance of the Study .....	8
Contribution to Business Practice.....	8
Implications for Social Change.....	9
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	9
General Small Business Practices.....	13
Entrepreneurial Initiatives.....	29
Veteran Assistance.....	39



Veteran Transitions.....	45
Transition and Summary.....	54
Section 2: The Project.....	56
Purpose Statement.....	56
Role of the Researcher .....	57
Participants.....	58
Research Method and Design .....	59
Method .....	60
Research Design.....	61
Population and Sampling .....	62
Ethical Research.....	63
Data Collection .....	64
Instruments.....	65
Data Collection Technique .....	66
Data Organization Techniques.....	67
Data Analysis Technique .....	68
Reliability and Validity.....	70
Reliability.....	71
Validity .....	72
Summary and Transition.....	74
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change .....	76
Introduction.....	76

Presentation of Findings .....	78
Participant Demographics.....	78
Research Theme Overview .....	79
Theme 1: Business Practices.....	80
Theme 2: Market Research.....	84
Theme 3: Business Adversities.....	87
Theme 4: Business Assistance Avenues.....	90
Applications to Professional Practice .....	97
Implications for Social Change.....	102
Recommendations for Action .....	103
Recommendations for Further Research.....	105
Reflections .....	106
Summary and Conclusions .....	107
References.....	109
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	126

List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses Contacted.....	79
Table 2. Veteran-Owned Small Business Practices.....	81
Table 3. Veteran-Owned Small Business Market Research.....	85
Table 4. Veteran-Owned Small Business Adversities.....	88
Table 5. Veteran-Owned Small Business Assistance Avenues.....	91

## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The U.S. Congress' concern was to aid, counsel, assist, and protect small business interests when it passed the Small Business Act in 1953 (Neumark, Wall, & Junfu, 2011). The focus of this act was to establish the U.S. Small Business Administration (Neumark et al., 2011). The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) ensures equally awarded governmental contracts to small businesses (Neumark et al., 2011). The SBA also provides and certifies small business loans to ensure free-market competition to bolster U.S. economic conditions (Neumark et al., 2011).

### **Background of the Problem**

In 2010, the United States had over 27 million small businesses, that is, businesses with fewer than 500 employees (SBA, 2012). Small business failure rates equated to 30% failures within 2 years of starting a new venture, while 50% lasted past 5 years (Solomon, Bryant, May, & Perry, 2013). The U.S. economy hinged partially on the successful operation of small businesses that created employment for 64% of the U.S. labor force from 1993—2011 (SBA, 2012). In 2013, the U.S. Department of Labor (2013) reported that there were fewer than 700,000 self-employed veterans among the 10.2 million employed veterans, from all military service periods (i.e., Gulf War era I & II, Vietnam era, Korean War, and World War II). According to Lighthall (2012), military downsizing will increase the number of veterans; according to Hoppenfeld, Wyckoff, Henson, Mayotte, and Kirkwood (2013) 45% of veterans may become self-employed.

### **Problem Statement**

Small business owners in 2009 employed almost 60 million people in the United States; 13% of small businesses were veteran-owned and 8.3% were service-disabled veteran-owned (Bressler, Bressler, & Bressler, 2013). As of 2010, approximately 70% of small business startups survived 2 years and 50% remain solvent for 5 years (SBA, 2012). The general business problem is that small business owners often have limited information about how to develop a business plan that will grow and sustain their company. The specific business problem is that some veteran small business owners lack strategies to sustain their companies beyond 5 years.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the business strategies that veteran small business owners needed to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. The study centered on veteran small business owners who had maintained a small business for at least 5 years in Central Florida. This study has implications for veteran entrepreneurship: It can (a) create positive social change, (b) promote positive social values, (c) promote stakeholder satisfaction, (d) promote incentives to create jobs that minimize governmental funding and (d) in general, improve quality of life (Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezcua, 2013).

### **Nature of the Study**

Three types of research methods are available to researchers: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2012). Mauch and Park (2003) defined qualitative research as a means of studying or observing individual and group issues that are

numerically difficult to measure. Myers (2013) wrote that a quantitative study relies on numerical data and is not as effective as a qualitative study in documenting participants' feelings, experiences, observations, and relevant situations. A qualitative research method was appropriate for this study since I queried veteran-owners on varying business strategies used in operating a successful small business without using numerical data found in quantitative studies. I did not use a mixed methods format for this study since element combinations from a qualitative method and numerical data used in a quantitative method did not synergize with this research study (Yin, 2012).

In a qualitative study, researchers may use grounded theory, a phenomenological, a narrative, an ethnographical, or a case study design to obtain data (Yin, 2012). Researchers using a multiple case study design allow for a cross-case synthesis based on a pattern-matching process (Yin, 2012). A phenomenological or grounded theory design use would research an individual's personal experience or worldviews on identified issues in order to develop common themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A narrative or ethnographical design would center on personal, historical stories or cultural experiences; future small business start-up problems are not covered (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2012; Kimmel, 2013). The multiple case study design chosen for this study enabled respondents to participate in an open discussion of management practices within small business ventures—something that could not transpire using other research designs.

### **Research Question**

The SBA (2012) reported that small business ventures had a 2 year survival of

70% and a 5 year survival rate of 50%. Bressler et al. (2013) conveyed that 99% of all businesses supporting the U.S. economy derive from small businesses while 13% being veteran-owned and 8.3% being service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The overarching research question for this study was as follows: What strategies do veteran business owners need to sustain their companies beyond 5 years? My study may address unique business problems, employment practices, financing, and operating strategies that may be prevalent for veteran-owned small business startups in Central Florida. I used the following interview questions to explore veteran-owned small business practices.

### **Interview Questions**

1. Why did you establish this business in Florida?
2. What financial assistance did you obtain to establish and maintain this business?
3. What market research did you conduct in providing your product or service?
4. What were some of the hardships you encountered while establishing your business in Florida?
5. How did you overcome these hardship issues?
6. What were some of the successes of your company?
7. What business strategies did you use to succeed?
8. What types of governmental assistance programs have you utilized in starting or operating this business?
9. What types of veteran small business incentives have you used to expand your

business operations in Florida?

10. What types of Florida assistance organizations have you contacted to enhance your business operations?
11. What more can you add to this study to assist with understanding veteran-owned small business practices in Florida?

### **Conceptual Framework**

To constitute the conceptual framework and thus address the experiences of veteran-owned small business ventures, I used two theories for this study—general systems theory and triple-loop theory. Biologist von Bertalanffy (1972) introduced general systems theory in the 1930s to explore how the whole system of an organism functioned in relation to the functioning and dynamic relationship of its independent parts. Argyris (2002) coined organizational learning as single-loop learning for reaching a certain limit in making a decision and double-loop learning that occurs in searching for adjustment alternatives in reaching a limit before making a decision in understanding how corporations operate and motivate decisions. Tosey, Visser, and Saunders (2012) expanded on the conceptualization of Argyris' (2002) single-loop and double-loop learning concepts with a triple-loop learning theorem that can help reshape established principles and reshape organizations. Finally, Asproth, Amcoff Nyström, Olsson, and Öberg (2011) expounded on the triple-loop learning theory to reflect that (a) single-loop learning asks *how* learning works (b) double-loop asking *what* is being learned, and (c) triple-loop asking *why* there is learning in determining a need for process change.



I used general systems and triple-loop learning concepts in formulating this study. Small businesses may need to interact to ensure that the business functions well in order for the company, financial supporters, and consumers to prosper (Valadez, 2012). By asking the *how*, *what*, and *why* questions from the triple-loop learning process, veteran small business owners may consider strategic business planning options to promote increased revenues, economic growth, and employment opportunities (Asproth et al., 2011).

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms and phrases are defined to promote clarity and consistency (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

*Employability*: Employability is a metric that measures the transition of a person's obtained expertise, capabilities, and aptitudes to the workplace (Olson & Shultz, 2013).

*Service-disabled veteran*: A service-disabled veteran is a person, while in the line of duty, suffered an injury while serving in the active military, naval, or air service (Bressler et al., 2013).

*Small business*: The SBA Office of Advocacy defines a small business as an independent business with less than 500 employees (SBA, 2012).

*Veteran-owned business*: A veteran-owned business is a business owned by an individual who served in the U.S. military and discharged or released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. As a business strategy, the service veteran must own 51% or more of the business to classify as a veteran-owned business (Bressler et al.,

2013).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

The following subsections explain the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this study. Delineating the parameters of this study will aid in establishing the boundaries used within the study.

#### **Assumptions**

In the strictest form, an assumption is a fundamental statement in building a perceived theory or formulating a realistic prediction (Tsang, 2009). The following assumptions were needed to conduct this study in order solicit interview response data without requiring background documentation screening. Respondents assumedly were truthful in revealing to be military veterans without requiring a certificate of service verification. The individuals I interviewed assumedly had a stake in operating and maintaining a small business venture in Central Florida for more than 5 years. In addition, respondents assumedly provided honest and factual responses to the research questions.

#### **Limitations**

Limitations outline potential factors that could affect the outcome of a research project that are beyond the control of the researcher (Mauch & Park, 2003). This qualitative multiple case study may not convey all aspects associated with the establishment and operation of small business ventures. Respondent knowledge and experiences expressed may not be transferable to all veteran-owned small businesses or

those that are nonveteran affiliated. In analyzing the limited participant responses, I conducted an interview transcript review rather than member checking in establishing creditability and dependability.

### **Delimitations**

Mauch and Park (2003) described delimitations as restrictions or boundaries that researchers impose to focus the scope of the study. This study explored only veteran-owned small business ventures within the Central Florida that had been in operation for at least 5 years. I will not inquire into all potential small business situations in determining longevity factors within this study. Veteran participants are not required to provide personal data for use in this study, unless self-identified, in focusing on operational aspects or practical constraints of existing businesses in Florida.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The significance of the study was to explore and understand the value of what business practices veteran-owners use to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. Small business ventures survived at a rate of only 50% after 5 years (SBA, 2012) while 99% of all small businesses support the U.S. economy (Bressler et al., 2013). Under the 2010 Small Business Jobs Act, small business owners have greater flexibility with business loans, tax options, equal treatment on federal contracts, training availability, and investment options in creating more jobs (SBA, 2014). Since veteran-owners represent 13% and service-disabled veteran-owners represent 8.3% of all small businesses, it was

imperative to research the longevity strategies used by veteran-owners in supporting the U.S. economy. This multiple case study might provide insights on small business permanence for other veteran or civilian owners to emulate in sustaining a small business venture.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study may provide an insight to the development of marketing and business concepts needed to maintain a small business. Business owners should focus on how market choice, loss prevention, decisions, price, and product leveraging affect the operability of a business practice (Newbert, 2012). In developing a small business venture, owners following these business practices may create opportunities for success (Newbert, 2012). Small business owners enhance economic growth by creating between 60% and 80% of new U.S. jobs (Lahm, Stowe, Carton, & Buck, 2011). Lighthall (2012) referred to military veterans as having the fortitude to excel due to maturity, objectivity, drive, professional experience, dedication, and sacrifice. Veteran small business owners can create a positive economic change by supporting a racial, ethnic, and gender diversified workforce in formulating competitive edge for economic growth (Loscocco & Bird, 2012). Based on a comparison of the researched literature and interview data from this study, veteran owners can promote a positive societal change through product or service development in stimulating economic growth while minimizing government dependencies.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

A review of the professional and academic literature consisted of using conceptual theories in shaping this study. Biologist von Bertalanffy (1972) introduced the concept of general systems theory in the 1930s to explore how the whole system of an organism functioned. Von Bertalanffy (1972) stated that while the system is a whole, the independent parts of a system assist in understanding the functioning of the independent parts and suggested that a dynamic relationship exists between parts. Von Bertalanffy (1972) expressed an understanding of how the independent parts worked together to aid in the functioning of the whole system.

Argyris (2002) linked general systems theory logic to single-loop learning for reaching a limit and then shutting down the process. Argyris (2002) continued to link general systems theory logic to double-loop learning that occurs when making needed adjustments based on reaching a limit and then shutting down the process while exploring these principles in researching how corporations operate and motivate decisions. Argyris (2002) presented that corporations need to recognize the existence of a problem (single-loop) and then identify the internal capacities, faults, and corrections needed to correct the problem (double loop). Tosey et al. (2012) expanded on the Argyris (2002) double-loop learning concepts in reemphasizing the triple-loop learning theorem. Tosey et al. (2012) believed that the triple-loop concept added to the learning process in reshaping established principles and organizations. Asproth et al. (2011) expounded on the triple-loop learning theory to reflect (a) the single-loop learning as asking how learning works, (b) double-loop asking what is being learned, and (c) triple-loop asking why is there

learning in determining the need for systems change.

Understanding the system theory design, Soojin, Miso, and Joonhwan (2011) presented several system concepts as a cohesive law, a decisional guide, an achievement options process, and support for abstract concepts. Soojin et al. (2011) highlighted the U.S. Postal Service as a case example reflecting how managers used system concepts and process diagrams to operate efficiently. Romme and Van Witteloostuijn (1999) exemplified the usage of triple-loop theory in a case study of the Endenburg Elektrotechniek Company. Forced to downsize, the Endenburg Elektrotechniek Company incorporated the skills, competencies, and infrastructure needed to research the problem and chose the appropriate course of action to overcome the adversity. Yuthas, Dillard, and Rogers (2004) applied a triple-loop theory in researching the ENRON failure outcomes to educate on the learning process used, how learning should occur, and the motivating factors for influencing a learning outcome to prevent a reoccurrence.

Business systems may process inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback in learning to formulate a complete product whole. I utilized triple-loop concept principles in formulating this study to address the success or hardship experiences of veteran-owned small business ventures. In researching small businesses, my study on small business ventures may encompass business model strategies, offered service or products, consumer demand for the product or service, and feedback strategies for process improvement. Small business processes need to interact together to ensure the business functions well for the company, lenders, and consumers to prosper (Valadez, 2012). By

asking the how, what, and why questions from the triple-loop learning process, veteran small business owners may consider strategic business planning options to allow for economic growth resulting in increased employment opportunities and revenues (Asproth et al., 2011).

Literature concerning veteran-owned small business ventures provided the catalyst in researching the management capabilities for this case study. A review of the data provided the need for a more in-depth analysis of the operation veteran-owned small businesses. I used ProQuest, Thoreau, and EBSCOhost database searches with key terms of *veteran, veteran-owned, small business, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), entrepreneurship, self-employ, start-up, and transition*. My strategy in using these research terms was to find pertinent business articles from a broad perspective that narrowed to focus on veteran-owner business issues. My objective was to focus on referencing 85% of peer-reviewed business and veteran articles published within 5 years prior to my study conference in establishing a foundation for my research.

Veteran-owned business longevity issues propelled the purpose for this study. My literature research revealed programs and strategies in supporting small business systems and triple-loop learning processes into veteran-owned small business financial, organizational, training, and marketing practices. I researched entrepreneurial initiatives that focused on social and for-profit entrepreneurship studies, motivations, risks, potential ventures, and global market comparisons for veterans to consider. Finally, transitioning veterans face physical, emotional, and social concerns in pursuing business ventures,

employment opportunities, or educational advancements.

### **General Small Business Practices**

Veterans contemplating starting a small business venture should consider several planning options for long-term success. My intent in this section was to cover small business options for potential veteran small business owners. Through this doctoral study, my intent was to study veteran-owned small businesses following the concepts of general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972) and triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011) to research what longevity success factors may aid in operating and maintaining a small business.

**Small business start-up.** Veteran-owned small businesses may need to consider several organizational considerations and opportunity options for growth and development. McFarlane (2014) outlined several key business points as: (a) business name, selecting a unique name to prevent trademark impingements; (b) business entity, sole proprietorship, partnerships, limited liability partnership or company, and corporations; (c) co-founder agreements; (d) employee laws, contracts, policies, rights, processes; (e) contractual obligations with suppliers and customers; and (f) intellectual rights on patents with veterans wanting to start or continue to operate a small business. An additional point to consider in defining small businesses for taxation purposes, Gale and Brown (2013) provided additional criteria regarding the evaluation of business tax returns. Out of almost 28 million small businesses, roughly 6 million businesses employed 1-499 individuals while 22 million were non-employer firms (those with only



the owner and no employees). The effects on potential small business owners in choosing which business sector to follow stems from determining the entry, financing, employment or firm size, innovation, and organizational structure considerations (Gale & Brown, 2013).

