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Strategies to Recruit and Hire Military Veterans

Chinyere Asoh
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Chinyere Asoh

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Review Committee

Dr. Diane Dusick, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Kenneth Gossett, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Strategies to Recruit and Hire Military Veterans

by

Chinyere Asoh

MS, Trident University International, 2009

BS, University of Maryland University College, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2016

Abstract

The inability of business owners to hire skilled employees affects the profitability of a small business. Small business owners may attain profitability by understanding the value of military veterans and cultivating strategies for the hiring and recruitment process. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees to maximize productivity, profitability, and sustainability. The conceptual framework of this study included human capital theory and recruitment theory. The purposive sample consisted of 6 participants who were small business owners. Data from interviews and supporting documents were processed and analyzed using data source triangulation to identify 3 emergent themes. Findings indicated that, for these 6 Fayetteville small business owners, job description and transition workshops, resume review and communication, and accommodations and benefits were key attributes related to the successful recruitment of military veterans as skilled employees. Specifically, streamlined hiring processes, relationship building, and access to resources were predictive of a successful hire. Knowledge barriers regarding hiring processes prevented efficient communication between small business owners and military veterans, but business owners cultivated strategies to help with hiring military veterans. The implications for positive social change include the potential for business owners to capitalize on the skills that military veterans bring to the civilian workforce, which in turn may improve the economy.

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Dedication

I thank God for giving me the grace to start and complete this journey despite numerous challenges. My boys, Micah and Jason provided the right amount of motivation to propel me to the finish line. My friend, Franklin Sturghill supported and continuously encouraged me through the entire program, and the lessons I learned from my mother, Maryrose Asoh regarding hard work led me to this defining moment. Without their love and endurance, I would never have completed this journey. I am truly thankful for my family, and I dedicate this document to them. In addition, I dedicate this work to my late father, Cyprian Emeka Asoh, who loved me dearly.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

This section includes an overview of the business problem and the methods to explore the strategies small businesses used to hire military veterans. I have provided a thorough review of the literature on the problem and provided justification for a new research study and design in this area. Finally, this section includes the discussion of the potential contribution of this current study to positive social change with small businesses.

Background of the Problem

Thousands of military service persons may leave the military with skills and timely counseling with hope to transition smoothly into civilian jobs (Wheeler, 2012). These prospective veterans need help identifying the various resources available and the factors that hinder their smooth transition into civilian jobs (Brown & Lent, 2013). Veterans, after a successful service to their country, want to transition into civilian employment to take the next step in their lives; however, 573, 000 military veterans had trouble getting a job they wanted in the current economic environment (Brown & Lent, 2013; United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015a). There was an imbalance between veterans' transition experiences and their expectation of the support from employers because of military health challenges (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012). Even though the nation was focused more on assisting veterans in transitioning into civilian jobs smoothly, the veterans needed certain skills, experiences, and leadership abilities for an effective transition (Hall, Harrell, Bicksler, Stewart, & Fisher, 2014; Schlossberg, 2011).

Military veterans have undergone adequate training programs that were designed to help bridge their work experience and educational gaps, which hindered most of them from finding and adapting to civilian jobs (Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2013). Military veterans had valuable skills (Hall et al., 2014), but some hiring managers also lacked the tools and education to understand the value presented by military veterans in the workforce and the benefits associated with developing and fostering veteran employees within the organization (Lin, 2012; Schlossberg, 2011).

Problem Statement

Military veterans are highly skilled, and over 200,000 military veterans depart the military every year (United States Department of Labor, 2011). Some business owners were unaware (a) of the skills of exiting military veterans and (b) that hiring veterans within 6 months of military separation could result in \$5,600 in compensation to the organization for each veteran and \$9,600 for each disabled veteran (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Parker, 2012). The general business problem was that some business owners lacked qualified candidates to fill jobs (Ciuhureanu, Fuciu, & Gorski, 2014). The specific business problem was that some business owners often lacked strategies to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees. The target population consisted of business leaders who successfully hired skilled military veterans in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The

implication for positive social change included the potential for business owners to capitalize on the strategies of business owners' best practices used to recruit and translate military experiences into useful skills needed within the civilian workforce. The findings of this study may help reduce the veterans' unemployment rate and help retain jobs within the local community, minimizing international outsourcing.

Nature of the Study

I chose to utilize a qualitative research method because the data originated from the participants' point of view. Qualitative researchers focus on the development of a social constructivist worldview (Bailey, 2014; Mertens, 2014). Qualitative researchers deal with complex concerns that may have varied responses and involve exploration through theoretical lenses (Ragin, 2014). Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher hopes to explore a phenomenon in depth to fill gaps in the research literature (Khan, 2014).

I ruled out the quantitative method, as quantitative studies are appropriate to test hypotheses developed from qualitative research (Hartas, 2015). Quantitative researchers examine relationships between variables while maintaining neutrality (Hartas, 2015). Also, I did not seek to establish numerical relationships (Anderson, Sweeney, Williams, Camm, & Cochran, 2012). I ruled out a mixed method design because it incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods and even though it is comprehensive, it requires the analysis of a relationship between variables (Starr, 2014).

I selected a multiple case study design for this research because researchers have an opportunity to retrieve information from participants while engaging in analytical

measures to determine common themes (Yin, 2014). I ruled out the use of ethnography because it focuses on the study of a particular culture and limits the study of the specific group in the study (Myers, 2013). Narrative researchers focus on storytelling from a person's point of view, which would present limited information to my study (Myers, 2013). I also ruled out a phenomenological design because it is only appropriate to capture the lived experiences of the participants (Wagstaff & Williams, 2014); the current multiple case study design was a suitable form to capture strategies used by some business owners to acquire skilled military veterans.

Research Question

What strategies do business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina use to recruit military veterans as skilled employees?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you employ to recruit military veterans?
2. How do the strategies you employ benefit your small business?
3. How do the strategies associated with hiring a military veteran differ from hiring civilians?
4. What methods do you use to equate military training to match business job requirements?
5. What skills and experiences do you expect veterans to have before transitioning into civilian jobs?
6. What type of training do you provide to military veterans after hiring them?
7. What additional information related to this topic you would like to share?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks for this study were human capital theory and recruitment theory. Horace Mann, Theodore Shults, Jacob Mincer, and Gary Becker were all pioneers of human capital theory. Becker (1962) claimed that human capital involved the skills and knowledge that individuals gained through investment in education, training on the job, and other experiences.

Mincer (1989) expanded on the theory by noting that human capital breeds excellence and the creation of human capital can be costly but present positive results in business. Welbourne and Pardo-del-Val (2008) posited that the investment in the development of worker skills ensured a higher pool of skilled workers to recruit. Human capital theory represented the talent, education, skills, knowledge, and attributes that individuals possess in a work environment.

Dunnette (1976) developed the recruitment theory and equated it to selection of applicants, but other researchers expanded on the theory. Guion (1976) posited that the key to a successful business was to seek out great employees. Boudreau and Rynes (1985) stated that business owners employ focused effort to hire and retain skilled employees.

Recruitment theory was supported by constructs that included (a) finding skilled employees; (b) identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities of potential employees; (c) keeping the employee engaged and interested, and (d) hiring the best employee for the business (Barber, 1998; Boudreau & Rynes, 1985; Breaugh, 1992; Winston, 2001). As applied to this study, human capital theory and recruitment theory support one another. I

would expect the propositions of both theories to help business owners understand the value of military veterans in business and cultivate strategies applied to the hiring and recruitment process.

Operational Definitions

The following definitions helped with ascertaining the meaning of the different terms used in the study.

Added value: Added value encompassed the innate skills (leadership, decision making, and teamwork) that military veterans learned from their time in the service that may be transmitted into businesses (O'Neil & Drillings, 2012).

Career adaptability: Career adaptability is the process of adjusting to the challenges of workplace environment or the process adults use for coping with professional, occupational, and distressing experiences and transitions (Rottinghaus et al., 2012).

Competitive advantage: Competitive advantage is the positive control of profit that sets one business apart from another while maintaining customer satisfaction (Li & Liu, 2014).

Disabled veterans: The term *disabled veterans* refers to military veterans who received any injury during a period of service on behalf of the United States (Hoppenfeld, Wyckoff, Henson, Mayotte, & Kirkwood, 2013).

Employable: Employable refers to the people that can actively participate in the United States labor force (BLS, 2015b).

Military separation: Military separation is the termination of duty for a military member after fulfilling their service contract or when the military member is forced to leave the military due to injuries or reduction of force initiative (Worthen, Moos, & Ahern, 2012).

Skilled veterans: Skilled veterans denote the level of training each military member receives and the experience gained from leadership encounters resulting from major challenges experienced in combat or the United States during the period of military service (Hall et al., 2014).

Small business enterprises (SBEs): SBEs are businesses with 500 people employed or less (United States Small Business Administration [SBA], 2014).

Strategy: The strategy is an organization's plan designed to accomplish a set target that includes the development of a short-term goal to accomplish a task (Acquaah, Amoako-Gyampah, & Jayaram, 2011).

Transition coordinator: A transition coordinator is a person that works for the military and attempts to help to transition military veterans with marketing themselves appropriately to businesses for hire (Elliott, Gonzalez, & Larsen, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions are facts that are assumed to be true, but cannot be verified (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To avoid misrepresentation, researchers must identify and address potential assumptions (Fisher & Stenner, 2011). Limitations refer to the shortfalls of the research study, which affects the trustworthiness of the findings (Rubin & Rubin,

2012). Delimitations help define the boundaries of the study and the target population (Yin, 2014).

Assumptions

Several assumptions relevant to the current study related to the participants. While all participants must have successfully hired veterans as full-time employees, I assumed that (a) the process of hiring veterans varied from the process for hiring civilians, (b) the participants would identify specific advantages associated with the hiring of veterans, and (c) the participants were willing to share information regarding these processes and advantages. I assumed that a sufficient number of small business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina who have hired military veterans for the past 3 years or more would be willing to participate in the study to reach data saturation.

Assumptions were made concerning the participants' honest, unbiased, and truthful responses. Another assumption was that the use of face-to-face interviews, and documents from the companies, would be sufficient to answer the central research question. The final assumption was that this study would be of benefit to veterans and other small business owners.

Limitations

My potential bias as a researcher and the transferability of the study findings to the larger population were limitations in this current research. The results of the study were limited by the participants' willingness to share and the honesty and thoroughness of their responses. Another limitation was that the participants with best practices may not be willing to share information regarding processes and advantages.

I had to make a concerted effort to conduct the interviews face-to-face at a location that was agreeable to each participant. By identifying my personal experiences as a researcher, coupled with my assumptions and attitude regarding this research problem, I remained aware of my bias as a researcher (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). My personal bias may have affected the interpretation of the research findings. To ensure applicability of this study, I kept detailed documentation of the systematic processes employed in the study (Wahyuni, 2012).