**Small business growth.** Veteran-owned small businesses may need to consider various opportunity options for growth and development. Neumark et al. (2011) provided a brief synopsis of the Small Business Administration Act to provide assistance, counseling, and loans to small businesses. Research from Neumark et al. (2011) focused on determining the U.S. job growth within various business sizes by categorizing businesses to size categories and compared employment growth to business size relationships. Rubens, Jackson, and Andrews (2011) researched small business incubators to aid existing businesses, recruit new businesses, or develop new business ventures in assisting with a varying degree of facilities and staffing to jump-start a business owner. Rubens et al. (2011) presented a case study of a Florida organization projected to operate as an incubator organization and projected that the incubators will provide a positive economic development and expansion. Rubens et al. (2011) reported an increase in numerous business sectors to create economic benefits directly and indirectly. Like Rubens et al. (2011), Neumark et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative analysis of businesses pertaining to the base year size, average size, gross job creation, gross job destruction, and net job creation using the National Establishment Time Series database. Based on this analysis, small businesses, with less than 20 employees, created more jobs

despite larger manufacturing business performance and job creations (Neumark et al., 2011).

Veterans businesses looking for new innovative products to aid in business growth and development must be cautious with significant product failure rates based on perceived expectations (Jhang, Grant, & Campbell, 2012). Unlike Rubens et al. (2011) presentation of the business incubator aspects, Jhang et al. (2012) referenced product positioning by conducting research to define what is a product and product differentiation. Consumers evaluate products based on similar product characteristics and do not purchase products that share incongruent characteristics (Jhang et al., 2012). Jhang et al. (2012) provided congruent and incongruent examples in combining orange juice with vitamins and vitamins with vodka with each product having similar or dissimilar characteristics that consumers may find appealing. To test this congruent factor, Jhang et al. (2012) conducted a survey using positive and negative emotional stimuli in evaluating congruent and incongruent products. Jhang et al. (2012) found product positioning to be effective by manipulating the respondent's emotions to invoke the respondent evaluate of an incongruent product more favorably although Neumark et al. (2011) business analysis reflected growth aspects and not marketing. Business managers and innovators can use this positive influence in marketing future products (Jhang et al., 2012).

**Small business outlook.** Veteran small business owners may need to conduct longevity assessments. Using several statistical databases, Campbell, Heriot, Jauregui, and Mitchell (2012) researched the causes in determining small business births and small

business deaths foreclosures. Entrepreneurs starting a business accounted for 11% of the working population in taking a risk with an innovative idea while 89% may have had an idea but were unable to start a business (Foreman, 2011). Foreman (2011) surmised that innovation is the ability to discover a possibility through differentiation by providing several examples of innovative services and products that came from baseline products. In revealing that big business revolved around research and development, Foreman (2011) found that small business and inventors were more readily apt to create and market an idea. Campbell et al. (2012) revealed that in 2006, there were almost 650,000 new businesses along with an estimated 580,000 closures. Using the Economic Freedom of North America (EFNA) index, Campbell et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative study in determining the causes of business deaths. Sourcing from other earlier references listing economic freedom as a measure in combining governmental policies, outcomes, taxation, and influence on employment, Campbell et al. (2012) reflected on entrepreneurship as a new venture with small business startups based on per capita, unemployment rates, local markets, technological advances, and industry reorganization. Foreman (2011) provided additional examples of innovation avenues for inventors to use in developing an idea. In conclusion, Foreman (2011) posited that innovation is boundless of research and development strategies, industry, or scientific knowledge but by trust in formulating and marketing an idea. Campbell et al. (2012) reiterated that 76% of small businesses remained open after 2 years, 47% remained open after 4 years, and 38% remained open after 6 years. Using data from the EFNA index and other

governmental sources, Campbell et al. (2012) researched numerous small businesses from across the 50 U.S. states. Campbell et al. (2012) findings indicated that small businesses close at a higher rate with higher governmental influences and employment freedom (wages, unions, and government employment). Although entrepreneurs may enjoy economic freedom with small business start-ups, Campbell et al. (2012) surmised that economic freedom also accounted for small business closures.

Valadez (2012) provided an overview of the value of U.S. small business job creation and that small businesses span a multitude of industries, neighborhoods, and countries. Foreman (2011) surmised that product differentiation stemmed from small business owners being more likely to create and market an idea. Valadez (2012) identified that innovative small business owners were explorative in taking risks with trying new ideas. Small businesses appeared to be more dynamic and willing to take calculated risks; however, this may contribute to an early failure due to lack of research (Valadez, 2012). Foreman (2011) expressed big businesses focus is towards research and development while Valdez (2012) maintained the focus is on efficiency, political aspirations, invest in research, lobby governments, and have the tendency to outsource to small businesses. Valadez (2012) expounded on the business market economies ranging from commercial freedom to market economies under government control with North America rated a score of 75.7% versus Asia's score of 57.6% in governmental freedom, on a scale of 0 to 100. Valadez (2012) expressed the need for small business creation and growth in supporting the global economy while reiterating the need for talent, capital,

technology, government and judicial regulations, and business freedom in creating new ventures and employment opportunities.

**Financial decisions.** Veteran-owned small businesses may learn from past business experiences. In a comparison study of business failures, Dunn and Liang (2011) conducted research on entrepreneurs, small business owners, and finance professors to reveal several common concerns with small business failures for owners to consider. Concerned about business failures, Ivanov (2011) studied why businesses fail due to cause and effects from time-delay decisions. Dunn and Liang (2011) surveyed 94 professors from 662 colleges and 79 respondents from official small business networks to discover poor management and planning commonalities among small business owners. Ivanov (2011) provided several examples on situations that caused a business decision, but the decision was not effective for several years later, and that executive decisions constrain employees. Based on a U.S. federal government organizational study, 40% of the surveyed employees felt underemployed, demoralized, and insignificant due to executive decisions (Ivanov, 2011). Ivanov (2011) provided examples of business decision inefficiencies that created an extended time lag between making a decision and the decisional outcome due to layered organizational tiers. Organizational restructuring would allow manager-employee trust in making decisions and increasing work productivity (Ivanov, 2011). Small businesses should consider (a) purchasing fixed assets with long term external funding sources, (b) avoid overestimating sales while underestimating business expenses, (c) avoid underestimating the working capital, (e)

asset purchase accountability with using time deposits versus rental or leased options, and (f) controlling rapid growth rates to control cash flow deficiencies (Dunn & Liang, 2011).

In a Pennsylvanian study on small businesses, Osborne, Wisnieski, Soni, Bharadwaj, and Palmer (2013) researched 5,000 small businesses across 48 rural counties regarding small business demographics, growth plans, external factor impacts, and Service Provider awareness. Osborne et al. (2013) discovered that small business owners completed 90% of Pennsylvania localized sales were diversified, experienced internal growth, over half plan for expansion, impacted by economic barriers, and with small businesses having 20 or more employees were more aware of small business service providers than smaller, homegrown small businesses. The Osbourne et al. (2013) study reflected no significant differences between genders with services awareness, but Wu and Chua (2012) contended that there are subtle differences regarding small business loan approvals with discrimination laws protecting potential borrowers from denial of loans based on these personal characteristics. Wu and Chua (2013) studied gender effects associated with differences of market treatment towards borrowers not caused by the economy or the organization by researching 4,240 small businesses to reveal lending inconsistencies regarding borrowing costs based on female sole proprietorship businesses. Di and Hanke (2012) linked small business failures doubled in a two-year span due to an increase in bankruptcies and taxation differences on loans between corporations, partnerships, and proprietorships on 3365 firms. Like Wu and Chua (2012), Di and Hanke (2012) revealed a similar negative connotation based on female gender

loan usage and cautioned small business owners on debt usage based on profitability, operating performance, and economic conditions before entering into small business loans.

Veteran-owned small businesses may need to consider their financial options. Lahm, Stowe, Carton, and Buck (2011) researched the impact of funding sources for small businesses. Lahm et al. (2011) reported on how small business owners resort to using personal or business credit cards in order to fund the companies. In comparing Dunn and Liang's (2011) study on business failures, research obtained by Lahm et al. (2011) on banking credit standards indicated that over 71% of large and small banking firms tightened the loan practices resulting in a one-year drop of over \$150 million for loan expenditures. Lahm et al. revealed that over 48% of small business owners face an additional burden of obtaining business financing using credit cards. Credit card usage by business owners has increased from 16% to 83% within the last decade potentially due to easier financial access and less banking approval restrictions (Lahm et al., 2011). Lahm et al. (2011) indicated that credit card companies restricted the terms and conditions while raising the interest rates and monthly payment plans on these cards. Comparable to Dunn and Liang's (2011) financial decisions and consequences, Lahm et al. (2011) recommended the need for small business owners to proceed cautiously when funding a business venture with capital loans and credit card options.

**Human resources.** Veteran-owned small businesses may consider Human Resources (HR) for business growth and development while influencing the economy.

Veteran-owners may need to understand HR practices on small business functionality with small businesses accounting for half of the private sector jobs, (Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013). Fox (2013) also revealed that U.S. small businesses created 65% of the new jobs over the last 17 years and employed 54% of all workers from technological fields. Allen et al. (2013) postulated that high-commitment HR (performance based, autonomous, and company motivated) usage promotes employee efforts, incorporates employee knowledge exchanges, combines management-union advantages, reduces employee loss, and increases growth in sales. Allen et al. (2013) provided research reflecting that small businesses typically do not utilize HR practices due to the acceptability and reduced resources. Allen et al. (2013) found that typical HR practices derive from the owner's views on employee relations and determined that although employees possess a multitude of skills and talents, limitations of employee's efforts could be due to the lack of HR practices. Similarly, Fox (2013) researched prior literature on small business studies focusing on strategic human resource development and strategic business planning strategies to compare, contrast, and summarize this literature concerning key impacts and characteristics on small businesses. In consolidating these small business planning strategy findings, Fox (2013) listed that small businesses had: (a) increased sales, profits, and growth; (b) a positive correlation on sales, profits, and investment returns; (c) enriched performance; and (d) degreed owners possessed a business plan while working owners generally did not have a plan. In testing owner-employee associations, Allen et al. (2013) surveyed 270 firms in researching employee-



quit rates, employee involvement, and firm performance to reveal that HR practices resulted in business performance, growth, and revenue growth. Fox (2013) suggested strategic human resource management enhancements to small businesses as (a) aids with employee training, development, and hiring practices, (b) alleviates owner marketing and planning concerns, and (c) enhance business performance and competitive advantage. Fox (2013) noted that 60-86% of small businesses have a strategic plan because 14-40% do not have a plan equates to 4-11 million businesses that are susceptible to failure. Small business success stems from developing and using a strategic business plan while incorporating strategic human resource development plans associated with performance measures, innovations, employment satisfaction, and leveraging a competitive advantage (Fox, 2013).

Unlike Allen et al. (2013) and Fox (2013), Massey and Campbell (2013) stressed for small business owners to know labor law requirements along with HR management and initiatives. Massey and Campbell (2013) understood the small business influences on numerous economic levels in job creation, technology advancements, and industry development. In studying small business comprehension of HR laws, employee recruitment, employee training, and HR strategy, Massey and Campbell (2013) provided a glimpse of small business' lack of understanding of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Massey and Campbell (2013) provided case examples of businesses not paying fair employee wages in which employees filed lawsuits. Although small businesses may still need to develop efficient hiring practices, Massey and Campbell (2013) found that 67%

of businesses use employment advertisements and walk-ins. Similar to Fox's (2013) conclusion on strategic business plans incorporating employee performance measures, Massy and Campbell (2013) stressed the right mix of qualified employees for business growth for small businesses striving to exist. In dealing with employees, Massy and Campbell (2013) explained that employee training pertains to promote organizational learning while employee development provides skills advancement for increased responsibilities and alleviate owner's burdens, transitions, and retention issues. Along with Allen et al. (2013) study on HR commitment for employees, Massey and Campbell (2013) emphasized the need for business owners in maintaining legal literature, employee documentation, and employee performance evaluations. In surveying 80 small business owners, Massey and Campbell (2013) reflected that small business owners were not fully compliant with the Fair Labor Standards Act, owners were cognizant of hiring practices, owners had varying degrees of employee documentation, and most of the owners rated themselves with an average to below average knowledge evaluation of HR practices.

Gender differences may influence veteran-owned small businesses. Loscocco and Bird (2012) researched the success variances between women and men in a small business. Based on prior studies focused on human capital, finance, family environment, and economics, Loscocco and Bird (2012) presumed why men succeeded in business that hinged on capital accreditation, human management skills, workforce disruptions, family balancing, organization, industry-market niche, and business practice differences. Female veterans had a harder time transitioning from the military than male veterans (Baechtold,

2011). Baechtold (2011) provided a general background synopsis that active duty women had difficulties with acceptance and performance issues in a male dominated setting. Baechtold (2012) stated that female veteran inferiority issues compounded preexistent mental and physical struggles associated with veteran trauma. Loscocco and Bird (2012) conducted a random study of local small business owners by performing on-site interviews, observations, and in-depth evaluations of 573 owners (235 female and 338 male). Loscocco and Bird (2012) posited that small business women-owners had educational degrees, a business focuss, and expressed a desire to make more money being self-employed. There was a disparity in gender norms and work-family constraints potentially due to conceptual associations with women in the home and men as a primary provider (Loscocco & Bird, 2012). Loscocco and Bird (2013) reported a 40% increase in women-owned businesses from 1998 to 2007 due to women operating a business from home, spent fewer hours working and were more successful as a single woman. Alternative to Loscocco and Bird's (2012) study, Baechtold (2011) conducted two case histories in expressing that PTSD and military sexual trauma are predominant in 20% of women service members. Baechtold (2011) contended that female veterans could develop a personal voice in seeking assistance in overcoming integration issues over male counterparts.

**Marketing strategies.** Veteran-owned small businesses may need renewed marketing principles for continued success. Small business owners need to have sound strategies and tactics (Box, 2011). Although vision and mission statements are necessary,

Box (2011) argued that having a strong strategy hinged on obtaining a competitive advantage over competitors. Cronin-Gilmore (2012) stated that small businesses are the catalyst for creating innovative new ideas and processes for big business. Cronin-Gilmore (2012) researched small business market strategies noting that one-third of all new patents came from technology developed by small businesses. As businesses develop tactics that implement business strategies in the most efficient process, Box (2011) offered that situational leadership was vital in directing and supporting the behaviors needed to apply these business decisions. Box (2012) elaborated on how small businesses can also benefit in using lean manufacturing principles as: (a) value, understanding the implied product worth; (b) value stream, mapping the process design, production, and distribution; (c) flow, minimizing disruptions in the value stream; (d) pull, inventory management; and (e) perfection, optimizing every facet of the operation. In cautioning on small business failures due to lack of marketing skills and knowledge, Cronin-Gilmore (2012) conducted a qualitative study to explore 20 small business owners' knowledge of marketing strategy. Based on the recipient responses, Cronin-Gilmore (2012) identified five key areas in the study of marketing, formulating strategy, values, strengths, and operational needs that concerned small business owners. Box (2011) concluded that with the current economic conditions, business owners must be aware of market indicators, situational leadership, and applying lean principles for success. Cronin-Gilmore (2012) bolstered for additional marketing education, additional certified training classes, training in market competition, alignment with business partners, long-term strategy planning,

resource knowledge, networking opportunities, entrepreneur training for women, and social capital management.