Delimitations

The scope of this current study was limited to small business owners who had successfully recruited veterans in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The scope of this study included six small business owners who had hired veterans for the past 3 years, with at least 20% of the present staff identified as military veterans. The study included only businesses with fewer than 500 employees and not medium or large companies (SBA, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Business owners need skilled employees to maximize productivity, enhance profitability, and support sustainability (Blatter, Muehlemann, & Schenker, 2012). The requirement for productivity, profitability, and sustainability drove the need for employers to employ skilled workers (Takatsuka, 2011). This study was significant to business practice in that it provided a basis for business leaders to capitalize on strategies that granted them access to skilled military veterans who seek employment. The different areas associated with this study supported the efforts of business leaders as they

attempted to find skilled workers, which subsequently reduced labor and turnover cost (Takatsuka, 2011). The implications for positive social change included the potential for business owners to capitalize on the skills that military veterans bring to the civilian workforce, which in turn may improve the economy (Hall et al., 2014).

Contribution to Business Practice

Military veterans made up 21.2 million of the American population in 2014 (, 2015a). Small businesses hired up to half of the workforce (SBA, 2011). In North Carolina, 39,000 soldiers transitioned from the Army (Department of Defense, Office of the Actuary, 2012). Small business owners in North Carolina may learn how to identify, recruit, and hire military veterans. The study provided opportunities for businesses to enhance productivity by capitalizing on the innate skills possessed by military veterans (O'Neil & Drillings, 2012).

During the course of my research, I planned to use the study to support the body of knowledge related to the employment of veterans to help reduce unemployment numbers in the United States. The unemployment rate for military veterans remained higher than the rest of the civilian workforce with 573,000 military veterans unemployed (BLS, 2015a). Military veterans are a major asset to businesses due to the level of discipline associated with military service (Hall et al., 2014). The results of a study of hiring military veterans may also contribute to efficient business practices as it may help educate business leaders on the knowledge base that military veterans bring to the civilian sector (Hall et al., 2014).

Implications for Social Change

Military veterans represent a small group of people who think first of others before themselves (Aldrich & Kasuku, 2012; Dixon, 2014). After the Vietnam War, military veterans were treated with contempt despite the sacrifices the military veterans made on behalf of the United States (Dixon, 2014). As President Obama ordered the drawdown of forces in Iraq and Afghanistan (Walzer & Mills, 2011), military veterans returned to the civilian populace seeking employment. Military veterans made significant contributions to the United States (Benmelech & Frydman, 2014), were exposed to different cultures, interacted with various classes of people, and still possessed a level of discipline that kept the military business afloat (Hall et al., 2014). The effect of veteran hire may produce the same results as barriers are eliminated and businesses increase profitability.

Military veterans served in a profession that instills the values of loyalty, duty, honor, integrity, respect, selfless service, and personal courage in all its members (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011). The military values support any organization's goals, coupled with the leadership and technical skill of military veterans. The military spent over \$100 billion training military members (Military Education and Training, 2013), so making proper use of the skilled force can save businesses the cost of training potential employees. The objective of my study was to ensure that business owners recognized the added value of military veterans, which increased the pool of skilled workers and would keep businesses progressing positively (O'Neil & Drillings, 2012).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees. The literature review involved the skills that military veterans learned throughout the course of their military careers, which may translate into good business skills in the civilian workforce. The literature review includes current evidence of the stated problem and insight on how to get business owners to understand the skills of military veterans to support recruitment and employment.

Military veteran commitments changed from a draft process to an all-volunteer force requirement (Coffman, 2014), and some business owners remained unaware of the requirements or the level of skill associated with being a military veteran. Military veterans are highly skilled, and over 200,000 military veterans depart the military every year (Department of Labor, 2011). The information gained from this study may provide business owners with the strategies needed to acquire skilled employees. The purpose of this professional and academic literature review was to summarize, compare, and contrast various sources that relate to the strategies small business owners use to hire military veterans.

Rowley (2012) stated that the review of literature involved (a) building an understanding of the conceptual framework, (b) adding literature to make a contribution to the research topic, and (c) analyzing the results. Scholars and researchers used literature reviews to avoid any unintentional duplication of research that already existed

while adding significant contributions to the existing literature (Rhoades, 2012). The literature review was linked together by human capital theory and recruitment theory.

The research strategy applied in this study included accessing articles from the Walden Library, using limiters to retrieve articles that were pertinent to the study. The databases accessed from the Walden Library included the following: Business Source Complete, Sage data, and Emerald Management Journals. The list of keyword searches for this study included (a) *skilled workers*, (b) *veterans transition*, (c) *recruitment theory*, (d) *military veterans*, (e) *military skill*, (f) *small business owners*, (g) *veterans' skills*, (h) *training and development*, (i) *recruitment strategy*, and (j) *business success and failure*.

An additional search engine included Google Scholar, which yielded a plethora of articles related to the same keywords applied in the Walden Library. In identifying future research questions, researchers use literature reviews to summarize the subject field (Rowley, 2012). The literature review included 220 articles retrieved over an 8-month period, of which 90% were peer-reviewed with a publication date between 2012 and 2015. A thorough synthesis occurred to ensure alignment and related to the problem statement.

This section of the literature review contains seven main subject categories:

- Small business management,
- Human capital theory,
- Recruitment theory,
- Hiring strategies to acquire skilled workers,
- Transition support and education programs for military veterans,

- Veterans training and development for civilian employment,
- Incentives for funding job training for small businesses,
 - Challenges of hiring veterans, and
 - The benefits of hiring veterans.

Hall et al. (2014) discovered that business leaders appreciated the talent and skills that military veterans had to offer. The skills that military veterans possessed served as a key element for small business owners seeking to achieve competitive advantage, and Hall et al. shared that the participants in the study provided positive responses regarding military veteran hire. Competitive advantage is required for business survival as small business owners strive to attain survivability, and Hall et al. determined that military veterans could help with the concern of maintaining competitive advantage. Hall et al. expressed that small business management was a primary factor in hiring skilled military veterans.

In 2011, 26 business leaders made a commitment to hire veterans and formed an alliance (Hall et al., 2014). The business leaders associated with this initiative to hire veterans had some challenges. The issues and challenges included (a) a lack of managerial knowledge on veteran's skills and values, (b) a lack of recruitment resources, (c) a lack of participation in federal research programs, and (d) a lack of follow up once veterans were hired to facilitate a smooth transition from the military structure to the civilian workforce (Hall et al., 2014).

Hall et al. (2014) also identified that business owners in the alliance did not have a collective advisory board, orientation for new members, or an effective means of

sharing helpful information outside of the alliance. My focus was not on the motivation or commitment of business owners to hire veterans, but on the business owners' need for skilled workers while highlighting the talent of military veterans. Hall et al. and Ruh, Spicer, and Vaughan (2009) identified shortcomings in initiatives to assist veterans. These shortcomings further identified areas of study to investigate. The study filled the void concerning relationships, resources, and best practices for linking transitioning veterans to civilian employers.

Small Business Management

The purpose of this section of the review was to explore the management concerns small business owners faced. Small businesses in North Carolina exceed 800,000 with over 1 million people employed (SBA, 2014). Small business management starts with leadership (Nixon, Harrington, & Parker, 2012). Nixon et al. (2012) revealed that business owners needed to have the skills necessary to motivate employees.

Small business owners were responsible for coordinating all work-related requirements, anticipating concerns, verifying completion of all work, actions and executing all activities to ensure mission accomplishment (Nixon et al., 2012). Business owners were responsible for the success or failure of the business and bore the responsibility of hiring the right people (Nixon et al., 2012). Small business owners had to serve in multiple roles and deal with concerns regarding sustainability and profitability (Hyytinen, Pajarinen, & Rouvinen, 2015). Small business owners must be creative (Kube, Maréchal, & Puppe, 2013), and finding employees that can multitask remains a concern of small business owners (Hyytinen et al., 2015).

Small business owners work long hours to make sure the business remains profitable as they compete with large businesses (Acquaah et al., 2011; Hyytinen et al., 2015). Hyytinen et al. (2015) determined that small business owners strive to acquire the right skilled workers, but the cost of competing with large or established businesses affects profitability. Small business owners needed skilled workers that possessed the right knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve success (Mincer, 1989). Other small business concerns include long work hours, which may affect employee morale (Kube et al., 2013).

The small business owner must have the right attitude, be able to run the business, and make tough calls (Acquaah et al., 2011). Business owners encourage creativity because with a small number of employees, problem-solving skills become a necessity (Hyytinen et al., 2015). The absence of strong leadership may affect employee management and decision-making. In small business management, when business owners recognize good performance, show gratitude, or appreciate employees, the employees are encouraged (Bolman & Deal, 2015).

Small business owners have to make decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2015; Dubrin, 2015). In some cases, the decisions are immediate and in other cases, a great deal of thought is required. Business owners should brainstorm possible responses and seek employee, customer, experts, and other stakeholders. Employees expect the employer to make timely, accurate, and relevant decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2015).

Small business owners are also responsible for caring for their employees (Dubrin, 2015). Caring for employees is not an easy task, but it is vital. Employees have

the right to work in a safe environment free from discrimination, abuse, or ridicule (Dubrin, 2015). Small business owners ensure employees comply with the law and any applicable policies in the business (Dubrin, 2015).

The challenge of keeping the morale of employees high, while encouraging creativity (Bolman & Deal, 2015; Hyytinen et al., 2015; Kube et al., 2013) remains the responsibility of the small business owner (Nixon et al., 2012). Small business owners faced significant challenges with maintaining profitability and sustainability, but good employees made the difference (Dubrin, 2015). Success may be achieved in small business management as small business owners invest in human capital as it relates to members of their organization (Nixon et al., 2012).

Human Capital Theory

Becker (1962) claimed that human capital involved the skills and knowledge that individuals gain through investment in education, training on the job, and other experiences. Mincer (1989) expanded on the theory by noting that human capital breeds excellence and the creation of human capital can be costly, but presents positive results in business. Human capital theorists claimed that all costs associated with education are profitable investments as the potential value of these investments far exceeds the money spent on educational improvement (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011).

In the examination of small businesses, understanding the specific human capital brought to the business provided information regarding the potential that the company could last past the first 5 years (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Human capital theory was vital to business survival, as evidenced by the views of Becker (1962) and Mincer (1989).

The ability to invest in people within an organization enabled the members of the organization to develop a sense of commitment to the improvement and success of the organization. In business, competitive advantage is achieved by determining what the customers want (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011), but investing in people is what brought about the ultimate fulfillment in business (Becker, 1962; Mincer, 1989).

Becker (1962) defined human capital theory as the highly marketable skills that business owners seek in their businesses. Becker further stated that human capital involved mental and physical abilities for job accomplishment while acknowledging the adaptability of employees to ever changing situations. Despite Becker's positive stance on human capital, he posited that employees possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities internally, and these employees may switch organizations despite the time and money invested by business owners.

Kräkel (2016) utilized Becker's (1962) views as a foundation to emphasize the negative aspect of investing in employees to promote human capital. Kräkel's quantitative study revealed that even if human capital investment provides positive results, the results are short-term. Kräkel's study indicated that as employees become more marketable based on the knowledge they receive, the employees start seeking out other employers with better compensation and benefits. In some cases, employers may require a service obligation period after investing in employees, but the performance of employees determined to leave the business may suffer as they work on fulfilling the required obligation period.