**Small business enterprises.** For veterans contemplating small and medium business enterprises (SME), Jasra, Khan, Hunjra, Rehman, and Azam (2011) researched the leading indicators in exploring global economic growth within other countries. Jasra et al. (2011) recognized the use of SMEs in creating global economic growth in promoting employment opportunities and wealth. Jasra et al. (2011) found that over 97% of businesses in Pakistan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan were SMEs. Within England, Hotho and Champion (2011) researched SME business startups of computer games. Focused on Australia, Terziovski (2010) researched 600 firms using an Australian SME manufacturing database in determining innovation practices. In reviewing previous SME research, Hotho and Champion (2011) listed three shortcomings challenging SME innovation as: (a) lack of differentiation, inability to create and promote new innovative ideas; (b) absence of contingencies, lack of innovative studies for environmental uncertainties; and (c) social process marginalization, lack of innovative research, processes, and management. Hotho and Champion (2011) theorized a need for innovation, motivation, tolerance, encouragement, autonomy and trust, creativity, and boundaries from executives and employees in SME start-ups. Among SMEs, Terziovski (2010) provided an assumption that SMEs need to have a formalized structure with procedures or standards, entrepreneurial innovation relating to new products, and innovation management or funding efficiencies. Terziovski (2010)

hypothesized that innovation structure; relationships, culture, and technology depend on SME performance. Businesses need to have the right amount of finances, marketing strategies technology, governmental support, formation, business planning, and entrepreneur expertise are essential to creating a successful SME (Jasra et al., 2011). Veteran-owned small businesses may need to consider these performance factors for future SME development.

**Franchise opportunities.** Veteran small business owners may envision signing into franchising as a viable business option. Kashyap, Antia, and Frazier (2012) reviewed prior research studies on contractual obligations placed on franchisees from franchisors. Kashyap et al. (2012) found significant contributions within contractual agreements focusing on governance controls, incentives, and behavioral monitoring. Kashyap et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative study of franchise contracts associated with the U.S. automotive industry and collected archival data from eight manufacturers that presented 92% of the U.S. automotive sales and collected 206 surveys from U.S. dealerships. Kashyap et al. (2012) findings indicated that contractual completeness reduced monitoring and enforcement actions between the parties. While one-sided contracts favored the franchisor requiring fewer enforcement efforts per the contract, Kashyap et al. (2012) findings also indicated that completed contracts incorporating incentives aided in minimizing control adjustments. Unlike the Kashyap et al. (2012) study on the U.S. auto industry, Mellewigt, Ehrmann, and Decker (2011) studied a German tourism franchise consisting of 147 travel outlets. Mellewigt et al. (2011) hypothesized factors

relating to positive-negative franchisee satisfaction, behavioral controls, operations experience, and outcome/production controls. Tourism franchises needed additional outcome controls, fewer behavioral controls, and the need for expanded research into other franchise markets (Mellewigt et al., 2011).

Based on franchise contracts, Wadsworth and Cox (2011) reviewed the requirements for full disclosure and reporting criteria. Wadsworth and Cox (2011) used this information in evaluating the risks of the franchise investment to prospective investors. McCuddy, Eser, and Pinar (2011) researched the history of franchise ethical issues in providing a general discussion of the increasing trends on franchise expansions on a domestic and global scale. Research reviewed by McCuddy et al. (2011) expressed the need for ethics relating to franchising royalty taxes, contractual laws, and legislation in protecting both parties. Wadsworth and Cox (2011) identified 10 risk index factors in establishing a franchise as profit margin, growth, debt to equity ratios, established franchises, legal issues, bankruptcy, earnings, company size, turnover, and franchise percentage in conducting a quantitative study on 239 franchises within Indiana and Virginia using these risk indices. Based on the overall risk scores, Wadsworth and Cox (2011) grouped the franchises into four risk categories with ratings of 3% at a high risk, 22.7% at an elevated risk, 55% at guarded risk, and 19% at low risk. Wadsworth and Cox (2011) determined that low-risk firms had higher profit margins, greater growth rates, lower bankruptcies, claimed earnings, and had a greater franchise rate than most other risk categories. Similarly, the Turkish franchise market needed a strong business culture,

information and system integrity, stakeholder involvement, and franchise expansion protections (McCuddy et al., 2011). Wadsworth and Cox (2011) recommended that prospective investors fully read the disclosure statements, consider the 10 risk variables, research potential franchises, and seek professional franchise consultation before investing. Veteran small business owners may need to be cautious in entering franchise agreements.

The intent of this general small business practices section was to research the various business components available to small businesses ventures in focusing on the general systems theory concept (von Bertalanffy, 1972). Small business growth centered on innovations (Jhang et al., 2012) and growth indicators (Neumark et al., 2011; Rubens et al., 2011). Small business outlook assessments indicated small business start-up (Campbell et al., 2012; Foreman, 2011) and job creations (Valdez, 2012). Veteran financial decisions encompassed veteran options (Lahm et al., 2011) and business experiences (Dunn & Liang, 2011; Ivanov, 2011). Human resources influence functionality (Allen et al., 2013; Fox, 2013), legalities (Massey & Campbell, 2013) and workplace diversity (Baechtold, 2011; Loscocco & Bird, 2012). Marketing strategies aided by small business strategy decisions (Box, 2011; Cronin-Gilmore, 2012). Optional small business ventures related to SMEs (Hotho & Champion, 2011; Jasra et al., 2011; Terziovski, 2010) and franchise opportunities (Kashyap et al., 2012; McCuddy et al., 2011; Mellewigt et al., 2011; Wadsworth & Cox, 2011) are viable ventures for veterans.

### **Entrepreneurial Initiatives**



Veteran small business owners contemplating entrepreneurial opportunities may focus on social or for-profit entrepreneurs. Veterans may need to consider education, motivation, market risks, venture options, and global markets before proceeding.

Entrepreneurships can have a positive social impact (Newbert, 2012).

**Entrepreneurial options.** With veterans potentially entering into entrepreneurships, Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) provided an overall historical perspective on U.S. small business entrepreneurships while Osiri, McCarty, Davis, and Osiri (2013) provided a brief history of entrepreneurship attributes and development. Osiri et al. (2013) expounded on the entrepreneurial sub-fields as (a) academic, (b) corporate, (c) family, (d) international, (e) small business entrepreneurships, (f) social, and (g) technology. Entrepreneurships were summarized as the anticipating, identifying, and creating of initiatives with sufficient resources in seeking prospective opportunities motivated by economic gain based on an assumed risk with the new product or service (Osiri et al., 2013). Small businesses have higher employment levels than big business for workers with less education, elderly over 65, disabled, and from rural areas (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) stressed the success for entrepreneurs is to obtain financing options, enlist human resources, understand process operations/production, identify marketing/sales, establish a customer service, start-up information management support, and institute an administrative staff. Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) identified contributing factors of business failures relating to communication, personnel, assignments, guidance, work habits, teamwork,

leadership, and operations. As one significant area of small business failures stemming from an inability to obtain and manage finances, Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) indicated that although the Small Business Administration established financing options, there are small businesses that continue to falter with debt and money management worldwide.

Regarding entrepreneurship, veteran small business owners may consider additional training options for continued success. Zahra and Wright (2011) integrated the establishment of entrepreneur opportunities with scholastic entrepreneurship research. Based on researched data, entrepreneurial indicators were associated with: (a) rate, the amount of start-ups that accumulate resources and training over time; (b) degree of innovation, the degree a new product or service is different; and (c) entrepreneurial variation, the degree a product or service impacts societal norms (Zahra & Wright, 2011). Markova, Perry, and Farmer (2011) studied how researcher investigative concepts associate with understanding nascent entrepreneurial challenges and successes while Groves, Vance, and Choi (2011) examined the cognition factors of entrepreneurs that succeed. Markova et al. (2011) provided researched data regarding how to analyze the entrepreneurship field by understanding the researcher's perspective, referenced database mining, and secondary/archival information on the study. Entrepreneurial focus groups consolidated the individuals to those thinking about starting a small business venture, those that are actively involved in a venture and the remainder of those that are eligible with the potential in starting a small business (Markova et al., 2011). Using typical

entrepreneurship variables, Markova et al. (2011) stated concerns whether an individual is an entrepreneur or not, whether an individual actively participates within the business venture, and whether the business prospers. Groves et al. (2011) approached researching the linear, non-linear, or mixed mindset that drives success in entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs with a linear thought process are more apt to operate based on facts, have explicit knowledge, and possess a thorough market assessment while non-linear thinking concentration is on intuition, creativity, insight, and emotions (Groves et al., 2011). To test these cognition factors on entrepreneurs needing a mixed mindset in combining linear and non-linear attributes, Groves et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study and concluded that entrepreneurs with a balanced mindset were more successful than participant characterized with linear or non-linear cognition. In a cross analysis, Zahra and Wright (2011) reasoned that public policy (a) supported entrepreneurial growth at all levels and operational modes, (b) supported entrepreneurial interests over time in supporting a wide array of interests, (c) supported a network development in a variety of interests, and (d) supported conditions that facilitate unique future venture start-ups.

Entrepreneurship stems from franchising owner contracted resource to agents for profit sharing or by sharecropping owner loaned resources for a return on agent profits (Pruett & Winter, 2011). Scholars typically identify new entrepreneurial business opportunities as affiliates or offshoots (Walsh & Bartunek, 2011). Pruett and Winter (2011) developed a relationship model to depict owner/entrepreneur relationship motives. Pruett and Winter (2011) believed the initially shared relationships stemmed from costs

(input value and market competition), risks (internal and external), and scarcity of resources (finances, experience, support, and branding). In conducting a qualitative research, Walsh and Bartunek (2011) focused on six case studies to develop dimensional themes into business lifecycle phases as disintegration, the beginning stage of shutdown, the demise or business closure, gestation as a period of regrouping, and rebirth in forming a new business. As entrepreneurial ventures develop due to closing or shutdown of the existing businesses, Walsh and Bartunek (2011) surmised three types of entrepreneurial opportunities as alumni, museum, or commercial that stem from post-business closures. Pruett and Winter (2011) revealed that advances in technology would influence profits while risks associate with marketing incentives based on economies of scale. Pruett and Winter (2011) stated that as time passes, the company's size would influence the costs, risks, and market resources. Contractual incentives benefit the process owner and the entrepreneur agent based on the researched shared relationship (Pruett & Winter, 2011). Veteran small business owners may contemplate entrepreneurship developments from previously established businesses.

**Global entrepreneurship.** Small business veterans opting for a global presence may consider other national entrepreneurial perspectives. Within Chile, Lussier and Halabi (2010) researched the lowering of entrepreneurship development in recent years. Focusing on Canada, Spence, Orser, and Riding (2011) conducted a comparative analysis of international new ventures (INV) and domestic new ventures (DNV). Spence et al. (2011) based this study on acquiring, integrating, and knowing foreign markets with

resource exchanges in developing resources and competitive advantage through entrepreneurial exchanges. Chilean leaders agreed that technology, education, innovation, capacity, and public policy were essential in starting a business (Lussier & Halabi, 2010). In a study of 313 Chilean small businesses, Lussier and Halabi (2010) revealed a need for small businesses to have specific business plans, capital and finance control, administrative functions, sales forecasting, and professional advice avenues in order to succeed. Spence et al. (2011) hypothesized several factors relating to the firm's organizational size, management knowledge, international expertise, growth comparison, innovation, sector profile, and gender on 12,000 Canadian businesses. Therefore, in relation to a firm's size for export potential, INV firms were technological advanced, INV owners were generally more experienced and older, INV and DNV firms differed in innovation and geographical locations, and that there were no differences in gender (Spence et al., 2011). Lussier and Halabi (2010) recommended the Chilean government institute low-interest loans, add professional advice management training, and establish a small business administration department. Lussier and Halabi (2010) stated this Chilean study paralleled a similar U.S. prediction model that revealed similar results. Veteran small business owners may contemplate these entrepreneurial options.

In two Danish studies on entrepreneurship, Malchow-Moller, Schjerning, and Sorensen (2011) developed set quantitative parameters with researching the establishment of entrepreneurial start-up businesses using a Denmark statistical database. Van Gelderen, Thurik, and Patel (2011) researched entrepreneurial problems associated

with establishing a small business. Initially, Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) referred to U.S. employment statistical data for guidance but found the data to be too general in nature or contradicting. In the van Gelderen et al. (2011) study, qualitative and quantitative perspectives in designing a survey instrument were similar to a previous U.S. based entrepreneurial study. Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) established subsets that focused on individual and business aspects. The Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) subsets pertained to newly self-employed individuals, first-time employers, newly reestablished firms, and new start-up firms. Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) targeted comparative analysis revealed that newly self-employed individuals combined with truly new firms resulted in 25% of the new Danish businesses and created almost 8% of jobs overall. In further analysis, Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) researched parameters in creating jobs (12 to 18%) thru job destruction (11 to 15%) as businesses merge or close while the U.S. rates for job creation from destruction reflected 9% and 10% respectfully. Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) reported that initially, new employers had lower wage rates than established firms and found that self-employed firms created more jobs after market entry but did not create higher paying jobs. In comparing start-up versus abandoned business ventures, van Gelderen et al. (2011) focused on determining the amount of problems businesses encountered, what types of problems businesses encountered, and what problems influence the failure of business. Van Gelderen et al. (2011) defined how people dealt with stressors associated with primary, secondary, and coping mechanisms. Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) surmised that businesses should assess the problem, decide

on available options to overcome the problem, and personally cope with decisions made. Using an initial telephone survey and follow-up contacts over a 3-year period, van Gelderen et al. (2011) listed problems associated with regulations, finance, organization, marketing, information technology, location, service or product, and time impacting business start-ups or as failures. Using a statistical analysis, van Gelderen et al. (2011) rejected all three hypothesis with the understanding that problems associate with all business, there were no problem differentiations, and there were no problem severities between start-up and failed businesses. As a positive rationale to succeed, small business start-ups need to have education, experience, market research, regulatory insight, finances, management organization, market timing, risk assessment, and resource capital (van Gelderen et al., 2011).

Veteran small business owners entering global entrepreneurships may also need to consider other national economies. In providing a global abstract viewpoint, all partners, stakeholders, leaders, and employees need to change the operational processes in creating an operable business (Blachfellner, 2012). Considering that economic status derives from absolute competition, Blachfellner (2012) surmised that open market freedom leads to financial prosperity, open monetary fund creation, Gross National Product improvements, defining business success solely by profits, and open society-wide competition. Unlike the Lussier and Halabi (2010) research on declining entrepreneurship development in Chile, Blachfellner (2012) singled out the Earth Charter as a global guide for other economic campaigns to curb the potential chaos paradigm. From this position,

entrepreneurs must recognize and cooperate at all levels in preserving economic freedoms (Blachfellner, 2012). Like the Spence et al. (2011) findings on developing resources and establishing a competitive advantage, Blachfellner (2012) listed key strategy insights to change as (a) purpose clarification, (b) develop leadership, (c) develop a vision, (d) develop cooperation, and (e) develop management to implement the business strategy. Blachfellner (2012) surmised that establishing a business strategy requires an equal capital balance between human, social, nature, built, and finance similar to the Lussier and Halabi (2010) and Spence, et al. (2011) findings.

**Social entrepreneurship.** Veteran small business owners desiring to create or continue support for a social cause may elect social entrepreneurship (SE). To understand SE, Smith and Woodworth (2012) conducted a course for students on SE principles for potential lifestyle changes. Smith and Woodworth (2012) presented the social identity theory (relational actions taken to associate with a societal cause) and the self-categorization theory (personal attributes to assimilate into a societal cause). The SE class was required to evaluate four case studies based on defining the SE situation, identify the SE leader or group, identify the SE cause for establishing related SE endeavors, and determine what self-efficacy attributes may apply (Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Newbert (2012) researched comparisons between social and for-profit entrepreneurships. In a quantitative study on 1214 nascent entrepreneurships, Newbert (2012) researched whether market research, loss, decisions, marketing, price, and supply channels were prevalent in the business strategy formulation. Based on the presented cases and class



evaluations, Smith and Woodworth (2012) asserted that students learned how SE could make a positive social change. Social entrepreneurs did not consider marketing data, start-up finances, business conceptualization, market changes' lower pricing indicators, and form supply partnerships as critical to the success (Newbert, 2012). Social entrepreneurs need to examine marketing and business strategies to improve the social and economic conditions overall (Newbert, 2012).

In researching social entrepreneurship (SE), Lumpkin et al. (2013) researched the historical SE concepts. Lumpkin et al. (2013) identified social incentives, potential prospects, financial accessibility, and stakeholder involvement as precursors to establishing SE. Katre and Salipante (2012) found SE ventures mirrored small business failure rates as being 40% in 5 years. Social entrepreneurs support causes driven by internal motives, initiatives, personal history, ingrained values, and individualized factors (Katre & Salipante, 2012). Lumpkin et al. (2013) listed the resultant outcomes with the creation of social values, fulfillment of multiple stakeholder expectations, and the management solutions for resources and institutions from SE initiatives. In bridging the gap between SE intentions with the outcomes, key drivers for successful social entrepreneurs entail creating innovated processes, proactive leadership, ability to take risks, assertiveness, and organizational independence (Lumpkin et al. 2013). Katre and Salipante (2012) compared and contrasted the similarities between researched non-profit ventures and for-profit business ventures in outlining key behavioral and survival issue components as defining a mission, secure funding sources, marketing plan development,

demand creation, stakeholder support, obtain legal support, and networking. Lumpkin et al. (2013) speculated similar process constructs between social and commercial entrepreneurship organizations.

The objective of entrepreneurial initiatives concentrate on general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972) in researching entrepreneurial options and triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011) in researching various initiatives in maintaining entrepreneurial opportunities for veterans. Entrepreneurial options allow veterans an understanding on the entrepreneurial mix (Osiri et al., 2013; Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011; Zahra & Wright, 2011), the entrepreneur psyche (Groves et al., 2011; Markova et al., 2011), and the entrepreneurial positioning (Pruett & Winter, 2011; Walsh & Bartunek, 2011) encountered with this venture. Global entrepreneurship looked at greater global impact perspectives on strategic planning (Lussier & Halabi, 2010; Spence et al., 2011) and entrepreneurial hindrances (Blachfellner, 2012; Malchow-Moller et al., 2011; van Gelderen et al., 2011). Veteran social entrepreneurs may stem from education (Newbert, 2012; Smith & Woodworth, 2012) and societal impacts (Katre & Salipante, 2012; Lumpkin et al., 2013) for success.

### **Veteran Assistance**

Veteran-owned small businesses may need to be cognizant of various governmental laws, directives, guidance, and programs associated with establishing and operating a business. Veteran understanding and adhering to governmental guidelines may aid in starting and operating a successful small business venture. Governmental

agencies may provide assistance for veteran small business opportunities.

**Governmental initiatives.** The SBA (2014) provided an overview of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. The current provisions in this law aid small business with the needed guidance for future economic and employment recoveries (SBA, 2014). Small businesses owners and entrepreneurs have a greater opportunity to apply and receive SBA loans with higher limits from \$35,000 to \$50,000 (SBA, 2014). In an effort to confront Fraud, Waste, and Abuse, the SBA (2014) cautioned businesses with penalties and compensation claims for any business misrepresenting or defrauding small business ventures. Government contracting officials possess greater flexibility when awarding small business government contracts by ensuring specialized trades have equal consideration for bidding (SBA, 2014). Business owners allow for increased resources in promoting trade exports with counseling resources and higher limits for export loans and grants (SBA, 2014). Small Business Development Centers receive additional grant monies for providing additional counseling and training assistance for small businesses (SBA, 2014). Businesses qualify for increased tax cuts, credit offsets, business deductions, and capital investment depreciation limits for creating new jobs (SBA, 2014). Community banks can reduce operating capital providing that there is an increase of small business lending above 2009 levels by using a \$1.5 billion support fund (SBA, 2014).

Concerning federal contracting for veteran-owned small businesses, Snider, Kidalov, and Rendon (2013) presented the fallacy with governmental contract awards

based on convenience, rather experience. Snider et al. (2013) provided a brief historical perspective on contracting processes with federal contracting operations employing over 500,000 workers, accounting for almost 15% annually of the federal budget, and contracting a wide array of services and products. Snider et al. (2013) argued the bypassing of qualified small disadvantaged businesses (SDB) in contract awards due to worker incompetence and inefficient processing capabilities. Snider et al. argued the SDB verification process to qualify applicants is ineffective. Snider et al. (2013) presented several court cases describing businesses that falsified SDB applications to receive contracting awards. To overcome competency and capability issues, Snider et al. (2013) concluded with presenting increased academic education, workforce skill assessments, and conquering the preverbal status quo to reorganize the award process.

**Veteran support.** There are additional assistance avenues available to protect and support the service-veteran rights whether to obtain employment opportunities or seeking educational credentials for employment advancements. In general, Yamamoto, Unruh, and Bullis (2012) posited that employers hired 19% of disabled individuals, and only 13.6% of the employers were actively seeking disabled workers. Yamamoto et al. (2012) reported that employed individuals without a disability to those with disabilities were almost 2 to 1 while earning almost 25 percent more in wages. Inversely, the potential of disabled individuals becoming self-employed is almost twice as likely, this sets the stage for disabled military veterans to be self-employed (Yamamoto et al., 2012). Robertson (2013) reiterated the need for employment counselor preparation in assisting veterans

with the military to civilian transitions by reporting on an influx of over 150,000 transitioning military troops to the civilian labor market by 2014. Although there are military transition programs, the unemployment rate increased from 11.7% to 13.1% within 1 year (Robertson, 2013). Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) researched numerous articles on veterans and employment opportunities using social workers. Presented with an unemployment rate of approximately 7%, expectations are for this rate to rise with the additional influx of over 1 million transitioning military service members (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013). In researching business perspectives with regard to social worker assistance with veteran employees, Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) posited a need for businesses to develop a veteran plan based on human resources, diversity and disabilities, training, resource groups, communications, military commitments, and information technology to accommodate a veteran workforce. Like Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013), Robertson (2013) concluded the need for counselors in assisting military members with transitioning efforts to civilian life to minimize financial, personal, and social hardships. Nevertheless, Yamamoto et al. (2012), deduced self-employment as a viable option in balancing an individual's needs, disabilities, and employment opportunities thru the use of computer technologies and social networking.

Madaus, Miller, and Vance (2009) discussed upcoming changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 on veteran definitions for disabilities, eligibility, and financial aid support. Rose (2012) also focused on issues affecting military veterans in describing the initial development of the 1940 G.I. Bill, service-

disabled veterans' discernment with a college education, and opting for employment opportunities. Madaus et al. (2009) outlined veteran sacrifices and disabilities encountered historically from Post World War I & II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian War, and recent Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). In briefly discussing VA benefits, the New G.I. Bill, and Federal Student Aid, Madaus et al. (2009) stated that inundated disability service providers processed service-disabled veterans returning to postsecondary education having numerous psychological, physiological, and financial difficulties. Rose (2012) elaborated how legislators passed Public Law 16 allowing veterans special privileges and rehabilitation programs for work assistance. Legislators replaced the Public Law 16 with the most recent passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to pave the way for equal representation of service-disabled veterans (Rose, 2012). For veterans seeking assistance, the Office of Civil Rights published initiatives to aid veteran education and the American Council on Education for Internet websites on colleges and educational avenues is available (Madaus et al., 2009).

Solomon et al. (2013) reiterated that within 2 years starting a new venture; there was a business failure rate of 30% while 50% lasted past 5 years. Phillips (2014) studied the functionality of the Small Business Administration, BusinessUSA, Small Business Development Center, and Senior Core of Retired Executives websites. Phillips (2014) discovered inconsistencies and difficulties in navigating the websites in which several operating features merely transferred to another governmental website. Veterans seeking

self-employment information on small business operations turn to these websites for advice, applications, guides, aids, tutorials, and other miscellaneous business resources (Phillips, 2014). Solomon et al. (2013) researched small business survival and growth responses stemming from governmental technical assistance avenues that analyzed relationships between counseling and business survival along with counseling and financial successes. Based on survey results, Solomon et al. (2013) reported that technical assistance garnered by governmental resources positively improved small business survival and financial factors while reporting a negative relationship between obtaining counseling and financial successes. Phillips (2014) postulated that governmental websites need efficient programming to assist veterans' with small business formulation and operations. Veteran small business owners may need to navigate several of these websites in order to obtain the needed resources for future success.

Kerrick, Cumberland, Church-Nally, and Kemelgor (2014) implied that due to military reductions, active duty military personnel transitioning to a civilian lifestyle would drastically increase. Hoppenfeld et al. (2013) reiterated the 2012 unemployment rate increase from 8.9% to 10.9% of Gulf War-era II veterans. Hoppenfeld et al. (2013) and Kerrick et al. (2014) posited veterans need help in starting a new business with 45% of veterans projected to be self-employed. Using study results from a small business training cohort of veterans, Kerrick et al. (2014) noted that entrepreneurship education, developing an entrepreneurial passion, and establishing networks as key factors in starting a business. In an effort to enhance available education, Hoppenfeld et al. (2013)

researched an educational assistance program (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities) focused on helping disabled military veterans. Veterans enrolled in the program learn business planning, accounting, human resource development, marketing, and legal processes (Hoppenfeld et al., 2013). Program librarians aid veteran enrollments with instructional, research, and counseling assistance (Hoppenfeld et al., 2013).

In applying the general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972), veteran small business owners may seek government support in providing guidelines and assistance to operate and maintain a small business. Governmental bureaucracies (SBA, 2014; Snider et al., 2013) impact veteran small business creations. Veterans' rights assistance (Madaus et al., 2009; Rose, 2012), avenues (Phillips, 2014; Solomon et al. 2013), and transition assistance (Hoppenfeld et al., 2013; Kerrick et al., 2014) aided in establishing a small business venture.

### **Veteran Transitions**

The U.S. economy may wane considering the influx of service members leaving the military for civilian opportunities (Lighthall, 2012). Veteran-owned small businesses may confront and overcome similar transitional effects in operating the venture (Bressler et al., 2013). For this reason, transitioning veteran choices on whether to start a small business venture, enter the workforce, return to academia, or simply retire may be a daunting endeavor.

**Veteran employability.** Veteran small business owners may need to reflect on employee attributes for a prolonged business existence. Small businesses account for



approximately 99% of all businesses in the U.S. while military service members transitioning from active duty back into a civilian lifestyle are confronted with a 21% overall unemployment rate (Bressler et al., 2013). A veterans' employability then becomes an employment factor with respect to workplace satisfaction and career success (Olson & Shultz, 2013). In researching how worker perceptions of success changed over the course of time, Olson and Shultz (2013) revealed that the worker employability depends on the expertise, capabilities, and abilities of an individual in adapting to new workplace complexities. Bressler et al. (2013) stated that veterans choose to enter into self-employed small businesses, to include service-disabled veteran owners. From these, Bressler et al. (2013) found veteran-owned ventures accounted for 13% of service-disabled veteran ventures accounting for 8.3% of all small businesses. Olson and Shultz (2013) examined the perception of subjective and objective career success in discovering that from the 47,000 workers polled on meaningful employment, 27% were involved, 58% were uninvolved, and 15% were detached from work. Olson and Shultz (2013) noted that from the 27% responding as engaged, 92% expressed gratification and significance with work. Bressler et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study of veteran-owned business demographics, ethnicity, gender, and military reservist impacts. From the 397 respondents, Bressler et al. (2013) posited veteran-owned businesses as positively affected by ethnicity, gender, and education level but were not with age or military status. Based on this study, Bressler et al. (2013) noted that veteran officers were less likely to start up a small business venture potentially due to seeking executive employment

positions derived from possessing a higher education and found that 32% of the veteran-owned small businesses centered on professional, scientific, and technical services markets. Bressler et al. (2013) reported on military veterans with more than 20 years of service were more likely to be self-employed, married, and had at least a high school education. Olson and Shultz (2013) found that worker engagement promoted positive talent increases and performance levels. Olson and Shultz (2013) noted that earlier worker career incentives centered on pay and benefits while later worker career considerations focus on increased learning, flexibility, and independence. Olson and Shultz (2013) concluded that potential employers need a broader view of worker career goals and worker employability in seeking candidates for employment.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) campaigns reflected service member deployments totaling 179,000 for active duty and 71,217 for reservists (Hinojosa & Hinojosa, 2011). Although veteran transition programs and services aid in the reintegrating of military service members to civilian life based on culture and identity issues, military veterans also experienced a variety of social gap adjustment issues while seeking employment opportunities (Demers, 2011). Hinojosa and Hinojosa (2011) conducted a study of 20 military members with OIF/OEF deployment and reintegration experiences. Similarly, Demers (2011) provided insight into the effects veterans endured during this transition period and initiated an advertising campaign to solicit returning veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. Respondents provided demographic data and consent for a follow-up focus group while 45 individuals attended

one of six focus group series (Demers, 2011). The assigned primary investigator chaired the groups in responding to a series of post-deployment based questions ranging from personal life impacts, family and friend relations, and support agency interactions (Demers, 2011). Based on audiotape transcriptions and theme analysis listing key areas of concern, respondents expressed a warrior mentality, fearless attitude, and a returning home euphoria during deployments (Demers, 2011). Respondents encountered misconceptions, misunderstandings, and identity reevaluation upon reintegrating to a civilian lifestyle (Demers, 2011). Hinojosa and Hinojosa (2011) administered semistructured interviews based on prior deployment experiences, deployment situations, and transition back to civilian status. Hinojosa and Hinojosa (2011) provided results reflecting principal themes of war transitions as military family development, reintegration issues, and military family reconnections. Demers (2011) concluded with the need for veteran focus groups, veteran dependent focus groups, and enhanced training for professional care providers on continued veteran transitional difficulties after military service. Veteran small business owners may need to be aware of these situational issues for employment hiring opportunities.

**Veteran intellect.** In regards to employment, Kogut, Short, and Wall (2010) revealed that obtained higher educational levels increases employment wages and researched to determine if military service had similar results. In a subsequent study, Kogut et al. (2011) researched employment earnings between military veterans and nonmilitary civilians comprising of a sample population in 2007 counties and

municipalities scientifically spread across the United States. Kogut et al. (2010) devised a wage difference study using the 2009 Current Population Survey database from the U.S. Census Bureau. Kogut et al. (2011) tested three hypotheses between veteran and civilians with high school educations, with high school education centered on age groups, and with high school educations founded on racial characteristics. Kogut et al. (2010) provided quantitative data results associated with individual characteristics and several educational levels that found a percentage of veteran student and black enrollments declined after obtaining some college experience through a professional and doctorate. Kogut et al. (2011) revealed the sample characteristics for personnel demographics resulted in nearly an even split between men and women. Kogut et al. (2011) revealed that racial diversities resulted in 80% White, 11% Black, and 9% of other ethnicities, there were 7% veterans to 93% civilian counterparts, and three age groups ranging from 25 - 54 years old were approximately evenly distributed. Kogut et al. (2011) categorized group educational levels as evenly distributed with a high school diploma, some college, college graduates, and a smaller percentage resulted in higher levels of education. As for employment wages, Kogut et al. (2010) revealed that a college degree veteran at \$29.63 per hour, a typical non-degree military veteran earned \$17.91, and a non-degree, nonveteran earned \$15.84. Kogut et al. (2011) confirmed that prior military veterans earned more than civilian counterparts did with at least a high school education. Small business veteran owners may need to evaluate the professional and educational experiences with hiring potential employees.

As of 2011, military downsizing resulted in an increased number of 924,000 veterans coupled with G.I. Bill authorizations created an increased demand on the educational system (Lighthall, 2012). Unlike the Kogut et al. (2010, 2011) veteran studies on veteran education and wage demographics, Lighthall (2012) discussed a number of principles in highlighting veterans. Lighthall (2012) found many veterans to experience (a) high diversity, (b) not considered victims, (c) lonely, (d) unaware of post-traumatic stressors, (e) sensitive to war questioning, (f) lingering female acceptance issues, (g) opting to return to war, (h) injury rationalization, and (i) positive self-esteem to succeed. Veteran small business owners may need an additional educational awareness in employing veteran students.

**Veteran adjustments.** Employing veterans with military service-connected disabilities may influence veteran-owned small business longevity. Physicians have diagnosed veteran patients with an assortment of psychological disorders (Bragin, 2010). Using support data from prior research and Department of Defense (DOD) statistics, Church (2009) uncovered significant areas on Global War on Terror (GWT) related injuries pertaining to traumatic brain injuries (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other mental health traumas. To explore military members experiencing psychosocial disorders, Bragin (2010) believed that prior researchers had overlooked or misdiagnosed war trauma. These associated researchers studying the psychosocial outlook referred to using prior traumatic war experiences in providing veteran assistance in coping with future interactions (Bragin, 2010). Earlier, Church (2009) referred to the

DOD sample size reporting an estimated 712,800 to 840,000 returning veterans in obtaining a degree varied due to the amount of military deployments and personnel movements were constantly changing. From these veterans, Church (2009) reported on two significant GWT disability areas centered on spinal cord injuries, amputations, and sensory impairments for comprehension. Injuries in these categories significantly hinder veterans' physical functioning in a learning environment (Church, 2009). As veterans account for 43% with TBI impairments pertaining to perceptual and cognitive deteriorations, Church (2009) conveyed that 30% of veterans experienced PTSD and veterans had difficulties with social interactions and self-control. Complicating the veteran disability problem is the reported drop in available jobs as reported by the Department of Labor (Church, 2009). Church (2009) postulated that veterans with disabilities have a daunting task to overcome obstacles with hopes of acquiring higher paying jobs. Since veterans suffering from PTSD and social interaction deficiencies may be less treatable, Bragin (2010) expressed an understanding of the human psyche and the altered effects war trauma had on the psyche, but deferred to the full effect on humans in combat is still unfolding. Veterans may remain with psychological and physiological disabilities after the war (Bragin, 2010).