Becker (1962) and Kräkel (2016) both presented the challenges business owners face as they invest in human capital for their employees, but Hall et al. (2014) provided an alternative to military veterans. Hall et al. presented military veterans as employees rich in human capital. The different facets of human capital support the hiring of military veterans. Hiring military veterans may prove advantageous due to the educational requirement associated with military employment, training requirements needed for job performance, and the experiences that transform these potential civilian employees into decentralized problem solvers (Hall et al., 2014).

Some military veterans participated in military assignments that required the skills of adaptability, leadership, training, and initiative (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Delbourg-Delphis (2014) shared the negative impacts of military skills and experiences as determined by the majority of the civilian populace. Delbourg-Delphis shared that members of the civilian populace assumed military veterans were nonthinkers and could not effectively contribute to a civilian-based organization. Business owners may hire skilled military veterans who may use their training and experiences to address common and challenging business problems (Brænder & Andersen, 2013).

Brænder and Andersen (2013) conducted a study on Danish soldiers who served in Afghanistan, which may be relatable to American soldiers who served in the same region. The results of the study indicated that soldiers are champions for a cause, which was a positive attribute in the civilian sector (Brænder & Andersen, 2013). Soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice because of the investment the soldiers placed in each other (Brænder & Andersen, 2013). Military veterans are committed to the success of any

organization they serve in (Brænder & Andersen, 2013), which is transferable to a civilian organization, but business owners need to find a way to recruit these skilled employees.

Human capital includes the experiences, skills, and training associated with different people to support productivity in businesses. Brænder and Andersen (2013) further advanced human capital theory by highlighting the selfless commitment of military veterans in combat and in the civilian workforce. Despite the positive results associated with military veterans in relation to human capital, Delbourg-Delphis (2014) noted that some business owners still have trouble understanding the value of military veterans in business. The varied views of Becker (1962) and Kräkel (2016) indicated human capital is a necessary requirement for small business success, but the cost of investing in employees outweighs the benefit. Military veterans represent a pool of employees with the skills, experience, and training needed for business success, but the real concern is how to connect with these skilled employees.

Recruitment Theory

Dunnette (1976) developed recruitment theory and equated it to a selection from a group of possible applicants, but other researchers expanded on the theory. Guion (1976) posited that the key to a successful business was to seek out great employees. Dunnette focused on recruiting and other researchers expanded on the fact that hiring starts with recruitment (Dunlap, 2014; Guion, 1976; Jackson et al., 1991).

Boudreau and Rynes (1985) stated that business owners employ a focused effort to hire and retain skilled employees. An investment in human capital is an excellent

recruiting strategy for small businesses seeking skilled workers (Welbourne & Pardo-del-Val, 2008). Recruiting is an elaborate process, and a thorough employment of the recruitment process may (a) improve the standard of small businesses, (b) enhance productivity, (c) promote sustainability, and (d) eliminate future financial concerns associated with turnover (Guion, 1976; Yücel, 2012).

Recruitment theory supports getting the right potential applicants interested in the business (Barber, 1998; Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). Small business leaders face significant challenges with recruitment as they strive to find skilled workers that can multitask or serve in dual positions (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014). Barber (1998) developed the dimensions of recruitment, which included (a) players, (b) activities, and (c) outcome. The dimensions support recruitment and Figure 1 indicated its applicability to military veterans who may be hired as skilled workers in the civilian workforce.

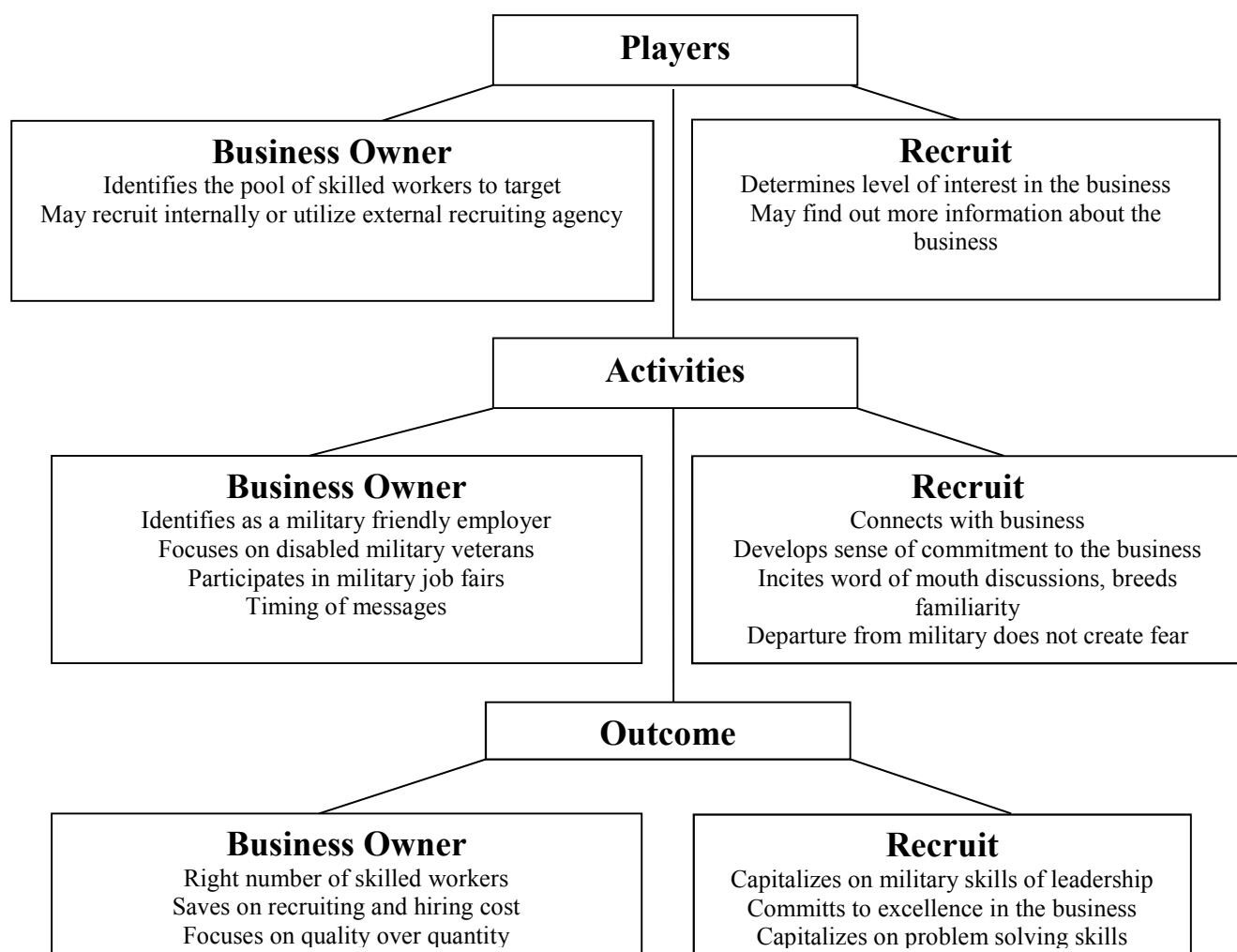


Figure 1. Recruitment dimensions (Barber, 1998). The different dimensions show the relationship between the business owner and military veteran as they try to connect. Adapted from “Individual and Organizational Perspectives” by A. E. Barber, 1998, *Recruiting Employees*, 8, p. 6.

Parker (2012) posited that skilled workers were available and continued to transition out of the military each day, but small business owners experienced challenges in recruiting these workers. Business owners needed to create an elaborate recruitment strategy to help them access the skilled military veterans (see Figure 1; Barber, 1998). Military veterans are loyal and committed to any mission they are involved in, and the

brand of a business may influence the decisions of a military veteran to accept employment (Parker, 2012). Parker discussed the skills, abundant in the military veteran pool, which differed from Abraham's (2015) article concerning skilled workers.

Abraham (2015) noted the lack of skilled workers in the civilian workforce made it difficult for business owners to hire the best fit for the business. Business owners have the ability to recruit and hire potential employees, but the lack of skilled workers kept unemployment rates high (Abraham, 2015; Ciuhureanu et al., 2014). Abraham noted that jobs were created after the great recession, but there were no skilled workers to fill the vacancies. The inability of business owners to fill vacancies contributed to businesses not surviving the first 5 years in business (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Business owners were unaware of the skilled military veterans exiting the military each year, and in some cases, the business owners were not sure how to recruit these skilled workers (Wheeler, 2012).

Parker (2012) posited that recruiting these skilled military veterans involved (a) high touch versus high tech, (b) commitment to a greater cause, and (c) keeping hiring rules and simple requirements. Military veterans are mission-focused and believe in forming teams, so when business owners seek to recruit these military veterans, attending job fairs in person instead of creating expensive commercials helps with forming connections with military veterans (Parker, 2012). Creating connections with military veterans involves marketing the business as a service to create a benefit (Parker, 2012). Simplicity is the military way, and military veterans appreciate the ability to apply critical thought to various situations without worrying about complex rules (Parker, 2012).

Hiring Strategies to Acquire Skilled Workers

Abraham (2015) determined that there was a major deficit of skilled workers in the United States. Small business owners worked hard to reduce costs, and one of those ways included hiring skilled workers to promote better efficiency (Babu, Sathyanarayana, Ketharam, Kar, & Detels, 2015). Businesses operate primarily to make a profit, so having skilled workers was a requirement for businesses (Blatter et al., 2012). Harrell and Berglass (2012) noted that the shortage of skilled workers is due to lack of an educated workforce and employees with no experience. Despite the views expressed by business owners about the lack of unskilled workers, military veterans are equipped to fill this shortage (Harrell & Berglass, 2012; Parker, 2012).

Harrell and Berglass (2012) focused on the importance and challenges of hiring National Guard, Reserve, and transitioning active duty military veterans. My focus was to investigate and expand on veterans specifically transitioning from military service. Harrell and Berglass interviewed 69 company leaders and compiled various strategies shared by business leaders that hire veterans. The strategies included (a) marketing your organization as an employer of choice, (b) business collaboration, (c) and visiting military bases while attending transition assistance program (TAP) sessions.

Military veterans are associated with the military, which is a professional organization (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Business owners seeking to hire these skilled workers should market themselves as military-friendly. Harrell and Berglass (2012) stated that veterans find it difficult to deal with what may appear to them to be a lack of structure in the civilian labor force. Business owners who make a concerted effort and

subsequently hire military veterans usually experience, productivity within the organization (Hall et al., 2014).

Some business owners claimed that military veterans were unstable based on unsubstantiated concerns about the military veterans' mental state (Caldwell & Burke, 2013). Unfortunately, over 7% of Americans suffer from a mental disability, and not every military veteran has a mental concern (Caldwell & Burke, 2013). Tsai and Rosenheck (2013) discovered that only 6.5% of working veterans used mental health services. Of the veterans actively looking for employment only 15% reported the need to use mental health services.

Business owners who support military veterans by hiring them based on the skills they possess market their business as troop supporters. The primary means of advertising is through word of mouth, and other military veterans will get the hiring message (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). While word of mouth is a means of informing military veterans, I intend to identify more effective means of bridging the gap between civilian employers and transitioning military veterans. As the business grows, the business owner can collaborate with other business leaders to determine the best practices for hiring military veterans.