In a related PTSD study, Westwood, McLean, Cave, Borgen, and Slakov (2010) provided a discussion of the magnitude, impacts, and traumatization of veterans with PTSD. Westwood et al., (2010) found that 80% of veterans diagnosed with PTSD have additional depression, anxiety, and alcohol/substance abuse. Adler et al. (2011)

researched 797 veterans from OIF/OEF military operations on reintegration to civilian employment and these veterans purportedly had enrolled in Veteran Affairs clinics with psychological and physiological impairments. Participants were administered a behavioral health laboratory needs assessment while using a Work Limitations Questionnaire to survey the emotional and physical needs of the target group (Adler et al., 2011). Once obtaining basic demographical, financial, and psychological data results, Adler et al. (2011) reported that there were a significant amount of male participants aged 18-29, barely financially stable, and diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety disorder, depression, and alcohol dependency. Adler et al. (2011) also stated that these veterans surveyed expressed employment difficulties and family complications associated with these impairments. Correspondingly, Westwood et al. (2010) posited studies reflecting that veterans with PTSD earned 22% less and were unemployed 10 times greater than veterans without PTSD do. Westwood et al. (2010) reported on a Canadian veteran transition program that (a) created military friendly associations, (b) provided rationalization counseling, (c) provided disability coping strategies, (d) minimized stressors, (e) provide social interaction strategies, (f) established future goals and employment options, and (g) provide family interactions. Westwood et al. (2011) argued the transition program as an excellent avenue for veterans with disabilities. Veteran small business owners may need additional transitional avenues with understanding and coping with employee disabilities.

Based on aggression issues within the veteran community, there are 31,800

OIF/OEF wounded service members and an estimated 790,000 OIF/OEF veterans to pursue VA disability claims (Resnik et al., 2012). Resnik et al. (2012) reported that OIF/OEF returning veterans developed mental and physical hardships stemming from marriage issues, financial problems, alcohol/substance abuse, homelessness, and vehicular accidents. Veterans under 30 and suffering from PTSD reported having certain transitional needs (Ellison et al., 2012). According to Ellison et al. (2012), individuals are mentally stable at age 30 and defined community reintegration for veterans based on a range of social criteria. Similarly, Resnik et al. (2012) measured community reintegration centered on acceptable social standards and discussed monitoring these standards against individuals with mental health problems, specifically targeting the military veterans with PTSD or depression issues. Using qualitative styled questions to the participants studied, Ellison et al. (2012) recorded the responses and used open code formatting in generating several common themes. Ellison et al. (2012) provided a demographic table outlining participant characteristics with 25% having a two-year or higher degree. Ellison et al. (2012) developed common themes from the respondents included challenges with planning an education, reintegration issues, obtaining G.I. Bill benefits, and psychological concerns. Ellison et al. (2012) quoted several members in responding to these challenging issues and highlighted several respondent recommendations on clinical, financial, housing, social acceptance for institutional improvements. Resnik et al. (2012) transitioned into VA initiation and application of community reintegration advancements but expressed VA concerns over funding, partnerships, recordings, technology, and



personnel commitments. Resnik et al. (2012) concluded that community reintegration is vital, although elusive, in assisting veteran lifestyle readjustments. Veteran small business owners may need to consider veteran psychological and physiological effects while incorporating small business strategies and operations.

In applying the triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011), veteran small business owners may need to consider business strategies focused on *how*, *what*, and *why* business longevity decisions are needed. Based on reshaping professional and personal lifestyles, veteran employability concerns focus on career aspects (Bressler et al., 2013; Olson & Shultz, 2013) and transitions (Demers, 2011; Hinojosa & Hinojosa, 2011). Veteran intellect is a factor with employment (Kogut, Short, & Wall, 2010, 2011) and personal potential (Lighthall, 2012). Veteran adjustments may become a business concern to veteran owners in dealing with and overcoming employee disability conflicts (Adler et al., 2011; Bragin, 2010; Church, 2009; Elbogen et al., 2012; Westwood et al., 2010) and integration (Ellison et al., 2012; Resnik et al., 2012).

### **Transition and Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies and problems that are unique to veteran-owned small business maintained in Central Florida for at least 5 years. I have provided articles encompassing general small business practices, entrepreneurship incentives, governmental initiatives, and military to veteran transitional issues for veteran-owned small business venture considerations. Based on my veteran transition research, the success of veteran-owned small businesses may be crucial in maintaining a

stable economy within the United States. Transitioning veterans may have physiological or psychological burdens when they establish business ventures, seek employment, or obtain an education. Section 2 will include characteristics pertaining to the role of the researcher, study participants, the research method and design, population and sampling methods used, ethical research process, the data collection process, data analysis techniques, and the reliability and validity factors for this veteran-owned small business study.

## Section 2: The Project

The research data I presented in Section 1 provided an insight to the obstacles encountered by veteran-owned small businesses. Veteran-owners need to consider all available options to operate a business. Section 2 specifies the research process designed and data collection practices to confirm the need for veteran-owned small businesses.

In this section, I provided a detailed description of the research for inclusion into the study. Valid and reliable research is necessary to achieve the overall goal of the study in providing strategies that owners could incorporate into the operating plans of new start-up small businesses. The framework of this section consists of the following subsections detailing the facets of the research project: the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling, the data collection, the data analysis, and the validity and reliability of the study.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the business strategies that veteran small business owners needed to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. My study focused on veteran-owned small businesses for at least 5 years in Central Florida. The implications for veteran entrepreneurship can create a positive social change with the potential for promoting positive social values, stakeholder satisfaction, and solution incentives in creating jobs that minimize governmental funding support and improve the societal quality of lives (Lumpkin et al., 2013).

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this qualitative study (Yin, 2012), I am the data collection instrument. For this reason, my role of the researcher was to minimize any form of researcher bias or opinions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In minimizing my personal bias or cultural viewpoints, I adhered to an interview protocol (See AppendixA) regarding administering interview questions; record the participant answers, overcome unexpected situations, understanding the covered topic, and unbiased data collection techniques (Yin, 2012). Explaining my researcher role and the purpose of this study in researching veteran-owned small business longevity options is necessary in order to build trust with the respondents (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Considering the Belmont Report on ethical principles for human rights (Cseko & Tremaine, 2013), my role as researcher towards beneficence was not to cause any harm to the participant or small business, provide justice for accurately reporting all of the findings, and respect the participants' desire in conducting the interview. My role as a researcher was to set the tone for the research in relating to the interview, participants situation, and being honest about the intended purpose of the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

For this study, I conducted interviews, compiled response data, researched organizational documentation, analyzed the data, and interpreted the researched data (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). In gathering the needed data, I contacted and scheduled the interviews at the participants' convenience. I made every effort to ensure the meeting time and meeting place was appropriate to prevent any interview disruptions.

The participants agreed to the rationale of the study, the intended use of the study, interview proceedings, the privacy of the participant and institution, and the opportunity to review the completed interview. After introductions had concluded to place the participant at ease, I asked the interview questions. During the interview, I recorded the session to simplify the transcription process.

### **Participants**

In 2007, veteran-owned businesses accounted for over 2 million firms while revenues generated reached \$1.2 trillion (SBA, 2012). The targeted participants for my doctoral study were veteran owners of small business ventures that had been in operation for at least 5 years. These individuals may forge the future direction for increased veteran employment opportunities, economic stimulation, and added start-up venture initiatives. By searching the Internet using a purposeful sampling technique (Hanson et al., 2011), I used the criterion sampling method to identify, contact via telephone or computer, and obtained interview pre-approvals on veteran-owned, small businesses with less than 500 employees, operational for 5 years, and located in Central Florida (Tello, Yang, & Latham, 2012). In selecting a sufficient sampling amount for the study, I petitioned 13 veteran small business owners to compare and contrast their operating processes in identifying their longevity influences. Data saturation occurred when there are no new themes or insights (Hanson et al., 2011). I collected data from participant interviews, participant Internet websites, and researched articles for analysis until reaching data saturation of no new emergent themes arise (Hanson et al., 2011).

I obtained a formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number 11-13-14-0307452 to conduct an interview while ensuring ethical compliance. My initial contact with the business owner allowed an open dialog for a future in-person interview and outlined the ethical guideline issues with conducting this multiple case study. Yin (2012) expressed that a single-case design study would allow researchers to focus on a particular issue impacting one event. Hanson et al. (2011) also suggested that conducting a multiple case design study provides a process for researching an occurrence that affects two or more subject cases. Using a multiple case design allowed replication of the interview research at participating veteran-owned businesses.

I did provide the veteran small business owners an informed consent form for their review and signature that outlined the purpose, intended use, interview risks, and privacy in conducting the study. The veteran-owners participated in an interview at their convenience and were under no obligation to complete the interview. I safeguarded all names, masked personal data to protect the identity of the addressed representative and the small business venture, maintained all data in a secure location for 5 years, and then scheduled to destroy the data after that time. Finally, a 1-2 page results summary was available after the study completion to share the results with the participants and stakeholders, upon request.

### **Research Method and Design**

The research method and design used for this study consisted of a qualitative methodology using a multiple case study design. A multiple case study design allowed

me to consolidate research data from numerous sources and use varying data collection options (Yin, 2012) to explore, illustrate, and analyze (Hanson et al., 2011) veteran-owned small businesses. This multiple case study design was to investigate how business longevity influenced work practices, management, and leadership experiences of veteran small business owners. I incorporated research sources using (a) semistructured interviews using open-ended questions, (b) researched documentation, and (c) affiliated participant Internet websites. Understanding the triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011), my multiple case study provided research into how veteran-owned small businesses operate, what requirements were needed to compete successfully in the U.S. economy, and why potential operational practice adjustments are used to accommodate returning veterans.

### **Method**

The three types of research methods available to researchers are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2012). Mauch and Park (2003) defined qualitative research as a means of studying or observing individual and group issues that are numerically hard to measure. Myers (2013) noted that a quantitative study does not view participants' feelings, experiences, observations, and relevant documentation and relies on numerical data for insights. A mixed methods format is not suitable due to time constraints, numerical equations, and the combined elements of qualitative and quantitative methods (Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) outlined qualitative studies as using grounded theory, phenomenological, narrative, ethnographical, or case study designs to

obtain research data. For this study, I chose a qualitative multiple case research study that enabled respondents to participate in an open discussion on management practices of small business ventures. Using a multiple case study design allowed me to perform a cross-case synthesis to explore longevity business strategies of veteran-owned small businesses that other designs may not reveal (Yin, 2012). A quantitative or mixed methods study incorporated numerical responses and was not suitable for my study in exploring the expressed operational or administrative process changes made by veterans in managing a successful business (Yin, 2012).

### **Research Design**

Yin (2012) identified that time and location formulate case study research. Anthony and Jack (2009) added that a setting and a time context are components of case studies. The multiple case study was appropriate for my study to focus on identifying specific strategies that veteran-owned business leaders might implement to enhance their longevity in Central Florida. My rationale for using the multiple case study research was to address potential technologies, strategies, economy, competition, and financial support needed to operate and maintain a small business. I used a qualitative data collection method to focus on conducting personal interviews with veteran business owners. In conducting this multiple case study, I focused on establishing an interview protocol process in response to the triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011). I incorporated research sources using (a) semistructured interviews using open-ended questions, (b) researched documentation, or (c) affiliated veteran small business owner Internet



resources (Hanson et al., 2011). My emphasis on the triple-loop theory within this study researched how a business formed, what determined a needed service or product, and why the business was still in operation.

I did not select other qualitative research designs since the focus of this multiple case study pertained to researching longevity factors associated to numerous veteran-owned small business existences within Central Florida for at least 5 years. By using a phenomenological or grounded theory design (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), my research would focus on a singular understanding and relation of a business issue and not focus on veteran-owner small businesses longevity strategies. Similarly, by using a narrative or ethnographical design (Hanson et al., 2011); my research would focus on historical veteran-owner experiences without focusing on veteran-owner small businesses longevity strategies.

### **Population and Sampling**

As of 2010, Florida had the third largest veteran population due in part to the military bases and veteran services within the state (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2011). I used a purposeful sample of 13 veteran small business owners within Central Florida by searching the Internet, business advertisements, or the Florida Department of State listings for veteran-owned small business ventures. Using a purposeful sample selection allowed me to identify and select the veteran businesses, businesses operating for at least 5 years, and business owners to provide the required data to address management issues (Tello et al., 2012). My rationale in selecting 13 veteran-owned

businesses aided in exploring the business strategy variations or similarities between the ventures in characterizing replications (Yin, 2012) within Central Florida. Francis et al. (2010) presented data saturation principles as setting an initial sample size, setting a stopping criteria point, using an independent coding staff, or evidence presentation for reader evaluation. In presenting data saturation (Francis et al., 2010) for this study, I interviewed 10 veteran small business owners and continued with three additional veteran-owner interviews to verify no additional emergent themes in determining the stopping criteria. I scheduled my interviews according to the participant availability and business locale to minimize any operational hindrances. The intent of my on-site interview was to obtain veteran-owners operational viewpoints in a real life business environment. The individuals I interviewed had an understanding of business strategies in operating and maintaining a small business venture in Central Florida for more than 5-years.

### **Ethical Research**

Collecting data for research requires the highest ethical considerations for researchers in obtaining the participant informed consent, protecting the participant rights, and securing the participant privacy (Yin, 2012). There is an ethical obligation for the researcher not to deceive the interview participant, demonstrate respect towards the participant, and honor any promises made to the participant on the intended study purpose and use of the interview data collected (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I provided the participants with a consent form to review and agree to the interview. After providing a

study briefing, the participants understood and consented to the purpose of study, the interview proceedings, data collection processes, the avoidance of any potential psychological, relationship, legal, economic/professional, or physical risks involved, privacy details, and university contact information. The participants understood the opportunity to request a withdrawal from this study at any time. Should a participant withdrew; all information obtained would become void and not used for this doctoral study. The participant could re-engage in a subsequent secondary interview while being offered the same questions at that time. I did not use incentives with this multiple case study. Privileged documentation obtained for the sole use in adding numerical or subjective content is proprietary information. I kept all electronically scanned or collected data, recordings, transcriptions, or assimilated data for this study maintained within my computer for 5 years, and scheduled for data destruction after that. I also maintained an electronic backup copy of all media data on an external computer storage device using a security pass code for system entry.

### **Data Collection**

In this section, the data collection processes incorporate the instruments, data collection technique, and data organization technique used for this for this veteran-owned small business study. The instruments I used in collecting the data centered on interviews, veteran small business Internet resources, and researched data or records. I used control processes to garner participant trust and approval with participating in the study for data collecting techniques. Lastly, I organized the collected data to ensure

accuracy and security.

### **Instruments**

As the case study investigator (Yin, 2012), I am the data collection instrument. This multiple case study consisted of establishing an individual interview session with each of the participants. This one-on-one meeting allowed for a private exchange of questions and answers. This privacy allowed the interview session to proceed without distractions or interruptions. I established reliability (Yin, 2012) by listing all of the interview questions on an outline to ask the same questions in the same order. The semistructured interview consisted of a series of open-ended questions verbally given to each participant. This form of questioning was to inquire about any operational changes conducted to enhance or prolong the veteran small business venture success. I conducted the interview session in a manner that would allow for an open dialog with the participants in order to enhance or clarify any of the interview questions. I utilized open-ended interview questions to inquire on veteran-owned small business longevity successes following the triple-loop theorem (Asproth et al., 2011). I recorded the interview sessions using a handheld recording device. I obtained a backup recording device if needed. After the interview session, I transcribed the participant answers and reviewed the transcripts to ensure comprehension. I transcribed and analyzed the recordings using codes and themes after completing all interviews. My denaturalized transcription review process (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) of the interview allowed for participant discrepancies or comments as transcript addendum entries.