Business owners from different industries work together to share the costs associated with ensuring the businesses remain visible to military veterans (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The collaborative effort to hire 100,000 veterans was comprised of a collection of business owners that were explicitly committed to hiring military veterans. This initiative is also known as the 100,000 missions. As the name suggested, the goal

was to hire 100,000 military veterans by 2020, but business owners participating in this mission have hired over 240,000 veterans as of 2015 (Veterans Job Mission, 2015).

Despite the goal of hiring military veterans, these numbers were still unable to satisfy the current and growing veteran unemployment and turnover rates (Faberman & Foster, 2013). Business owners strive to get the best fit for their business, with little time, effort and resources allocated for recruiting (Ghee, Ibrahim, & Abdul-Halim, 2015). The results of the study identified strategies that business owners could use to recruit military veterans as skilled employees therefore positively impacting veteran unemployment.

Business owners who want to attain organizational goals, strive to achieve success (Benmelech & Frydman, 2014). To hire military veterans, the business owners needed to visit military bases and participate in TAPs (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The benefit of visiting military bases included meeting the transition coordinator and exposing the business name to the potential employees (Elliott et al., 2011; Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

The business leaders also had an opportunity to support TAPs. TAPs provide a listing of reviewing potential employees available for hire. The advantage of this strategy was that business owners would not have to pay to advertise job positions. The job posting service was free to business leaders that supported the TAPs (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Hiring military veterans involved commitment from business leaders who understood the value of military veterans as skilled workers (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Business leaders must maintain a professional stance to attract military veterans while refuting generalizations not grounded in facts (Caldwell & Burke, 2013; Harrell &

Berglass, 2012). Business owners draw from the strength of other companies during collaboration (Veterans Job Mission, 2015).

Military veterans are easily accessible as employers publish the jobs available, and the military veterans list the skills they possess. The entire communication is cost effective and connects military veterans with business owners. The final review makes the business owner easily accessible to the military veterans during the workshops hosted by the military. If the business owner is impressed, then hiring may occur on the spot (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The strategies noted provides a baseline for business leaders that want to hire military veterans. During this study, more effort was applied to ensuring that a detailed listing of the different strategies employed by military friendly companies is compiled.

Transition, Support and Education Programs for Small Businesses

In this section, I highlighted the need for military veterans in the civilian workforce. The strategies retrieved from articles to help with military veteran hire may be incomplete if business owners still do not understand why they need to hire military veterans (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Ellyson, Gibson, Nichols, and Doerr (2012) conducted a quantitative study on 869 soldiers and determined that leaders in the military were primarily successful because they were mission-focused.

Routon (2014) noted the complex leadership requirements in the military, which only increased military members' leadership skills. Routon stated that military leadership is well known and in various settings, respected. The views of both authors (Ellyson et al., 2012; Routon, 2014) supported the need for the study through their findings because

as employers seek to hire veterans, it is imperative that the employees understand the value of veterans and the innate skills they can offer. Military veterans may be poised to engineer success in business, but a review of the transition support is necessary (Ellyson et al., 2012; Routon, 2014).

Routon (2014) explored the requirements for military service that involved *mental, physical, and moral* testing. The requirements for military service (Routon, 2014) were positive requirements sought by business owners. A business owner who hired a military veteran with mental agility, a sound moral compass, and great physical stamina, can focus on the mission of the business (Toner, 2015).

An employee with mental agility is able to think creatively and critically, which proves advantageous in business. An employee with sound moral compass is bound by values and supports positivity in business. An employee with great physical stamina can withstand the rigors of serving in multiple positions or completing labor induced tasks. Routon (2014) revealed that military veterans could positively contribute to the civilian workforce, and Hall et al. (2014) indicated this was, in part, due to the military training available to veterans.

Military training opportunities remained available to military members (Hall et al., 2014). Transition coordinators utilized the TAP to help military veterans effectively transition into the civilian workforce (Elliott et al., 2011). The Department of Defense designed the TAP to assist military veterans with building resumes and business owners with the hiring process (Hall et al., 2014). Other resources available to military veterans

include mock business interviews, educational support utilizing the Montgomery GI bill, and internship opportunities (Hall et al., 2014).

The various training opportunities may not be enough to bridge the communication gap as some military veterans find employment in businesses they have no experience in (Smith, 2014). The new employment may require skills that military veterans do not have, so these military veterans return back to school for more training or may start employment at an entry level position which may not be acceptable to the military veteran (Kleykamp, 2013). The Department of Defense continued to increase vocational training opportunities to mitigate the concern of a military veteran starting over (Smith, 2014). Another area that required training for the military veterans and business owners was the resume (Arendt & Sapp, 2014).

Arendt and Sapp (2014) discovered that military veteran resumes included jargon that would be difficult to translate for a civilian business owner. Arendt and Sapp found that each resume followed a different format, which led to a failure of selling leadership and experience. Arendt and Sapp noted the resume concerns created a communication barrier between military veterans and business owners because business owners had no means to decipher the qualifications of the military veterans. Arendt and Sapp made suggestions to remedy the translation of experience and skills between transitioning veterans and civilian employers: (a) military veterans should receive assistance with resume building, and (b) civilian employees should learn about military terminology so both parties can make adjustments to accommodate the other. These remedies make it

easier to connect transitioning military veterans as well as business owners looking to hire military veterans.

Business owners seeking to hire military veterans have various programs available to help with recruiting and hiring (Hall et al., 2014; Ruh et al., 2009). Resources are available on the Department of Defense, Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs websites, and are available for business owners (Ruh et al., 2009). Representatives from these government agencies help train the human resource staff, and work through the jargon of military veteran resumes (Hall et al., 2014). State governors also created training opportunities in their states to help business owners receive the training needed to understand the complexity that surrounds military veterans (Ruh et al., 2009).

Business owners understand the benefits of hiring veterans, but the communication challenge with resumes created a gap between military veterans and business owners (Hall et al., 2014). Leaders from federal and local levels created programs to address the resume concerns, train human resource staff, while marketing military veterans as the employees of choice for any business. There are support and educational programs to help military veterans connect with business owners as the military veterans transition into their new careers. Resume building activities, interviews, and a host of training programs assist the business owners (Hall et al., 2014; Ruh et al., 2009).

Veterans Training and Development for Civilian Employment

Military veterans with adequate education and training can increase business survival chances by having specific human capital (Becker, 1962; Mincer, 1989), the particular experience that is beneficial to one industry, and employing growth strategies to mitigate failure (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Parker (2012) spotted the gap in the literature concerning why the veterans have problems with civilian employment. Delbourg-Delphis (2014) supported my research as I tried to explore the positive effects of hiring veterans for business leaders while acknowledging that there are limitations that military veterans may have (Rudstam, Strobel, Gower, & Cook, 2012).

The limitations of military veteran hire included concerns of (a) posttraumatic stress disorder, (b) traumatic brain injury, and (c) other disability impairments (Rudstam et al., 2012). Rudstam et al. (2012) surveyed 1,083 human resource professionals in 2010. The 33-question survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The outcome of the research inferred that the majority of employers felt that military veterans would benefit their companies and perform at the same level as other workers, but some of the respondents felt that hiring military veterans might involve more cost as well as additional manager supervision.

Contrary to the views of Rudstam et al. (2012), military veterans are adaptable and can learn and apply new skills with limited to no supervision (Thomas & Taylor, 2016). Military veterans deployed to different countries and employed the training they had in support of the war, and they emerged successful (Thomas & Taylor, 2016). Military veterans served honorably in foreign countries and as decentralized problem

solvers (Hall et al., 2014), employed in the civilian workforce challenged these skilled workers to fulfill their duty, not hinder performance.

As business owners learned about the skills of military veterans, there were also training opportunities available to prepare military veterans for civilian employment. In the military, service members had an opportunity to attend college utilizing the Tuition Assistance (TA) designed to fund Associates through Master's degree programs (Hall et al., 2014). TAP was revamped by President Obama to include the SBA, Office of Personnel Management, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Labor, and Education, to help prepare military veterans as they prepare for the transition into the civilian workforce (The White House, 2015).

TAP helped military veterans with schooling, training, and credentialing (The White House, 2015). The new program starts as soon as the military member joins the military. There are different tracks that military veterans may decide to pursue as they leave the military like education, technical training, and entrepreneurship (The White House, 2015). The education track focuses on how to get into the college of choice and afford it (Parker, 2012; The White House, 2015). The military veteran is assisted throughout the process until positive contact is made with an education counselor.

The technical training track will help the military veteran with selecting the technical training school and field of choice (Parker, 2012; The White House, 2015). The military veteran receives support until a meeting occurs between the career technical expert and the military veteran. For military veterans interested in opening up their own business, the advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship are provided to the

military veteran. The military veteran will also complete a business plan and be connected with a successful business mentor to help in the process (Parker, 2012; The White House, 2015).

Delbourg-Delphis (2014) used statistical data from the Department of Labor to illustrate the number of military veterans that were hired in the previous year to show that educated military veterans helped the hiring process. Delbourg-Delphis did not show the statistics regarding the turnover rate of military veterans in small businesses. The findings of Delbourg-Delphis may have practical use among many transitioning military veterans as well as organizations looking to hire military veterans.

The different authors expressed that the hiring of veterans also means getting a good, reliable, dependable, respectful team player who works well under pressure and there are financial benefits that come with the hiring of these veterans (Hall et al., 2014; Parker, 2012). Hall et al. (2014) also stated that the federal government helps military veterans with attaining a higher education. The White House (2015) expanded to three different tracks that support the marketability of military veterans as they enter the civilian labor force. In conclusion, the various educational and skill requirements associated with military veterans could help small business leaders. The different specialized training programs available to military veterans place them in high demand types of jobs in areas like engineering, manufacturing, security, and intelligence.

Incentives for Funding Job Training for Small Businesses

Delbourg-Delphis (2014) explained how to promote a positive image of veterans for business recruitment. The research conducted a review of several literature and

surveys on the aspects of hiring military veterans. Delbourg-Delphis expressed the need to understand the military despite the misconceptions and prejudices associated with recruiting and hiring veterans. These misconceptions coupled with the task of translating military occupations and skills often lead to military veterans being overlooked and business leaders missing out on valuable talent.

The valuable battle-tested skills of military veterans often need supplementation from a civilian employer to optimize their performance (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Hiring military veterans is good for business because it adds to leadership potential and employee retention (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). The author inferred that business leaders not only get tax incentives from the government, but there is also the incentive to create a better talent pool for succession and leadership placement (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Parker, 2012).

Bosco and Harvey (2013) investigated the generational differences in the workforce. The researchers provided data on the characteristics, behaviors in the workplace, and recruitment based on generational differences. Bosco and Harvey found differences in perspective, education, experience, and work ethic across the generations. The researchers attempted to determine the effects on recruiting based on the particular factors across the generations. The researchers used surveys to collect data from 97 personnel.

The authors focused on four different generations (military, veterans, baby boomers, generation Xers, and Millennials) competing against each other in the civilian workforce (Bosco & Harvey, 2013). Recruitment has become a major concern to get the

best fit for any business, and with the different generations, business owners face even greater recruitment challenges (Winston, 2001). The younger generation brings technology as a positive contribution while the older generation contributes knowledge (Bosco & Harvey, 2013).