I collected additional information from secondary data sources such as the veteran small business Internet page (if available), the Better Business Bureau (BBB) filings, researched articles, and other data sources (as needed) provided by the participants. In using additional secondary data sources, I established reliability by designing this research study for repetition with follow-on studies and validity in how this researched data focused on veteran-owners need in conducting this multiple case research study (Hanson et al., 2011).

### **Data Collection Technique**

Using the multiple case study questions, I proceeded to interview each participant. The focus for my interview questions was to obtain veteran small business owner responses supporting the main research question, what strategies do veteran business owners need to sustain their companies beyond 5 years? Based on the researched articles within this study, my interview questions focused on small business adjustments and experiences of veteran owners. My intention in conducting interviews for this multiple case study (Yin, 2012) was to explore what factors contributed to veteran-owned small business successes by recording the audio portion of the interview session for a comparative analysis. I collected additional secondary data from the business venture Internet websites and the BBB to enhance the research study. I maintained all data and interview recordings on file within a private computer system that was password protected (Hanson et al., 2011). In addition, I electronically scanned all documentation compiled during the interview process for electronic filing. I maintained participant

confidentiality by assigning a case code number to track the interview session. My electronic data remained securely backed-up on a pass coded external storage device. Upon collection of all hard copy documents, I destroyed all documentation for control of privacy immediately after electronically scanning the documents. In addition, I did not conduct a pilot study.

### **Data Organization Techniques**

The resources I used for documenting the interview sessions included the list of interview questions, the interview protocol outline, and a handheld recording device to record the interview (Hanson et al., 2011). I transferred and stored the audio recordings from the Olympus voice recorder to my desktop computer. I created an interview transcript using the Dragon NaturallySpeaking® 12 software to transpose the recorded audio data after storing the interview recordings on my personal desktop computer. Using a Microsoft Excel™ spreadsheet, my collected data derived from audio recordings, transcriptions, personal notations, secondary data sources, and electronic media for a reference catalog. I scanned all printed correspondence for electronic filing and then shredded. After scanning, I stored and maintained the electronic files on my secured password protected computer. I created electronic backup files using a USB memory stick and stored in a key-locked fire retardant safe with all pertinent electronic data maintained for a minimum of 5 years and then destroyed. Using the qualitative analysis software NVivo™, I compared the data based on codes and themes in cross-referencing with other participant responses, national guidelines, and participant recommendations in

presenting a final research conclusion (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Following the theme development, I conducted an interview transcript review (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) with the participants to verify transcription accuracy for concurrence with emergent perceptions stemming from the interview session.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

I used a purposeful sample of 13 veteran small business owners within Central Florida by searching the Internet, business advertisements, or the Florida Department of State listings for veteran-owned small business ventures. Conducting this multiple case study allowed me to focus on interviewing a 13-selected small business veteran-owners found by searching the Internet, business advertisements, or the Florida Department of State business listings. My intention of this research study was to explore strategies that contribute to the success of veteran-owned small businesses that have operated in Central Florida for at least 5 years. Bekhet and Zauszniewski, (2012) described two types of methodological triangulation as either across method (quantitative and qualitative research properties) or within method (quantitative or qualitative research properties). I conducted a within method type of methodological triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012) by using several data sources from participant interview responses, researched articles, or collected data from veteran-owner establishment websites in researching what success factors lead to the longevity of veteran small business ownership. Respondent answers collected represent existing small business management strategies or decisions, highlight any operational constraints, and record recommended

processes that veteran owners encountered in operating a small business.

In following the Asproth et al. (2011) triple-loop theory concepts, veteran-owner small business longevity paradigms may expand in researching how businesses operate, what assistance was available, and why a business strategy was used. I structured the interview questions to inquire about *how*, *what*, and *why* a veteran-owned small business was operationally successful (Asproth et al., 2011). I incorporated research sources to include (a) researched articles, (b) semistructured interviews using open-ended questions, (c) researched participant small business Internet websites, and (d) BBB filings. The interview questions used for the study were:

1. Why did you establish this business in Florida?
2. What financial assistance did you obtain to establish and maintain this business?
3. What market research did you conduct in providing your product or service?
4. What were some of the hardships you encountered while establishing your business in Florida?
5. How did you overcome these hardship issues?
6. What were some of the successes of your company?
7. What business strategies did you use to succeed?
8. What types of governmental assistance programs have you utilized in starting or operating this business?
9. What types of veteran small business incentives have you used to expand your



business operations in Florida?

10. What types of Florida assistance organizations have you contacted to enhance your business operations?
11. What more can you add to this study to assist with understanding veteran-owned small business practices in Florida?

My data analysis of the interview responses enabled an emergence of codes and themes (Katre & Salipante, 2012). I used the computer generated software program NVivo™ to document, code the data, and develop the themes to compare the interview collections (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Following the theme development, I conducted an interview transcript review (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) with the participants to verify transcription accuracy for concurrence with emergent perceptions stemming from the interview session. Yin (2012) suggested a cross-case synthesis stemming from a pattern-matching process. The interview data analysis I used consisted of a cross-case synthesis in comparing expected resultant patterns to formulate patterns from the interviews and obtained data. My intent of this study was to explore the longevity factors of veteran-owned small businesses in an effort to raise operational awareness options for future small business ventures.

### **Reliability and Validity**

In this section, I presented the reliability and validity aspects of the veteran-owned small business study. Reliability relates to the researcher presenting the study for future research repetition while obtaining the same results (Yin, 2012). Validity relates to

the researcher in establishing credibility, findings dependability, data review, and transference of the data results (Hanson et al., 2011).

### **Reliability**

Reliability was crucial in documenting and providing the steps taken to conduct this study for replication (Ali & Yusof, 2011). Ali and Yusof (2011) listed three principles in providing reliable data as (a) using several evidence sources, (b) using a case study database, and (c) establishing a chain of evidence protocol. Ali and Yusof (2011) referred to triangulation as using several sources whether data, investigator, theory, or methodology to perform evaluations. From these sources, I focused on methodological triangulation based on administering open-ended interview questions, researched relevant small business literature, and reviewed Internet websites focused on the veteran-owner small business (Hanson et al., 2011). I confirmed reliability (Yin, 2012) with establishing an interview protocol by listing all of the interview questions on an outline to ask the same questions in the same order. To enhance the trustworthiness of the research, Hanson et al. (2011) asserted that dependability was crucial in a qualitative study to ensure the process was complete. My dependability in conducting research encompassed a transcript review to verify the participant interview meaning to ensure topic coverage, emergent perceptions, and response accuracy (Hanson et al., 2011). Mero-Jaffe (2011) contended that a transcript review entailed allowing the participant to review the transcript summary for accuracy, discrepancies, or comments. I conducted a transcript review following the interview to allow the participants the opportunity to

review the transcript in verifying and confirming the accuracy of the transcript. I reviewed the transcribed interview with the participants for memory recollection and transcription data accuracy. I sought participant viewpoints, perceptions, and concurrence with the interpretation of the interview data for use in supporting theme development within the study. Participant discrepancies or comments about the original transcript, if any, I noted on an addendum of the participants' modified response (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Ali and Yusof (2011) outlined the use of computer technologies to communicate, collect, and track information in a database. I used Microsoft Office and NVivo computer software programs to store and analyze the research data. Using Ali and Yusof's (2011) principle of maintaining a chain of evidence, I was capable of linking the interview process from developing, implementing, electronically storing, analyzing, and reporting the interview data. In developing the interview process for my multiple case study, my interview questions addressed veteran small business owner understandings regarding success and longevity strategies used for future veteran small business start-up ventures. The basis of my interview questions stemmed from veteran issues found in the peer-reviewed research articles.

### **Validity**

The validity of this study was to build upon prior researcher articles associated with small businesses. Ali and Yusof (2011) identified conflicting forms of validity for qualitative studies and noted inconsistencies in validity criteria ranging from credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and trustworthiness. I established credibility

(Hanson et al., 2011) by collecting data from several sources stemming from researched articles, reviewed participant Internet data, and small business veteran-owner small business interview responses. Participants authenticated their interview transcripts to ensure creditability of the transcribed data. I established confirmability (Hanson et al., 2011) in safeguarding the draft study documentation, interview protocols, recordings, transcripts, and analysis reports for potential educational, research colleagues, or participant audits in confirming the accomplishment of this study. I conducted a within-method type of methodological triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012) by using several data sources from participant interview responses, researched articles, and collected data associated with the veteran-owner small business ventures in researching what success factors lead to the longevity of veteran small business ownership. I skillfully conducted interview questions to obtain small business process descriptions and longevity awareness processes (Hanson et al., 2011). In addition, Ali and Yusof (2011) described transferability of a case study to be applicable to the general populace. The transferability of the study relates to providing a detailed sample description and results for the reader to determine comparability within their situation (Hanson et al., 2012). The transferability for my multiple case study presumed that the participating veteran-owner's situational leadership assisted in determining the longevity of future veteran-owned small business ventures (Box, 2011). The dependability of the study results stemmed from conducting an interview transcript review process (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) with the participants as soon as possible after the interview to allow accuracy verification and

confirmation of the transcribed data. I minimized my personal bias and cultural viewpoints by adhering to an interview protocol regarding administering of the interview questions, recording the participant answers, overcoming unexpected situations, understanding the topic being covered, and being unbiased with data collection (Yin, 2012). In analyzing the data, I continued to collect information until data saturation was evident to where there are no new emergent themes (Hanson et al. 2011).

### **Summary and Transition**

Within Section 2, I provided a detailed process in researching the study. I focused on a research description consisting of a purpose statement on the study focus, the role of the researcher in conducting the study, identified the participants, outlined the research method and design used, and delineating the population and sampling. I defined the data collection and analysis concepts and defined the reliability and validity of the study.

In Section 3, I will provide a presentation of findings listing the research question, identified themes, and a comparative analysis of the findings. For a professional practice application, I plan to discuss the findings applicability to veteran-owned small businesses. I plan to provide how veteran-owned small businesses influence social change. Using recommendations for action, I intend to discuss potential small business recommendations for veteran owners. I plan to recommend further research areas towards small business practice improvements. I will address my concerns and suggestions in reflecting upon this DBA study process. Finally, I will conclude with my final thoughts on this research paper. I provided all applicable consent forms, permissions, and

interview questions.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore veteran-owned small business strategies and practices in Central Florida to support their companies beyond 5 years since only 50 percent of small businesses remain operational within the U.S. economy (Solomon et al., 2013). I provided insight into the daily business operations encountered by veteran owners by utilizing the referenced research material, veteran-owned small business Internet websites, the veteran-owned BBB small business rankings, and veteran-owner interview data. Section 3 provides an overview of the study, the findings, and the application to professional practice, the implication for social change, recommendations for action and further study, personal reflections, and a summary and a conclusion of the study.

The primary research question used for this study inquired on the veteran-owner small business sustainment strategies operating at least 5 years. Using a purposeful sampling, my interview participants were comprised of veteran-owned small businesses from varying specialties. Using Dragon NaturallySpeaking 12 software to record and transcribe each interview, I reviewed the interview data to capture accurately the respondent's answers. I entered the interview response data into the qualitative program, NVivo, to organize the information. Upon completing my data gathering from the 13 veteran small business owner interviews, organizational Internet websites, and BBB posts, I coded and consolidated the veteran-owned small business data to develop

emergent themes following a constant comparison method (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Assimilating the Murphy, MacCarthy, McAllister, and Gilbert (2014) transcript review process, I validated the interview data with each participant for data interpretation, concurrence, and subsequent use in coding and theme formulation prior to incorporating the findings into this study.

Using qualitative analysis, my intent of this multiple case study explored the main research question in determining longevity factors of veteran-owned small businesses. Upon my obtaining participant acceptance with the study, I coordinated a date, time, and location that were most conducive to the interview to use open-ended questions to allow the participant freedom in responding. I researched and coded the participant's small business Internet website along with reviewing BBB posts to triangulate the data (Hanson et al., 2011) while using constant comparison coding methodology (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011) to code the veteran-owned small business data in developing five main themes. The first emergent theme related to the veteran-owner business practices used for establishing a business in Florida. The second emergent theme revealed varying veteran-owner decisions on market research practices. The third emergent theme exposed business adversities and overcoming hardships with operating a veteran-owned small business. The fourth emergent theme disclosed veteran-owner business assistance avenues used in operating a small business. These emergent themes align with my conceptual frameworks used for the study. My overall study analysis resulted in small business strategy support stemmed from the veteran owner drive and determination in



overcoming adversities to sustain their businesses.

### **Presentation of Findings**

I based this study on the general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972) and triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011) conceptual frameworks. My rationale for using systems theory refers to how the independent parts of a system work together to function as a whole. The general systems theory applied to small businesses reflect veteran-owned small business intrical support within a local economy (Soojin et al., 2011). The triple-loop learning theory was applicable in researching how a process works, what is being offered, and why is there an issue in defining a need for systems change (Asproth et al., 2011). I explored triple-loop concept principles as applied to veteran-owned small business process changes. In using the general systems theory and triple-loop learning theory, my research allowed for an internal and external understanding of small business strategies used for veteran-owner longevity.

### **Participant Demographics**

In this study, I searched the Internet for Central Florida businesses, using purposeful selection criteria, in locating 33 veteran-owned small businesses. From this list of businesses, only 13 small businesses were receptive to participate in an interview (see Table 1). The veteran small business owners interviewed comprised of businesses in dentistry, law, construction, Internet advertising, religion, Internet employment placement services, electronics, real estate, electrical, automotive repair, and a professional cleaning service. In conducting the interviews, I coordinated a meeting place

and time that was conducive to the participant in setting with a comfortable atmosphere allowing for open communication. I conducted interviews at the participant's business location, veteran-owner residencies, and at a public location. In conducting the interview, I explained the interview purpose, rationale, and proceedings with each of the 13 participants using an interview protocol outline. Given participant agreement, I proceeded with the interview by asking open-ended questions to solicit real life experience responses. I recorded the interview and provided question clarification for the participant. I conducted an interview transcript review (Murphy et al., 2014) with the participants to obtain a mutual understanding of the interview data. I reviewed the interview transcript with the participants for memory recollection and transcription data accuracy. I obtained participant approvals of the interview data on viewpoints, perceptions, and interpretation of the study for use in supporting theme development within the study.

Table 1

*Summary of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses Contacted*

Business Replies	Number	Total
Agreed for Interview	13	40.0%
Not Qualified	2	6.0%
Declined	4	12.0%
Not Available/No Response	14	42.0%
Total Businesses Contacted	33	100%

### **Research Theme Overview**

Business owners seemed to align with the general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1972) by providing an individual service or product to support the local economy as a whole. As noted in the interview question responses, business owners

unknowingly applied principles found in the triple-loop theorem (Tosey et al., 2012) in adapting or modifying business strategy practices needed to continue operating their establishments. Based on these interview question responses, participant Internet websites, and BBB, five major themes emerged in focusing on how, what, and why factors that contributed to the continued operation of the interviewed veteran-owned small businesses. Using available veteran-owned small business Internet websites, I provided additional reference data for coding analysis and theme development to triangulate (Hanson et al., 2011) the interview responses given. I queried and coded the BBB website in searching for additional operating details about the participating small businesses. In comparing prior researched small business articles to the coded interview responses, coded company websites, and coded BBB posts, it became apparent to me that the emergent small business themes reflected that the veteran-owners interviewed strived to overcome obstacles for continued operation. Based on the completed research analysis, the emergent themes align with the primary research question inquiring on; what strategies do veteran business owners need to sustain their companies beyond 5 years?

### **Theme 1: Business Practices**

The first emergent theme, based on interview questions 1, 6, and 7, pertained to veteran-owner business practices used for operating a small business in Florida. My intent was to inquire into the decision factors used by veteran-owners in starting and operating a small business. My questioning inquired on why establish a business in Florida, queried to highlight success situations, and explore what factors contribute to

these small business successes. In defining small businesses with less than 500 employees, Bressler et al. (2014) reiterated that small businesses created 67% of the U.S. labor force from 2009–2011 with over 52% being home-based businesses and 2% of franchises. To understand the influences of veteran-owners who enter into a small business, there may be a potential impact on the U.S. economy pertaining to the influx of service members leaving the military (Arendt, 2014). Focusing on this military transition, 13% of veteran-owners and 8.3% of service-disabled veteran-owners account for self-employed veteran small businesses in confronting and overcoming re-integration issues (Bressler et al., 2013). Valadez (2012) stated that small businesses transcend a multitude of industries, neighborhoods, and countries. Small business owner innovation appeared to be more dynamic and willing to take calculated risks (Valdez, 2012) while being creative in trying new ideas (Foreman, 2011). In analyzing my research data (see Table 2), I coded and consolidated the collected data into three nodes pertaining to operating rational, business success, and business strategies used in supporting the business practice theme.

Table 2

*Veteran-Owned Small Business Practices*

Theme/Node	Sources used	References
Business Practices	56	61
Operating Rationale	20	20
Business Success	18	19
Business Strategies	18	22

**Operating rationale.** Veteran small business owners interviewed provided

numerous responses regarding the establishment of a small business. Based on the respondents' answers, two codes were prevalent regarding veteran-owner existing residency status and relocation actions to support the operating rationale theme (see Table 2). I confirmed participant relocation in establishing a small business in Florida with investigating and coding interviews, veteran-owner websites, and the BBB (Participant 2, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014). Participants responded that they had previously resided here prior to starting a small business (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014). Participants stated that they were assigned here from the military, lived here after the transition, and started a business after leaving the military (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015; Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014; BBB ranking 2014; website data, 11/22/2014). A select few stated that they relocated here due to corporate business issues and started a new venture (Participant 11, interview, 12/1/2014). Participant 12 revealed that professional and personal complications with PTSD forced a move to Central Florida while reestablishing a small business venture (Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014).

**Business success.** The intent of this node comprised of veteran-owner responses to highlight some aspect or accomplishment in operating a veteran-owned small business. Participant 6 attributed positive profit margins to personnel association and job selections for business success (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014). Participant 5 asserted that reputation in doing things right the first time afforded numerous business

transactions (Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/5/2015; website, 11/21/2014). Similarly, providing outstanding customer service and support regardless of adversities propelled Participant 12 in making the choices regardless of cost (Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014; website 12/2/2014). Participant 2 attributed business success to steady growth, broaden specializations with economic downturns, and prepare for future opportunities to business success (Participant 2, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014). From a social perspective, Participant 4 posited that by voluntarily providing charitable monetary and business services contributions enabled successful professional networking opportunities (Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014).

**Business strategies.** In developing business strategies and tactics, small business owners need an efficient implementation process beyond vision and mission statements to obtain a competitive advantage over competitors (Box, 2011). Participants 8 and 12 shared business strategy experiences with controlling overhead costs, asset procurement, and company reinvestment in relation to debt management (Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014; website 12/2/2014). Referencing the Spence et al. (2011) research on global ventures, Participant 11 outlined similar business opportunities as an international veteran-owned small business by expressing a need to make the necessary business changes as the market fluctuates regarding the Asian influence on U.S. manufacturers and U.S. employee relations (Participant 11, interview, 12/1//2014). Similarly, Participant 6 stated a need to set a short-term strategic plan and

longer strategic plans but to remain flexible for individual change as the market changes at any given moment (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014). As Fox (2013) suggested for human resource enhancements aiding small businesses, researched participants expressed a necessity for internal and external customer support, employee relations, and social media (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015; Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014).

My analysis of the participant responses, organizational websites, and BBB ratings outlined veteran-owner business practices for operating a small business in Central Florida (Table 2). Based on the general systems theory and triple-loop theory conceptual frameworks identified within this study, veteran small business owners possessed differing rationale for establishing a small business venture within a local economy. Veteran owners may need to consider applicable operating systems pertaining to applicable business laws, operating processes, human relations, and support services for continued small business operation that aids in supporting the economy. Veteran small business owners may inadvertently follow a triple-loop theorem (Valdez, 2012) in part by rationalizing in knowing how a business works, what business to establish, and why a particular small business exists in supporting economic changes within Florida. Small businesses may need to interact together to ensure the business functions well for the company, lenders, and consumers to prosper (Valadez, 2012).

### **Theme 2: Market Research.**

Using interview question 3, the second emergent theme related to market research

conducted by veteran-owned small businesses. My rationale for inquiring on veteran-owner's market research of products or services was to probe into the various processes used in establishing and operating a small business. Small business strategies create innovative new ideas and processes with one-third of all new patents coming from small business technology development (Cronin-Gilmore, 2012). Veteran small business owners responded to an interview question regarding market research conducted in providing a product or service. Given the various small businesses participating in this study, a market research inquiry revealed the importance of market research strategies in starting or maintaining a small business. Based on analysis coding of the interview data and associated company websites, market research conducted and market research not conducted became prevalent nodes from veteran-owner small businesses (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Veteran-Owned Small Business Market Research*

Theme / Node	Sources	References
Market Research	14	14
Research Conducted	10	10
Research Not Required or Not Conducted	4	4

**Research conducted.** Although Box (2011) contended the importance of market awareness, leadership, and applying lean principles are key to success, Cronin-Gilmore (2012) added education, training, planning, networking, and management as additional factors. Small businesses need to have market research, experience, regulatory insight, finances, and risk assessment (van Gelderen et al., 2011). Within this study, the participants revealed several variations in conducting market research ranging from a



simple surveying of the local market conditions (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015 ) to an extensive small business analysis on market conditions, location probabilities, and population demographics (Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014). One participant surveyed larger businesses to determine a market need and then established a small business to meet that market niche (Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014 ).

**Research not required or not conducted.** Respondents stated that, not conducting or not requiring market research was due to current work experiences within the market that allowed for an establishment of a new veteran-owned small business (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 12, interview, 11/26/2014). Participant 13 honored a divine intervention while referring to faith guidance in establishing a church without the need for market research by studying and preaching gospel doctrine to the people (Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). As a matter of opportunity, Participant 1 established a small business by chance stemming from a recreational by-product on Internet key word searches (Participant 1, 11/18/2014; website, 11/19/2014).

In applying general systems theory principles to theme two, participants that conducted market research inquired on what type of individual small business could prosper within the local economy. Small business owners influenced system operability by focusing on market choice, loss prevention, pricing, and product leveraging of a business venture practice (Newbert, 2012). Business owners conducted market research

to understand the need for internal operating system requirements as applied to an external niche in order to compete in an economic market segment. Veteran small business owners may research viable strategic business plans for increased profit, growth, and opportunities in applying the triple-loop theory (Asproth et al., 2011). Obtaining market research seemed to enable veteran small business owners the opportunity to analyze what the market was, how to meet the market demand, and why a process change would meet the market demand in applying a triple-loop theory principles. In applying a general systems theory conceptual framework for participants that did not conduct a market research, one veteran used a faith system in establishing a prosperous not-for-profit small business as part of a larger divinity realm. In applying triple-loop theory, veteran-owners not conducting research still seemed to prosper with a previous understanding of what the market need is, how to start-up a business using trial and error, and why making business decisions were important to remain operational within the local economy.

### **Theme 3: Business Adversities**

The third emergent theme concerned veteran-owned small business adversities. My emphasis on using interview questions 4 and 5 was to investigate the contributing factors surrounding small business problems and reveal the processes used by veteran-owners to overcome small business difficulties within Florida. Small business problems centered on regulations, finance, organization, marketing, information technology, location, service or product, and time (van Gelderen et al., 2011). The emergent theme of

business adversities comprised of coding interview responses and company websites. The data analysis responses given comprised of three main nodes pertaining to hardship occurrences, hardship relief, and neutral or no issues (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Veteran-Owned Small Business Adversities*

Theme / Node	Sources	References
Business Adversities	28	34
Hardship Occurrences	13	15
Hardship Relief	12	14
Neutral - No Issues	3	5

**Hardship occurrences.** In researching small businesses, there were varying degrees of hardship occurrences that veteran-owners endured. Differing gender norms researched by Kogut, Luse, and Short (2014) surfaced with referencing made to male domination over female entrepreneurs (Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014). Hardships caused by undisclosed personnel issues concerned Participant 13 (Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Veteran-owners may need to accept, understand and utilize HR practices for small business functionality (Allen et al., 2013). Respondent referrals established small business recognition within the local economy in starting and maintaining a business (Participant 2, website, 11/18/2014; Participant 3, website, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Small businesses must consider market change (Newbert, 2012) and potential business trends (McCuddy et al., 2011) in identifying a course of action for small business operation (Participant 11, interview, 12/1/2014). Veteran-small business owners

interviewed expressed difficulties with business start-up, logistics, delegations, legal requirements, and politics (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014); Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014) that paralleled McFarlane's (2014) research on key business points being name selection, legal foundations, agreements, stakeholder contracts, and patents.

**Hardship relief.** I also inquired about how veteran-owners overcame hardships in operating a small business. Participants leaned towards technological advancements in establishing and growing a small business venture (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015) similar to the Valadez (2012) researched need for technology with small business creation and growth. Kerrick et al. (2014) contended that business passion and establishing networks as key business factors while participants voiced similar factors pertaining to networking, partnering, and sheer determination (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014); Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014).

**Neutral - no issues.** In researching small business adversities, participants expressed a neutral or stated there were no hardship issues. Participant 6 stated that there were not many issues to overcome after business start-up (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). In my interview with Participant 10, this small business owner utilized computer technology from a residency to negate any adversities (Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014). Similar to Katre and Salipante research on demand creation, networking, and stakeholder support, Participant

12 insisted that networking, support, and salesmanship excelled beyond potential adversities in maintain a small business (Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014: website, 12/2/2014).

In applying the triple-loop theory to businesses overcoming adversities, veteran-owners may emulate Malchow-Moller et al. (2011) guidance for assessing the problem, decide what options are available, and cope with making a decision. Veteran small business owners interviewed had varying degrees of adversities and coping mechanisms to overcome hardships. It was apparent that the veteran small business owners interviewed knew how an obstacle could affect a business market, what course of action to make, and decide why alleviating an adversity is important for success. In applying system theory concepts, veteran owners strived to use various managerial systems to align problems encountered with applicable solutions to overcome adversity similar to the Groves et al. (2011) linear and non-linear thought process.

#### **Theme 4: Business Assistance Avenues**

The fourth-emergent theme concerned veteran-owner small business assistance avenues used. Participant interview responses were given to question 2, 8, 9, 10, and 11 provided analysis data for coding. I coded the data into nodes under a single theme reflecting business assistance avenues used (See Table 5).

Table 5

*Veteran-Owned Small Business Assistance Avenues*

Theme / Node	Sources	References
Business Assistance Avenues	81	86
Financial	25	26
Governmental	15	15
Veteran Programs	14	15
Florida State	14	15
Additional VOSB Recommendations	13	15

**Financial assistance.** Using the respondents' answers to question 2, my analysis focused on what financial assistance avenues did veteran small business owners use. This questioning allowed the participants to reveal what types of funding avenues were available to start or operate a small business. The veteran owners studied revealed limited financing options (i.e. loans, credit cards, savings, or repayment agreements) that appeared to align with the Lahm et al. (2011) study on company funding options using credit cards over larger banking restrictions (Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014; BBB ranking 2014; website data, 11/22/2014; Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014). Participants stated that financing a small business came from personal savings (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014). Once established, participants were able to operate and maintain a small business by reinvesting back into the business (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015; Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014). Participants using available computer technologies at an established residency did not

require any specialized funding to start and maintain a small business (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014, Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Still, one participant reported utilizing no financial assistance based on personal licensure and commissions in operating the small business venture (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014)

**Governmental assistance.** My focus on question 8 explored veteran owner rationale in utilizing governmental resources to assist in operating a small business venture (see Table 5). Participant data analyzed and coded revealed select application, limited usage, or denial of governmental resources. Small business survival and growth stem from positive governmental resource assistance avenues (Solomon et al., 2013). Although, Phillips (2014) postulated that governmental websites need efficient programming to preclude veteran small business owners from navigating numerous websites in obtaining resources. My analysis of participant data disclosed mostly governmental assistance rejection due to unawareness or personal preference (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014; Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014). Participants expressed disappointment with initially applying for governmental assistance but ultimately withdrew due to system inadequacies and bureaucracy (Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014; BBB ranking 2014; website data, 11/22/2014; Participant 11, interview, 12/1/2014). Nevertheless, a few participants had limited governmental

associations due to obtaining small business certifications and documentation usage (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014, website 11/19/2014; confirmed through transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014, website 11/22/2014). Warren's (2014) research on the federal contracting workload and inefficiencies seemed to support the veteran small business owner rationale within this study from Participant 3, Participant 6, and Participant 8 expressing discourse for the process (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014).

My focus in studying veteran small business owners explored the types of incentives used to expand small business operations in Florida with using question 9. Resnik et al. (2012) expressed a vital need for VA community reintegration in assisting veteran lifestyle readjustments despite agency difficulties. This questioning inquired if veteran small business owners pursued Veteran Affairs offices for assistance and guidance. Unfortunately, participants rejected veteran assistance due to unawareness, disassociation, and bureaucracy (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Although, participant data did reflect a sparse benefit of veteran assistance based on organizational and networking associations (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014, Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 12,



interview, 12/1/2014, website 12/4/2014). Participant 2 possessed enhanced veteran certifications and proceeded to reach out in assisting military service members similarly expressed in the Demers (2011) study on the veteran transitional program involvement (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014, website, 11/18/2014; BBB ranking 2014).

Participant 5 applied to and accepted a veteran outreach program committed to service homeless veteran with dental care (Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Participant 12 voluntarily divulged having PTSD and the personal and professional effects on life and business relationships that mirrored previous research on PTSD (Guillen & De Miguel, 2013; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014; Westwood et al., 2010).

Based on Florida having the third largest veteran populace (Guillen & De Miguel, 2013), the primary focus of this small business study pertained to veteran owners in the state. My intent on question 10 centered on what types of Florida assistance organizations enhanced their business operations. Unfortunately, participants interviewed did not use Florida state assistance due to personal refusal or resource unawareness (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014, Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014). At least a third of the participants attempted to apply or investigate using some form of Florida assistance with negligible results (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014, website, 11/18/2014; Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014, website, 12/5/2014).

Comparable to the Phillips (2014) study on available small business assistance avenues, participants interviewed expressed negative involvement or difficulties in navigating most assistance programs available through government, state, or veteran centers.

Small business owners provide the basic building block in job creation, product innovation, and willingness to take calculated risks (Valdez, 2012) while creating and marketing an idea (Foreman, 2011). Katre and Salipante (2012) listed defining a mission, financial stability, marketing plan advancement, product demand, stakeholder support, litigation, and networking as key business factors for survival. I wanted to inquire about what more could the participants add to assist with this study in understanding veteran-owned small business practices in Florida with question 11. This open-ended questioning allowed the participants to express their concerns about future veteran small business ownership. Participants also provided insight on needed veteran programs or services to aid small business operations or veterans in general.

Veteran owners need to embrace computer technologies for a global outreach (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014, confirmed through transcript review on 2/6/2015; website, 11/18/2014) as a viable necessity in managing and conducting business (Yamamoto et al., 2012). Although despite using computer technologies, participant 3 withdrew from official business submittal processes used for contract awards due to program inconsistencies similar to the Snider et al. (2013) research (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014). Participants expressed various personal characteristics to use for veteran-owned small business success relating to building relationships, integrity

(Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014), value creation (Participant 11, interview, 12/1/2014) psychology (Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014), military attributes (Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014), commitment (Participant 5, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/5/2015), mentorship, and networking (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed through on 2/4/2015) to benefit veteran small business start-ups in Florida. Participant 13 recommended additional government support for substance abuse programs for veteran intervention and reintegration back into society (Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015).

In applying general systems theory, veteran small business owners may seek governmental support systems in providing guidelines and assistance to operate and maintain a small business. Governmental initiatives (SBA, 2014; Snider et al., 2013) assist veteran small business growth. Small business survival and growth stemming from governmental assistance avenues positively improved small business survival and financial factors (Solomon et al., 2013). My research findings indicated that veterans chose not to use governmental assistance or dismissed themselves from the system. Despite this oversight, the findings indicated a triple-loop theorem application in that veteran small business owners were still in operation, potentially due to self-motivation, with understanding what business process to use, how to obtain the required resources, and why a certain process assists with continued success. Using the triple-loop theorem, a

small amount of veteran small business owners identified what the importance was in obtaining a veteran certification, how to obtain the government certification, and why it was important to apply for governmental assistance in obtaining the veteran certifications.