The review of the generational differences shows that despite the experience and an age gap of military veterans, they can seamlessly transition to the civilian sector as cohesive employees (Adler et al., 2015). The core values of hard work and respect for authority support why veterans should be among the top recruits for business leaders (Lieberman et al., 2014). Adler et al. (2015) provided an updated look at the various skills that soldiers receive while in the military while comparing them against the civilian workforce.

Adler et al. (2015) argued that military members outperformed members of the civilian workforce. Military veterans received a great deal of training that tested physical, cognitive, and intellectual capabilities (Adler et al., 2015). The skills gained by military veterans can be transferred once a soldier transitions from the military to a civilian job (Adler et al., 2015). Soldiers are exposed to training that the civilian population cannot access. Soldiers training and experiences set them apart and makes them great candidates for the civilian workforce when they transition (Adler et al., 2015).

Lieberman et al. (2014) provided insight into the innate skills that military veterans received while in the military. The skills included leadership, initiative and commitment. The soldiers acquired these skills as soon as they entered the Army, and the skills were reinforced and amplified as they progress in the military (Ahern & Pell,

1970). Rettmann (2013) posited that the skills could be transferred once a soldier transitions from the military to civilian employment.

Adler et al. (2015) explained that recruiting skilled military veteran centers on two primary strategies. The strategies include *batch* recruiting that deals with developing a pool of applicants and *continuous* recruiting, which deals with a concerted focus to attract applicants (Carlson, Connerley, & Mecham, 2002). The continuous transition of soldiers from the military presents a steady pool of applicants for business leaders. The steady pool of applicants help business leaders selects the right applicants with the right skills needed for employment (Carlson et al., 2002). Soldiers are available, so there are no exorbitant costs (Ahern & Pell, 1970) included in connecting with a soldier regarding recruitment.

Rettmann (2013) explored how the military produced skilled military veterans were trained to be technically and tactically proficient. The training levels include institutional, which is when the Soldier learns about the particular skills associated with a particular job in a school environment. At the end of the first training level, testing is conducted which includes a practical application of skills learned. The second training level is unit level training and the soldier learns by doing and interactions (Rettmann, 2013). At the end of the second training level, the soldier is placed in an austere environment.

The goal in the final level is to build proficiency. The final level is self-development. The final level deals with the refinement of skills learned and applied. The

different levels fulfill the technical skill requirements for soldiers to perform their military jobs, which in turn may transfer to civilian skills (Cacioppo et al., 2015).

Ellyson et al. (2012) explored what builds resilience in soldiers. Resilience is a skill that small business owners need in their employees (Hall et al., 2014). Ellyson et al. highlighted the resilience training that soldiers get while in the military. These skills can be transferred once a soldier transitions from the military to a civilian job (Franke & Felfe, 2015).

Resilience building is a positive cognitive function soldiers are trained in (Ellyson et al., 2012). Resilience is one of the many attributes soldiers leave the military with, and a reason business leaders should be encouraged to recruit them (Ellyson et al., 2012). The technical skill focuses on the military occupational specialty of the military member (Caldwell & Burke, 2013), but resilience is what keeps employees motivated regardless of the challenges in the business (Ellyson et al., 2012).

Ellyson et al. (2012) mentioned the drawdown of forces, as military members leave the service. Ellyson et al. highlighted the growing problem of military veteran unemployment, while noting that if business owners gain an understanding of the abilities and skills that military veterans can bring in business, a possible solution may arise (Ellyson et al., 2012). Hiring military veterans is an endeavor with congressional backing and presidential attention (The White House, 2015).

The endeavor led by the President led to the refinement of veteran military skills to make military veterans marketable (Lewandowski, 2014). Companies that have successfully hired veterans have teams dedicated to the recruitment of military members;

the companies attend military job fairs (Ellyson et al., 2012). Onboarding is another means that companies that hire veterans use for successful recruitment (Ellyson et al., 2012).

The onboarding process is accomplished during the service member's final year in the military to ensure the hiring will be a good fit for the military veteran and the business owner (Rettmann, 2013). Companies that also hire veterans connect military veterans with veteran employees to establish commonality (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The transition for a military veteran can be overwhelming despite the innate skill of leadership, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage they may possess (Parker, 2012).

Caldwell and Burke (2013) posited that business owners develop internal training programs for recruiters that have no military experience to help the recruiters translate military skills into civilian terms. Get skills to work is a program that recognizes the vast skill bank of military veterans that may be expanded upon by business owners (Parker, 2012). Veterans are resilient and have a great deal of training, work well in teams, are committed to the mission and are comfortable working in severe and even diverse environments (Cacioppo et al., 2015; Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Business owners understand the skills that military veterans possess, but more importantly their flexibility.

In conclusion, the simplest way for the government to incentivize companies to hire veterans is by providing tax credits to employers (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The authors agreed that the government gives a wide variety of tax credits to companies who employ veterans, and in some cases, this tax credit can amount to millions in tax savings

for firms (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The federal government also provides military veterans with a fair amount of financial assistance to attain a degree in higher education. This educational support serves as a place for small business owners as well and motivates them to hire veterans to avoid spending additional funds for higher education and training related to career progression. The innate skills possessed by military veterans serve as an incentive for business owners to fund on the job training for these skilled employees.

Challenges of Hiring Veterans

Tsai and Rosenheck (2013) explained that military veterans experienced multiple deployments associated with their jobs in the military. The experience gained by military veterans adds to their skill bank and may contribute to the improvement of any organization (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). The negative side to this is the number and intensity of the deployments experienced by military veterans serve as a hiring challenge for business owners (King, 2012). The trauma associated with deployments creates a concern for business owners as they contemplate the cost (health care, time off for appointments, accommodations) of hiring a veteran.

The mention of the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) also raises concerns for business owners as they wonder if military veterans may have an explosive negative episode while at work (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). Some business owners worry about the risks of what may be termed an unstable employee (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). The presence of an unstable employee keeps other employees on edge, which does not

foster a positive work environment. Some business owners also worry about the military veteran redeploying to war while employed (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

King (2012) revealed that business owners strive to hire the right people at the right time. Even with veteran unemployment numbers and the number of veterans eligible for work, business owners face some challenges with hiring military veterans. Some business owners think that military veterans have lower education levels and non-competitive resumes due to only previous experience noted as the military (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). Another challenge expressed by business owners is the use of military acronyms, which means nothing to business owners (King, 2012). The military acronyms make it difficult for business owners to understand military veteran's skills and what it translates into for their company (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013).

The most significant challenge expressed by business owners is how to reach these military veterans. Business owners are not sure how to connect or attract military veterans because there is a cultural barrier due to military service (King, 2012). Small business owners face significant challenges as they manage their business.

Small business owners struggle with remaining relevant in a market with large firms. Small business owners also struggle to attract, select, and retain skilled workers (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). The challenges experienced by small business owners are compounded by the amount of capital large business owners have to provide employees with compensation and benefits (King, 2012). Small business owners have to contend with turnover concerns that stem from not having skilled workers on staff (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

The cost of hiring skilled workers can be an expensive endeavor, but turnover leads to cost at the end (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Small business owners work long hours to make sure the business remains productive. Some of the concerns small business owners also face include succession concerns, on how to keep the business progressing in a positive manner (Hyytinen et al., 2015). The long work hours also affect the morale of the employees, and the business owner faces challenges with maintaining the morale of the team (Hyytinen et al., 2015). A diverse employee pool may not be affordable for the small business owner, and with a lack of diversity, the customer outreach is also limited (Hyytinen et al., 2015).

Tsai and Rosenheck (2013) explained that although veterans have certain qualities such as discipline, leadership, and loyalty due to their training and background, it can be hard to transmit that fact to employers. King (2012) also supported this view and added that the government's tax credits are not always available to employers hiring veterans. It is a very competitive job market, and veterans are competing against people with more focused skills (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Most managers who hire can translate college credit into job-related fields; however, the hiring of veterans can be difficult because their skills are not easily understood to be matched to specific job fields. King expressed his view that business leaders will need to educate themselves about military culture, language, and jobs.

Veterans will need to learn how to better translate their skills and training applicable to civilian life (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). It is against this backdrop that all the authors agreed that skills translation is not the only problem for veterans in finding

jobs (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). There are issues about a mismatch of skills, military hires being pulled for future deployments, and the belief that veterans need time to mentally reposition in civilian life (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Benefits of Hiring Veterans

Arendt and Sapp (2014) conducted a study of a retired soldier resumes at their initial point of transition to determine how potential civilian employers may interpret the skills and experience of soldiers. The study was conducted to determine barriers between the military veteran transitioning pool and civilian employers. Their study sample size was five male Army veterans.

The veterans' resumes were evaluated according to how the veterans were able to articulate their skills and attributes. Arendt and Sapp (2014) collected data through e-mail, face-to-face, and phone meetings. Arendt and Sapp found that veterans have exceptional qualifications and skills that most employers desire; however, these skills are often masked with jargon or are buried deep into the resume.

Military skills include leadership, responsibility, resilience, and initiative (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Arendt and Sapp (2014) provided insight into the valuable skills that veterans possess; however, the sample size was small. This article is useful for my study because it identifies skills that veteran has that can assist civilian employers in gaining a competitive advantage.

Lucke and Furtner (2015) determined that soldiers can lead themselves and continue to seek self-improvement. Military veterans are noted as self-motivated and are receptive to training. Military veterans can receive training even in extreme conditions, so

training for business is easier (King, 2012). Employees that are trainable are beneficial to a business (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Lucke and Furtner also highlighted the skills, abilities, and attributes of service members.

Routon (2014) mentioned that the characteristics included higher self-efficacy, physical performance, and less mental strain. This improvement would give transitioning military veterans an advantage when hired and benefit a civilian employer. King (2012) focused on the leadership skills of veterans and their initiative.

Military veterans while in service are promoted based on their leadership potential (Hall et al., 2014). Young leaders in the military are challenged to strive for success in every endeavor (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Military veterans also have the distinct ability to make decisions due to the years of training and the missions they had to complete (Bosco & Harvey, 2013).

Military veterans understand how to follow rules, but also understand that hard work is important to mission accomplishment. The strain of war has helped mold military veterans into resilient and contributing members of the civilian workforce (Arendt & Sapp, 2014; Cacioppo et al., 2015). Military veterans had to serve as ambassadors on behalf of members of the United States, which helps them to perform in a business setting with ease. The skills of military veterans will provide business owners with the right skills needed to ensure mission accomplishment (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Transition

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study includes the (a) background of the problem, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) nature of the study, (e)

research question, (f) theoretical framework, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (i) significance of study, and (j) literature review. From the literature review, I identify the challenges business owners face as they compete for large businesses with skilled workers. The literature review covers the following topics: (a) small business management, (b) recruitment theory, (c) human capital theory, (d) hiring strategies to acquire skilled workers, (e) transition support and education programs for veterans, (f) veterans training and development for civilian employment challenges of hiring veterans, (g) benefits of hiring veterans, (h) incentives for funding job training for small businesses.

Military veterans are technically proficient and possess skills that prove beneficial to small businesses and widen the pool of skilled workers. The multiple case study design is a suitable form to capture strategies used by some business owners to acquire skilled military veterans. The findings of this study may help reduce the veterans' unemployment rate and help retain jobs within the local community, minimizing international outsourcing.

In Section 2, I will provide the research method of case study design based on the research question, (a) role of the researcher, (b) participants, and (c) data collection. The section includes a discussion of the study participants, research methodologies, data collection, analysis, and reliability and validity of the study. In Section 2, I will provide a detailed approach to understanding and connect the main research question of the study of the role of the researcher, methods and design of the study, and data gathering is

supporting the research findings. Section 3 contains the presentation of the findings of this research and the application to professional practice.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I provide a detailed explanation of the steps I took to explore strategies that some business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees. This section includes the discussion of an approach to ensure the quality of the findings. This section includes the following subsections: (a) purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection, (i) data analysis, and (j) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees. The target population consisted of business leaders who successfully hired skilled military veterans in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The implication for positive social change included the potential for business owners to capitalize on the strategies business owners used to recruit and translate military experiences into useful skills needed within the civilian workforce. The findings of this study may help reduce the veterans' unemployment rate and help retain jobs within the local community, minimizing international outsourcing.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the main data collection instrument (Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012; Kyvik, 2013), and my role as a researcher included (a) data collection, (b) analyzing the data, (c) developing themes, and (d) writing the results of the findings. Condie (2012)

mentioned that a researcher needs to collect data from primary and secondary sources. The data collection process included the collection of semistructured interviews with the participants.

In this qualitative multiple case study research, I worked with small business leaders who hire from military units in North Carolina. The participants and I worked together a year prior to data collection, when I served as a commander for transitioning military members, but I had no influence in the recruiting or hiring process. The participants and I had to forego our biases to ensure the research was not tainted (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

I was familiar with my research topic because I had a small business, and at the different conferences I attended, I listened to small business owners raise concerns about the shortage of skilled workers. I also served as a commander of a military transition unit and witnessed some soldiers transition out of the military. Some of the soldiers had trouble connecting with businesses. I lived and worked in the geographical area where I conducted this research study. My familiarity with the topic and the relationship I formed as a commander helped the participants feel comfortable with sharing the strategies they utilized to connect with military veterans as they attempted to increase the pool of skilled workers in their business.

Despite my role as a commander while serving in the military transition unit, I had no influence during the recruiting and hiring process. In fact, the business owners were expected to coordinate on recruiting, hiring, and training events through the

transition coordinator. In order to avoid my personal biases and life experiences, I separated my personal thoughts, knowledge, and feelings while transcribing responses.

My primary data collection source included interviewing six business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina, who satisfied the requirements of the research objective. Secondary sources were reports and data from the different businesses participating in the research. As explained in the Belmont Report (Eckstein, n.d.), I followed the ethical principles and research guidelines outlined in the Belmont Report to include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. All participants voluntarily consented to the research and, as a researcher, I treated every participant fairly and precautions were taken to avoid exposing participants to risk.

I ensured the safety and rights of the participants by submitting the proposal of the study to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval (Approval No. 08-26-16-0490969). I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research web-based training course as part of the process to conduct this research. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), researchers doing qualitative studies should attempt to minimize error and researcher bias. Biases in research distort results and influence decisions (Gorrell, Ford, Madden, Holdridge, & Eaglestone, 2011). I mitigated bias by utilizing peer reviews and sharing the transcripts with the participants to clarify and confirm their interpretations (Harper & Cole, 2012).

An interview protocol is important in ensuring that the researcher follows the same protocol with each participant. As a researcher, I utilized the semistructured interview protocol to determine the various strategies utilized by the participants.

According to Foley and O'Connor (2013), qualitative researchers rely on interview protocols as a tool to achieve commonality and add to the consistency and reliability.

Participants

A qualitative case study requires recruiting participants with experience in the phenomenon studied (Yin, 2014). The criteria to participate in the study included (a) small business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina, (b) business owners who have hired veterans in the past, and (c) businesses with over 20% of the employees listed as military veterans. According to Yin (2014), a sample size of three is sufficient in case study research. I used a qualitative method and a multiple case study design.

Participants received correspondence through e-mail explaining the intent of the study. Attaining permission for participant-researcher dialog or to gather data requires contacting the participant by means of telephone, e-mail, or letter (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). The e-mail also contained the Participant Consent Form, which participants were allowed to review, sign, and return. The e-mail also informed participants that company documents would be included in the data analysis.

I conducted face-to-face interviews with small business owners in the geographic area of Fayetteville, North Carolina. I gained access to the participants by sourcing local business phones and contacting the transition coordinator after I received Walden University and IRB approval to conduct the study. I made calls and requested to speak to managers/small business owners, introduced myself, explained the rationale for the research, and explained the criteria for participant selection and the confidentiality and informed consent process.

Potential participants provided evidence that they had hired military veterans for at least the past 3 years and agreed to participate voluntarily. Business owners who met the criteria as participants received written correspondence from me. I obtained their e-mail and e-mailed the consent form to them. To build trust and establish a working relationship with the participants, I provided full disclosure of the rationale and process of the research, as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2012). I guaranteed the small business owners participating in the study absolute confidentiality and privacy; I did not use the names of participants and the research organizations maintained confidentiality.

Research Method and Design

This section includes the underlying principles and justification for selecting the research method, design, instruments, population, and sampling protocol used in this study. In the literature review, I indicated that researchers used qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the availability of a skilled workforce and the employability of military veterans. I will use a qualitative study to gain an understanding of the strategies utilized by participants as they deal with the problem, while sharing lessons learned and best business practices.

Research Method

I selected a qualitative multiple case study to explore the strategies some business owners use to connect with military veterans as skilled workers. I based my decision to use a qualitative multiple case study approach on the need to explore the phenomenon in depth to fill gaps in the research literature (Khan, 2014), as it relates to small business owners. The primary research question (What strategies do business owners in

Fayetteville, North Carolina use to recruit military veterans as skilled employees?) was exploratory in nature, and a qualitative approach proved sufficient in this study (Ragin, 2014).

The objective was to collect information on how the participants viewed and understood the problem rather than analyze variables. I utilized a qualitative research method because the data originated from the participants' point of view. Qualitative researchers enable the development of a social constructivist worldview (Bailey, 2014; Mertens, 2014). Qualitative researchers deal with complex concerns that may have varied responses and involve exploration through theoretical lenses (Ragin, 2014).

Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher hopes to explore a phenomenon in depth to fill gaps in the research literature (Khan, 2014). Business owners seek to recruit skilled employees, and transitioning veterans seek immediate employment as they prepare to leave the military. Qualitative research helped me identify and bridge the gap between small business owners and military veterans.

Quantitative studies are appropriate to test hypotheses developed from qualitative research (Hartas, 2015). Quantitative researchers examine relationships between variables while maintaining neutrality (Hartas, 2015). Quantitative studies help with trend analysis, and quantitative researchers make subjective decisions regarding variables and hypothesis, which may affect the outcome of the study (Newman & Benz, 1998).

A quantitative method is not effective when trying to understand human interactions (Letourneau, 2015), which is relevant to my study. Quantitative research also focuses on proving or disproving a theory (Newman & Benz, 1998), which was not

applicable to my research. Mixed method studies provide a thorough review of the problem by incorporating quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) methods of research (Starr, 2014). Despite the thoroughness associated with mixed method, it requires a researcher with the expert ability to translate both methods of research in a timely manner. For this study, mixed method was not suitable for my research because time and finances were a factor.

Research Design

Case studies involve the use of multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations, artifacts, and documentation (Yin, 2014). I used a qualitative multiple case study and a purposeful sample of six small business owners located in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I selected a multiple case study design for this research because researchers have an opportunity to retrieve information from participants while engaging in analytical measures to determine common themes (Yin, 2014).

Ethnographies focus on the study of a particular culture and limit the study of the particular group in the study (Myers, 2013); therefore, it was not appropriate for this study. Narrative researchers focus on storytelling from a person's point of view (Myers, 2013), which would present limited information to this study. The phenomenological design was not appropriate because it is only appropriate to capture the lived experiences of the participants (Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2013).

The case study design was a suitable form to capture strategies used by some business owners to acquire skilled military veterans. The case study design was fitting because the approach of the study was to understand the process by which business

leaders search, recruit and hire military veterans (Wheeler, 2012; Yin, 2014). One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview and the ability of the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews for data collection (Yin, 2014). To achieve data saturation, after the interviews, I conducted member checking. Member checking involved sharing the data and interpretations with the participants (Harvey, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Population and Sampling

Selecting the population and sample size was important to ensure the reliability and validity of the study (Walker, 2012). The focus of the study was to seek the strategies used by some business owners to acquire skilled military veterans to improve the pool of skilled workers in the workforce. The targeted participants were business owners who currently employ military veterans. The targeted population were business owners who had common characteristics that support this study.

The targeted population in the study was made up of small business owners operating in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The business owners met the following requirements: (a) the participants hired at least two military veterans within the last 3 years, (b) the participants had at least 20% of the present staff identified as military veterans, and (c) the participants were at least 18 years of age. The small business owners that met the requirements were asked to participate in the research voluntarily.

The purpose of the qualitative mixed case study was to determine what strategies would help small business owners connect with military veterans in order to acquire skilled workers. A purposeful sampling approach provided an in-depth understanding of

participants' lived experiences, which was the objective of the study (Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2013), The purposeful sample helped to ensure the richness of the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

The acceptable number of cases usually ranges from two to four, with 15 as the maximum (Rollins, Nickell, & Ennis, 2014). The number of participants to interview in qualitative research to attain data saturation depends on many factors such as the dexterity of the researcher, the design, and the purpose of the research (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

According to O'Reilly and Parker (2013), the primary goal of qualitative researchers is to collect sufficient data to allow for richer and complete description of the phenomenon under investigation. I continued to collect data from primary and secondary sources to include historical company documents on employee recruitment, promotion, award, turnover, and demographic information until I achieved data saturation. Data saturation occurred when the same patterns of information kept appearing, and new information was not emerging (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interviews took place wherever the participants decided was convenient for them. The only requirement I had was of a quiet and private location to limit distractions during the interview process.

Ethical Research

Considerations in ethics are important in scholarly research that involves human population to guide the participant participating (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In the application of the ethical considerations, participants received and signed a consent form before the interview began. However, before administering the interview, I received

approval from Walden University's IRB in order to (a) prevent psychological, physical, social or economic harm to participants; (b) ensure the dignity, confidentiality, and privacy; (c) where required, ensure the participants' anonymity; (d) be honest and transparent; and (e) develop informed consent from all participants.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) explored the concerns and ethical considerations that are prevalent in qualitative research. It is vital to have concern for ethical considerations to promote the trustworthiness of the research. I explained the research process to the participants before recording or taking notes. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the research process at any time without any penalty.

There were no incentives given to the participants. To comply with the guidelines set forth by Walden University regarding the destruction of information, I will protect participants' identities by storing data for 5 years in a password locked cabinet. The protection of participants' privacy is vital to ensure compliance with ethical standards of research (Yun, Han, & Lee, 2013). I ensured that all participants had their names, coded alphabetically to ensure privacy and coded the name of the business to ensure anonymity (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Data Collection Instruments

In a qualitative research study, the researcher is the main data collection instrument (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). For this study, face-to-face interviews, observations, and archival data were included. As Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained, the four main types of qualitative interviews are (a) Internet interviews, (b)

unstructured or semistructured interviews, (c) group interviews, and (d) casual conversations. The collection instrument process was a process of carrying out semistructured interviews with open-ended questioning. I had a list of questions to ask the participants (Appendix A).