In conclusion, the researched findings were congruent with the study purpose and significance associated with veteran-owned small business longevity. My semistructured interview sessions using open-ended questions allowed participants an open forum to respond. A transcript review process followed that enabled respondent data analysis for theme development consolidation. The research findings aligned with the general systems theory and triple-loop theory conceptual frameworks to aid in understanding veteran-owner situational leadership (Box, 2011). Veteran small business owners researched within this study utilized various operating business processes to remain solvent. Based on the research findings, four emergent themes revealed centered on business practices, market research, business adversities, and external assistance avenues. I developed research nodes in analyzing and coding data from interviews and associated Internet websites to support each theme (see Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5). Jasra et al. (2011) stated that businesses need financing options, marketing and business plans, technological advancements, government provisions, and expertise to succeed.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

My findings may have added implications for veteran-owner small business supporting longevity applications. It may be apparent that small business owners often

have limited information about developing a business plan to operate and maintain their company with roughly 70% of small businesses remaining solvent after 2 years and 50% lasting for 5 years (Miles, 2014). From the reported 27 million small businesses, Bressler, Campbell, and Elliot (2014) identified that over 60% were home-based businesses and created 78% employment. My intent of this study was to explore veteran-owner business practices that may contribute to understanding why some veteran small business owners lack strategies to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore veteran-owned small businesses using the overarching research question, What strategies do veteran business owners need to sustain their companies beyond 5 years? Following Francis et al.'s (2010) data saturation principles, my initial sample size involved 10 veteran-owned small businesses, and I set an additional stopping criteria point using three additional small businesses. I reached data saturation (Hanson et al., 2011) after the eighth participant interview where follow-on participant responses provided no additional information. The research findings from this veteran-owner study relate to general systems theory and reflect that veteran-owners need a business model, leveraging, and systems to remain operational (Blass & Ketchen, 2014). My research findings on Participants 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13 seem to align with the triple-loop theory since veteran owners unknowingly applied these principles in overcoming adversities to remain operational similar to the Ivanov (2011) study on decision analysis. Veteran small business owners researched may need to reconsider small business strategic planning for increased profit, growth, and performance (Fox,

2013).

Veteran-owned small business operating practices in Florida formed the first emergent theme. Veteran-owners may continue to follow the direction found in this research by simply establishing a small business in a close proximity to the owner's residency (Participant 3, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014). My researched findings indicated that all of the 13 participants attributed small business success derived from personal commitment, tenacity, and making the needed business decisions needed for longevity and growth. External economic factors may influence veteran-owner decisions influenced by external factors job creation, technology advancements, and industry development (Massey & Campbell, 2013). On an international scale, Participant 8 disclosed a business planning rationale to remain flexible based on global market influences (Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014). Participant 6 indicated that economic changes should induce small business strategic plan revisions for continued operation (Participant 6, interview, 11/20/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Veteran-owners need help in starting a new business through education, emergent enthusiasm, and networking in starting a small business (Kerrick et al., 2014).

Based on the research findings for the second theme, veteran small business owners conducted various forms of market research prior to establishing a venture. Participant market research ranged from a basic surveying of similar business within the proximity of the new establishment to an in-depth market analysis based on population,

market niche, market saturation, and location analysis to pinpoint a probability for success (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015; Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014; Participant 8, interview, 11/21/2014). Veteran-owner Participant 10 expressed that conducting market research as not important due to the nature and functionality of the business (Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). Veteran owners create opportunities for success based on national economic conditions, market penetration, training, electronic medium usage, and added capital (Monahan, 2011). Veterans desiring to establish a small business should consider conducting various forms of market research to promote products and services (Kennedy, Scriven, & Nenycz-Thiel, 2014).

Concerning the third emergent theme on small business adversities, veteran owners interviewed shared problematic experiences with establishing and maintaining a small business. The consolidated findings from each participant response ranged from continuing gender norms, personnel management, name recognition, logistics, delegations, legalities, and politics (Participant 3, website, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015; Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 13, interview, 12/6/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/4/2015). To combat adversities, research findings from veteran owners indicated that technology, networking, partnerships, and finance that enabled veteran-owner success (Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014; confirmed by transcript review on 2/6/2015) similar to the Kanmogne and Eskridge (2013) study on business partnership motivations. Arendt and Sapp (2014)

expressed employment acceptance impacting veterans due to the pending influx of transitioning military service members. Based on my research indicated, veteran-owners may encounter difficulties and require varying processes to overcome these adversities.

Research findings pertaining to the forth-emergent theme indicated financial, federal, state, and veteran assistance avenues available to veteran small business owners. Presuming the increase of credit card usage from 16–83%, small business owners face an additional burden in resorting to personal or business credit cards usage for company funding (Lahm et al., 2011). Participants from this study revealed that 62% of the veteran-owners used personal loans, savings, or credit cards to finance the business venture. Although the research findings indicated other financing reinvestment options revealed by Participants 1, 8, and 11, veteran-owners should be cautious and explore all financial options before financing a small business venture (Santikian, 2014).

Referencing the federal, state, and veteran assistance findings, veteran-owners had minimal interaction with these support avenues. Veteran owners indicated several factors from denial, unawareness, and disassociation with governmental agency support (Participant 1, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 2, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 4, interview, 11/18/2014; Participant 7, interview, 11/21/2014; Participant 10, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 11, interview, 12/1/2014; Participant 9, interview, 11/26/2014; Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014). While Solomon et al. (2013) postulated positive governmental resource assistance for prospering small businesses, Monahan (2011) also contended that increased governmental influences are contributing factors for higher



small business growth. Potential veteran small business owners should research all available external avenues to ensure applicability and effect to the new or existent venture (Monahan, 2011). In one participant's case, the self-divulgence of PTSD affected employment opportunities with the personal torment (Participant 12, interview, 12/1/2014) while research on PTSD associated with pain and suffering (Kip et al., 2014) can aid to alleviate PTSD symptoms. As veterans comprehend these small business strategies, the study findings may show future veteran small business owners with developing strategic business plans for establishing or revitalizing a small business venture.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The risk associated with entrepreneurship relates to small business survival rates of 67% remaining after 2 years, 44% remain after 4 years, and 50% may remain open after 5 years (Miles, 2014). Postulating the military downsizing caused an increased veteran population; Kerrick et al. (2014) contend that 45% of these projected veterans become self-employed. In this multiple case study, I explored the business strategies of veteran small business owner sustainment beyond 5 years in Central Florida. I annotated veteran-owner implications from this study that may aid future veteran entrepreneurship in creating a positive social change within the local economy along with the potential for promoting positive social values. The findings indicated that Participants 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 utilized various avenues and decisions affecting various suppliers, investors, consumers, and employee stakeholders in the operation of a veteran-owned small

business. Participants 2, 4, and 5 conducted market research prior to establishing a small business venture to prevent market saturation. Veteran small business owners may use the study findings as incentives to aid in formulating business strategies and market research. Alternative implications from the research findings may provide veteran-owner encouragement in creating jobs that potentially could minimize economic dependency on governmental funding support while improving the societal quality of lives.

Veteran transition programs and services aid in the reintegrating of military service members to civilian life to express experience and knowledge issues to businesses (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Veterans also experienced a variety of social readjustment issues while transitioning from the military to a civilian lifestyle (Mallen, Schumacher, Leskela, Thuras, & Frenzel, 2014). Given an approximate 7% unemployment rate, the influx of 1 million transitioning military service members may cause this rate to rise (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013). In applying general systems theory, this surge of veterans entering self-employment may in-turn affect various stakeholders from affiliated small businesses, social services, health care, law enforcement, financial institutions, and governmental resources. In applying triple-loop theory, businesses may need to develop a veteran plan that encompasses the human resources, diversity and disability management, worker training, and information technology in assimilating a veteran workforce.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The following recommendations may aid veteran small business owners with needed strategies to overcome operational and economic adversities in prolonging

business success. The specific problem addressed in this study was the lack of veteran small business owner strategies to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) estimated a 7 % unemployment rate to rise with the additional influx of over 1 million transitioning military service members. While veteran populations may increase due to military downsizing, veterans transitioning to the civilian sector may focus on self-employment as a viable option in seeking work (Blass & Ketchen, 2014). Participants within this study addressed several factors in operating a small business. Although my focus on this limited study was on a small portion of veteran-owned small businesses in Central Florida, the responses analyzed reflected a resounding need for small business intervention measures. My inquiry concerning business strategies and hardships revealed that all of the 13 veteran-owners interviewed attributed to the small business development based on individual drive, determination, and personal attributes for success. Conversely, 85% of the participants responded negatively to external assistance organizations potentially due to a lack of individual education, simplistic availability, and governmental processing improvements similarly expressed in the Phillips (2014) study. In conducting this study, I recommend that veteran small business owners could benefit from this study in developing financing options, formulating marketing strategies, and effectively utilizing external assistance avenues in fostering a small business venture. My added recommendation is for government, state, or local agency leaders becoming more aware on the adversities experienced by veteran small business owner applications for guidance and assistance. My intention is to publish this

study in numerous educational or governmental publications in order to raise awareness of veteran small business owner experiences. Excerpts from this study may aid legislators, educators, alumni, or veteran-owners in analyzing business strategy decisions or assistance applications for process improvement opportunities.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored the veteran-owned small business strategies to sustain their companies beyond 5 years within Central Florida. My intent was to conduct a purposeful sample of veteran-owned small businesses in Central Florida. Future veteran-owned small business studies could compare or address longevity issues expressed by veteran-owners within another geographical area. Participant responses and referenced data revealed emergent researched themes and analysis focused on business practices, market research, business adversities, and external assistance that may apply to other veteran small business ventures, larger business corporations or non-veteran business opportunities. Participants in subsequent veteran-owner studies may corroborate theme development beyond an interview transcript review used in this study. Not all veteran-owned small businesses from a wide array of specialties and geographical areas are included in this study. My intent centered on researching a limited amount of varying veteran-owned small business disciplines within Central Florida.

Participant views expressed within this study revealed an uncertainty with utilizing external assistance organizations. Therefore, a study could explore the potential ineffectiveness into the use or difficulties encountered while seeking external assistance

programs. Small business studies could explore veteran versus nonveteran-owned business comparisons based on (a) longevity factors, (b) non-profit organizations, (c) business specializations, (d) failure rate rationale, or (e) the validity of small businesses claiming to be veteran-owned. Personal, organizational, and locale perspectives of future studies may reflect a societal change based on individualized views and experiences encountered.

### **Reflections**

In studying veteran-owned small business reference articles, company Internet websites, and veteran-owner interviews from Central Florida, I am convinced that small business assistance programs need process enhancements. Although there are governmental and local resources available for veterans to utilize, I feel that there are extenuating circumstances that prevent or inhibit the full execution of those resources. As found in the research study, Participant 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 13 expressed various external biases existing in the treatment of veterans and veteran small business owners. All of the 13 veteran owners questioned relied on personal aspirations to succeed.

Although I am a retired Air Force veteran, I had only empathy as a reason for conducting this study. I had 26 years of military service with varying work experiences and managerial decisions on numerous assignments. Although I am not self-employed, I was open-minded on seeking what veteran-owner longevity strategies promoted small business ventures. My preconceived understanding of veteran-owned small businesses centered on the sufficient amount of governmental and local assistance organizations

available to aid veterans with continued guidance and resources to operate a business. This limited study reflected a varying veteran owner rationale in the operation and support of veteran-owned small businesses.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The U.S. economy partially depends on the success of small businesses in creating 64% employment opportunities for the U.S. labor force (SBA, 2012). Arendt (2014) stated that military downsizing increased the veteran population while 45% of these projected veterans may opt for self-employment options to enhance their way of life (Hoppenfeld et al., 2013). Although the U.S. economy may fluctuate, veteran small business owners strive to operate and maintain their businesses despite a survival rate of 70% within the first 2 years and only 50% lasting past 5 years (SBA, 2012). The specific business problem was that veteran small business owners lack strategies to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the veteran-owned small business strategies used to sustain their companies beyond 5 years. Thirteen veteran-owned small businesses from Central Florida agreed to participate in the semistructured interview to answer open-ended questions. I also reviewed the participants' company Internet websites and the Better Business Bureau website to supplement the interview data.

Upon my consolidating, analyzing, and coding of the research data, four themes emerged pertaining to business practices, market research, business adversities, and business assistance avenues. The findings revealed veteran owners started a small

business venture based on existent residency, varying degrees of market research, and typically financed through financial loans, reinvestment options, or personal savings. The findings also revealed that veteran-owners endured hardships and sought relief by networking and tenacity. My findings also revealed that external assistance avenues from governmental, state, and veteran services were under-utilized for small business support and growth due to unawareness and bureaucracy avoidance.

To conclude, I used numerous research data in formulating this veteran-owned small business study. I provided previous research material on varying aspect associated with small businesses and veteran narrations. Research participants answering open-ended questions and Internet data collection aided with my inquiry on small business strategies used for longevity. Finally, I analyzed and coded the collected data by triangulating the interview responses, veteran-owner Internet websites, and Better Business Bureau entries to reveal a need for veteran-owner small business assistance.

Veterans may opt to seek self-employment given the potential for the veteran workforce to increase (Blass & Ketchen, 2014). Regardless of the situations encountered, it may ultimately dependent on the individual to effectively research, apply, and operate the chosen business venture in order to succeed. External assistance avenues must also change to accommodate and promote the viability of veteran-owned small business ventures to support the U.S. economy.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_**Name of Study:** Success Factors of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses**1. Introduction (10 minutes)**

- Thank you for allowing this Small Business Veteran-Owner interview today.
- Introductions
- Main Research Question:

What strategies do veteran business owners need to sustain their companies beyond 5 years?

**2. Informed Consent (Provide consent form)**

- **Key points:**
  - a. The purpose of the study is to explore the business strategies that veteran small business owners need to sustain their companies in Central Florida for at least 5 years. The implications for veteran entrepreneurship can create a positive social change with the potential for promoting positive social values, stakeholder satisfaction, and solution incentives in creating jobs to improve the quality of lives for all.
  - b. This study is voluntary. You may stop at any time without any retribution.
  - c. Any information you provide will be kept confidential.
  - d. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project.
  - e. You have the option to participate or decline taking part in this study.
  - f. I will maintain your privacy by assigning a tracking case code number.
  - g. I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure and password protected electronically within my computer.
  - h. Do you have any questions regarding the veteran informed consent form?
  - i. Please sign the consent form if you do not have any further questions.

(Ensure participants are provided a copy.)

- **Interview Rules:**
  - a. You may defer any question to answer at a later time.
  - b. Your candid answers are important in defining your business experiences.
  - c. Your responses are important and respected.
  - d. **Please remember that everything said today will be kept confidential.**
  - e. May I have your permission to record the session at this time? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Any Last Questions? Start The Recording!**

#### 4. Interview Questions: (20 Minutes)

- a. Why did you establish this business in Florida?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- b. What financial assistance did you obtain to establish and maintain this business?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- c. What market research did you conduct in providing your product or service?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- d. What were some of the hardships you encountered while establishing your business in Florida?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- e. How did you overcome these hardship issues?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- f. What were some of the successes of your company?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- g. What business strategies did you use to succeed?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- h. What types of governmental assistance programs have you utilized in starting or operating this business?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- i. What types of veteran small business incentives have you used to expand your business operations in Florida?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- j. What types of Florida assistance organizations have you contacted to enhance your business operations?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:
- k. What more can you add to this study to assist with understanding veteran-owned small business practices in Florida?  
Description of participant activity, environment, activities, interactions, unplanned events:

#### 5. Interview Wrap-Up (5 Minutes)

- Remember that the information you shared today may create a positive social change with the potential for promoting positive social values, stakeholder satisfaction, and solution incentives in creating jobs to improve the quality of lives for all.
- Your identity and responses will remain confidential.
- Please contact Walden University from the consent form for any questions or concerns.
- Thank you for allowing me this interview opportunity.