The goal of this study was to explore the recruiting strategies of small business owners to hire veterans. The use of semistructured interviews helped with exploring the phenomenon. I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews with all participants. Adherence to protocol was followed during the interview as participants were screened and contact made by participants that met the criteria.

Before the start of the interview, participants were informed of their rights, the purpose of the study, and all privacy concerns as stipulated on the consent form. Participants were interviewed and observed in their work environment. After the interviews, I conducted member checking by transcribing all the interviews and offering the participants an opportunity to review the summary of the interpretations to confirm the accuracy of the interview.

The collection and review of documents occurred throughout the data collection process and provided support for in-depth questioning during the interview process (Owen, 2014). Documents based on small business success strategies were used to compare the information recorded during the interview to increase understanding. I utilized documents that focused on small business owners who hire veterans and have hired two veterans in the last 3 years. During document review, author bias remained a

concern (Owen, 2014), while applying critical thought to increase understanding of the documents to support the study.

The participants were observed during a TAP session to supplement the interview process. For this study, collaboration with the participants occurred to determine a suitable time to observe a TAP session. During initial contact, the participants received an explanation concerning the purpose of the study, and if the participants agreed to participate in the study, then an observation was scheduled. A total of 3 observations was conducted at the veteran TAP location. Each observation lasted less than 45 minutes. I recorded the notes.

The criteria for the observation included (a) physical location of the observation, (b) the participants who agreed to participate in the study, (c) the conversation that took place between business owner, and military veteran from the observation, (d) the nonverbal communication, and (e) my role as a researcher during the observation. The participants received a copy of the transcription to ensure accuracy and provide feedback. The advantage of experiencing possible hiring of military veterans firsthand, while maximizing the opportunity to see the entire process work supported research in a natural setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

I enhanced reliability and validity as the data collection instrument through member checking and transcript review. Member checking is sharing data and interpretations with participants (Harvey, 2016). As a researcher, reliability was ensured by (a) maintaining consistency while presenting the interview questions in an orderly manner (Houghton et al., 2013), (b) interpreting what the participants shared, and (c)

providing the participants with the interpretations to support validation (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I conducted a transcript review by (a) reviewing the audio recording, (b) writing every response I receive verbatim, and (c) sharing the transcript with the participant for review, clarification and validation (Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009).

Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection sources for this multiple case study included interviews and observations. The interviews involved six small business owners. The interviews were semistructured and audio recorded. While interviewing participants, I observed and took notes on their nonverbal actions and attitudes as they responded to questions. Secondary sources included documents and archival evidence such as previous studies, surveys, and records.

Company historical data such as employee recruitment, promotion, award, turnover, and demographic information served as a metric to measure, compare, and contrast data gained from interviews. During the semistructured interviews, I asked all the questions listed in Appendix A, after which the participants may add anything they feel may support the topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The use of the method provided me with the opportunity to gain an understanding of the participants' views.

Before the interview, I invited the participants using a letter of invitation sent through e-mail that clarified the intent of the study. The e-mail also included the Participant Consent Form for the participant to review and then electronically sign by replying to the e-mail with the phrase *I consent*. The Participant Consent Form included a sample of the interview questions and an explanation of how I would audio record the

interview. I informed the participants in the e-mail, that I would collect company documents, and observe a military hiring event if possible.

During the informed consent process, I was sensitive to the participants' responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, I clarified that participant participation in the study is voluntary, and that themselves as participants can withdraw at any time without penalty by stating, *I withdraw*. In addition, the Participant Consent Form contained information notifying the participant that there will not be any compensation for their participation in the study and that participant would have access to the interview results, in which I would e-mail to them for participant review.

The participants were contacted through a telephone call to schedule the interview dates, times, and location. The objective was to schedule additional time for the interview to accommodate for the lateness of the participants. I called two days before each interview to confirm the interview date, time, and location with each participant. Upon arrival at the interview location, the date, time, demographics, surroundings, and participant interactions with others will be handwritten in a journal. Each participant received a copy of their electronically signed Participant Consent Form to review again before the start of the interview questions.

The steps for conducting interviews, according to Condie (2012) and Chan et al. (2013) include (a) conducting the research interviews to capture the description of experiences, (b) establishing an environment to foster rapport and trust while conducting the interview, and (c) proper bracketing questions. The steps allowed me to take a systematic approach to the interview process. The steps associated with interview

structure and framing content by providing a basis for the overall interview and data collection process (Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012; Kyvik, 2013).

During the interview process, I took notes and recorded the interviews to help me transcribe the information accurately. In determining the appropriateness of interview questions, qualitative researchers conduct a pilot study with members of the population (Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011). However, I did not conduct a pilot study because I will be using semistructured interviews that will enable me to ask probing questions for a detailed answer from the participants.

The advantage of using the open-ended semistructured interview allowed for flexibility with the participants to express their opinion; the disadvantage was that it was time-consuming, but I allocated enough time to help me fulfill the rationale for using the open-ended semistructured interview. In the case where the participants of the study did not understand a question, I rephrased the question for them. The interview lasted no more than 30 minutes. I used member checking of the data interpretation. I interpreted what the participant shared, and shared the interpretation with the participants for validation (Harvey, 2016; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

After the interview, I collected company documents that were relevant to my study (Yin, 2014). I collected company data documents in the form of historical data such as employee recruitment, promotion, award, turnover, and demographic information to ensure the information received during the interview was reflected in the documents. The most important source of collecting case study information, interviews and the use of other sources allows for triangulation (Yin, 2014).

During observation, I observed the small business owners during a TAP session to see the strategies utilized by the small business owners, and comparing it with the information I collected during interviews. For the observation, I used an observation protocol that was broad enough, so I could collect enough raw data as quickly as possible during observation. I will compare the observed information against the information I will collect during interviews.

Data Organization Technique

I began the interview session by audio recording the participant using Audacity audio recorder software on my Toshiba smart touch laptop. I coded and analyzed the information gathered from participants. I stored the information collected in a database to allow me to analyze all evidence collected (Amerson, 2011). I collected data using notes, documents, and audiotape, and I stored the information in an organized place for future access.

Raw data and documents from the note collected from the field were organized and categorized. All the information was listed in Microsoft Word and Excel to help in the organization of the data collected. Nvivo 11 will be used in the data organization process to enable me to identify emerging themes, patterns, and trends on common topics.

NVivo is a software that researchers may use to organize research data (Rowley, 2012). Yin (2014) suggested that researchers analyze and criticize any conflicting interpretation that emerges from participants. I was the only person to analyze the data

and have access to the data collected. The data will be saved and stored in a cabinet that is password protected for 5 years, and the data will be destroyed after 5 years.

The collection and storage of all data aligned with IRB requirements. Data could exist as physical records or files on a researcher's computer or terabytes of data on dedicated servers with authentication (Cox & Pinfield, 2014). I would be the only person who has exclusive access to all the data.

Data Analysis

During collection and analysis of data, researchers involved in a multiple case study, verify if the evidence from the other sources match the information retrieved during the interviews (Yin, 2014). The first step was to review the information collected during interviews by replaying the audio recordings in a slow motion, which enabled me to type out the responses of the participants, and apply process information coding (Yin, 2014).

The goal of this research was to analyze and address the research question while exploring explanations in the literature review. I explored the experiences of the participants about recruiting veterans by small business owners by using inductive data analysis. The analysis of the data involved interview coding to look for patterns and themes that are linked which related to the research question. To enable me analyze the data and get a rich description, I used NVivo 11 software, which is a tool to help researchers in coding and categorization of large volumes of narrative text.

A coding system was created for the participants and the interview data. The participants, and participant data were coded using participant A through F. In a separate document, the participants' actual name and their assigned participant letter were noted.

The software program NVivo assisted in identifying word frequencies and themes from the data. The transcripts were uploaded and organized to discover emerging themes and trends (Edwards-Jones, 2014). The next step was to build a textural-structural description, while clarifying the information shared by the participants to include the emerging themes (Moustakas, 1994).

The use of semistructured questions helped me measure the concepts associated with my framework of human capital theory (Becker, 1962) and recruitment theory (Dunnette, 1976). The questions were useful for exploring the strategies that some business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina use to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees as measured by the interview questions.

The interpretation and data analysis process also included my review of the transcribed interviews that were recorded and documents related to the research question with each participant. Member check-in was utilized, which is sharing data and interpretations with participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants reviewed transcripts to verify the transcribed data. Each participant received a Word document of compiled data from their interview and document collection for sharing of data and review of accurate interpretations. Each participant also received a call to communicate, and review the process. Yin (2014) suggested that the multiple-case procedure involves the final step of analysis and conclusion.

According to Denzin (2012), it is essential to integrate multiple sources of data to help the researcher understand the results. By using the methodical triangulation, it will enhance the transferability and the reliability in the research findings. There are four types of triangulation according to Denzin. This includes (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. Methodical triangulation involves the use of multiple sources in the process of data collection. I gathered data using documents, and observation.

Reliability and Validity

According to E. Thomas and Magilvy (2011), qualitative researchers use, reliability and validity to establish trust and confidence in the results. This section included a detailed description of how to establish the reliability and validity of the study.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results and the freedom from any mistakes and errors (Hess, McNab, & Basoglu, 2014). According to Yin (2014), a research study is reliable when the research can get the same results under the same condition of research. One key issue in attaining the reliability and validity of the study is the use of member checking as a key method. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) explained strategies, which I utilized by (a) keeping detailed descriptions of the research process and procedures, (b) developing a case study database, and (c) facilitating member checking to enable me to ensure the reliability of the study.

A study is reliable when a researcher can produce the same results under the same conditions. In ensuring reliability and validity, I asked each participant the same set of

questions to get the research question, and this process remained the same for all participants as established in the interview protocol (Aust, Diedenhofen, Ullrich, & Musch, 2013). For this study to be repeated by other researchers, I explained the method of the data collection, all participants' criteria, and the analysis of data that ensured the consistency and quality of the findings (Narayanan, Greco, Reeves, Matthews, & Bergin, 2014).

Validity

There are four components when it comes to the validity in qualitative research. According to E. Thomas and Magilvy (2011), validity is the trustworthiness of the research, which included the following components (a) credibility, (b) transferability, and (c) conformability. As the researcher, I ensured the validity of the research by using multiple sources of evidence, ensuring data saturation was attained and analyzing any limitation of the research. As explained by Denzin (2012), by using multiple sources of evidence, it ensured triangulation, which is essential in case study research. I used the following data sources (a) review of documents, (b) archival records, and (c) physical artifacts in combination with the six interviews with the small business owners.

Dependability. I audio recorded the participant interviews. I performed member checking by interpreting the interview data and then having the participant verify my interpretation. In addition, I collected company document data. After the interview, I transcribed the recorded audio. The participants reviewed the transcripts by e-mail to look for discrepancies or errors, a process known as transcript review (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I utilized NVivo to synthesize the data, a qualitative data analysis

software. Transcript review and member checking along with the use of NVivo data analysis software enabled me to enhance the dependability of my study results.

Credibility. I used member checking to ensure the credibility of the study results and also data saturation to make sure I obtained all the information, and they were exhaustive (Houghton et al., 2013). As the data collection instrument in this qualitative study; I based the credibility of the study on my protocols, my procedures applied, and my self-awareness during the research process. Triangulation of data sources enhanced the credibility of my study results (Denzin, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Transferability. In the area of establishing the transferability of the findings or methods, I described the research limitation regarding geography and demographics (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Transferability is for the reader to decide as explained by Marshall and Rossman (2011). I ensured data saturation by developing a detailed face-to-face interviews and member checking.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the accuracy of the data (Houghton et al., 2013). I ensured confirmability by creating audit trails (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I kept records of all the documents and acknowledge my beliefs, while utilizing triangulation to reduce the effects of my bias (Tong & Dew, 2016). I also determined confirmability from the data by establishing the frequency of words and themes within NVivo for accurate analysis. Data saturation may be associated with the stage when a further collection of evidence provides no new information in a qualitative research synthesis (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Walker, 2012).

Transition and Summary

The use of semistructured, audio tape-recorded interviews and observations of six business owners may help with exploring methods that small business owners may use to recruit veterans in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In Section 2, I presented the procedures and the methods of research in conducting this research study. I described the instruments for data collection and the steps for data analysis using Nvivo 11 application software. I also discussed reliability and validity.

Section 3 will begin with an introduction including the purpose statement and the research question. I also presented the results of the analysis of the data. Section 3 will also include (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) researcher reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina used to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees. I conducted semistructured interviews with hiring managers from several businesses in the Fayetteville, North Carolina area to acquire data and to answer the following research question: What strategies do some business owners in Fayetteville, North Carolina use to recruit military veterans as a means to acquire skilled employees? The interviews were conducted in the interviewees' offices, where they would be relaxed and comfortable.

The participants answered eight semistructured interview questions (Appendix A) that would indicate the strategies they used to recruit and hire military veterans. The interviews garnered comprehensive responses from the participants (Yin, 2014). In addition to interview questions, I studied company documents that supported data collected from the interviews.

Based on the information provided in Section 2, the qualitative multiple case study design was appropriate for this study (Yin, 2014). This approach provided a basis for data analysis from the data collected (Wheeler, 2012; Yin, 2014). Once the interviews were transcribed and company documents were reviewed, the data were imported into NVivo 11 software for coding.

After analyzing the data, I identified three core themes. Within the themes, I outlined the strategies identified in the hiring documents, interview assessments,

questionnaires, and feedback regarding hiring strategies. I used the data collected to answer my research question.

Presentation of the Findings

I used semistructured interviews to achieve an understanding of the strategies the business leaders used to recruit and hire military veterans as skilled employees. In addition, I reviewed companies' hiring assessments as well as other company records used for determining organizational suitability to contrast the data collected during interviews. I conducted the semistructured interviews when participants were accessible with six face-to-face interviews conducted. During the interviews, the only requirement I had was of a quiet and private location to limit distractions.

After collecting and analyzing the interviews and documents, three themes arose. The first theme related to the job description and transition workshops. The second theme related to resume review and communication. The third theme related to accommodations and benefits.

Human capital theory and recruitment theory are the conceptual frameworks used for this research study. The majority of responses from the participants reinforced both human capital and recruitment theory frameworks. Human capital theory depicts the characteristics that leaders use when considering employees for longtime employment and organization fit (Mincer, 1989). Additionally, hiring managers use the concepts of human capital to build their pool of skilled workers, which assists with succession planning (Welbourne & Pardo-del-Val, 2008). The recruitment theory conceptual

framework depicts the methods used by hiring managers to make hiring decisions and acquire workers (Guion, 1976).

For this doctoral study, I reviewed the two conceptual frameworks and found a connection with the findings and provided a means for understanding effective veteran recruitment strategies and the utilization of those strategies to hire former military employees. The hiring process takes several steps: recruiting, interviewing, and training. The process of hiring veterans in its entirety can be time consuming, costly, and may not guarantee envisioned results (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The case study design was an effective method for exploring the research question in real-time practical setting (Yin, 2014). Throughout the presentation of findings, I excluded unrelated and repetitive information.

Theme 1: Job Description and Workshops

Theme 1 revealed that business owners should attend workshops that provide training and assistance for hiring veterans and writing targeted job descriptions to fill vacant positions. Preparing a good job description can be described as an art and a science. A broad job title and general description is not enough to muster a decent group of qualified candidates. Respondent P3 noted,

It is challenging to find the one, the perfect fit for a vacant position. You have to make sure the job title, description and verbiage align. You want to hire the right person; however, you don't want to push away possible hires nor attract too broad of a range of candidates. We have experienced weeks of many candidates without experience or knowledge of the job as well as weeks of no candidates at all.

Respondent P5 provided comparable feedback and noted that “generating an accurate job description ensures that you are reaching a suitable applicant for the interview.” Additionally, P6 replied, “In order to attract the best candidate, I must make sure that the description, qualifications, and requirements, are phrased in a manner that I attract the specific person for the job.” Likewise, P2 noted, “Anyone can fill a space but getting quality employees depends on the job description and hiring manager’s ability to sort through and choose competent people.”

The TAP provides many resources to link transitioning veterans with potential employers. In contrast to traditional hiring practices, employers can use job postings, transition coordinators, workshops, and job fairs from the program for free (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). In addition, hiring workshops and job fairs facilitate the bridging of the gap between transitioning veterans and employers (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). More specifically, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the Soldier For Life Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) offers workshops as part of service members out-processing. This program hosts quarterly job fairs specifically for transitioning veterans and employers looking to hire.

Respondent P1 stated, “The job fairs hosted by SFL-TAP makes the process of finding qualified personnel extremely easy. We registered, showed up, set up a booth and came away with six great candidates who ended up filling positions.” Similarly, P4 added, “The job fairs on Fort Bragg are the best for recruiting new employees. All of our veterans were hired through a military Transition Coordinator or at one of these job

fairs.” Respondents P2, P3, P5, and P6 were not familiar with the SFL-TAP or the hosted job fairs on post.

The study results indicated that properly advertising job vacancies through job descriptions can be an effective strategy for attracting competent candidates (Dunlap, 2014). The respondents found that job description were positive or negative depending on the candidate pool responding to employers. Respondents also found that job descriptions along with phrases such as *veterans welcome* were not very effective in pooling qualified military veterans.

P3 noted that these statements “attract a wide variety of veterans” from “different military backgrounds.” The two respondents who did use the TAP resources were able to find more highly qualified military veterans than the respondents who did not. The finding of this theme is relative to the notion of business leader’s knowledge of programs and strategies to hire qualified military veterans.

Archived job vacancies and hiring ads placed in classified listings showed adjustments as the weeks went on depending on the candidate pool. The review of archived documents revealed that employee turnover and new positions created an average of two vacancies every 5 months. The respondents associated with TAP had the same vacancy concerns; however, the timeline for hire was 4 weeks shorter than respondents that did not use TAP. At P3’s location, a job listing in the newspaper slightly changed every week for a 3-week period.

Similarly, P5 provided applications by month that varied in volume from week to week, depending on the job description. Companies registered with the Army TAP on

Fort Bragg had a shorter job posting to hiring timelines for veterans as compared to those who were not registered. At the P4's location, applications arrived within 3 days of the job descriptions being e-mailed to military transition liaisons.

Job descriptions for a company position generally include education level, years of experience, and technical skills (Hall et al., 2014). The concept of job descriptions and military transition workshops is consistent with the body of literature and human capital theory. In order to find personnel for organizational fit, leaders should create communication tools to inform possible candidates of detailed information regarding the job.

The concept of job descriptions and job fairs is needed to maintain a typical practice that allows the most competent and knowledgeable persons the opportunity to apply and be hired for a position. Competitive advantage can be achieved by hiring the right employees (Harrell & Berglass, 2012; Li & Liu, 2014). Using effective methods of recruitment and worker selection strategies is essential for regulating costs and limiting bias by hiring managers (Dunlap, 2014).

Job descriptions should provide detailed and clear expectations for employees; however, Harrell and Berglass (2012) noted that workshops such as job fairs assist hiring managers as well as potential military veteran employees. These workshops place the employers and veterans in the same room, allowing employers to clarify, explain and liaison for their company. The TAP is of little or no cost to employers and often results in employers filling their vacancies. This centralized location of skilled military veterans

also assists business owners with addressing organizational fit. This theme clearly emerged from the responses of the managers interviewed.

Theme 2: Resume Review and Communication

Theme 2 revealed the ability of a business owner to fully understand a candidates' resume increases the business leaders' chances to interview and hire a worker. It is paramount that business leaders have strategies and tools available to assist with the veteran resume review to select the best person for the job. Supporting this theme, respondent P3 stated that using the resume assists with "identifying success, competence, and shortcomings" of past candidates. P3 also noted that resumes "should have information that we can validate such as background and work history."

Respondent P6 noted, "Specific words in the resume helps to determine the right candidate to select for an interview." P6 also stated that when comparing veteran and civilian resumes, "there is a big difference." P6 further stated, "my civilian candidates typically have the traditional resume that is easy to understand." Similarly, P2 noted that "civilian resumes can be read and referenced quickly, most of my veteran resumes take a longer time to review."

P5 stated that "veteran references and work history are hard to verify." The interviews conducted and the company documents I reviewed showed the resume as the first step, and the clarity of the resume determined if potential candidates would be interviewed. For example, P2 noted,

Once all of the resumes have been received, we review each one to see how it matches up to the requirements, qualifications and experience. The resumes are

then separated into two main categories good resumes with experience and good resumes without experience. Any resume not fitting into these two categories will be shredded. The military resumes that have not been converted or translated into something we can understand automatically go to the shred pile.

Respondent P3 noted that during the resume review process, “all of our veterans resumes automatically have an advantage. We know they can be on time and do not need much supervision.” P3 further stated, “The veteran resumes with terms we are not familiar with go to the bottom of the stack, and we typically don’t make it to the bottom before we find our candidates to call.” Respondent P5 noted, “We look for veterans that have been leaders while in the military. Any candidate that has sergeant listed in their position or as their rank has a greater chance of getting called for an interview.”

P5 also noted that this strategy can be “hit or miss” as the title of sergeant does not always correlate to leader. Similarly, P6 noted, “We do not understand everything on veteran resumes. Our strategy is to look at their rank and number of years served.” P6 followed up by saying “the higher their rank and number of years the higher the likelihood of them being called.” In contrast to the other respondents, P4 noted,

Our strategy is simple when it comes to reviewing veteran resumes. We use the veterans employment tool kit on the VA website. This site automatically translates any military jobs that we are not familiar with into a term that we can understand. Anyone that has been to the SFL center on post receives a packet with this website as a resource. The site also converts duties, rank and responsibilities to the civilian equivalent. The rank system in the military shows a level of

leadership and expertise; however, the different jobs cover a wide range of specialties. The VA site makes my job a whole lot easier when determining organizational fit.

Respondent P1 stated, “We always use the VA site to assist us with the military occupational specialties. They have a search engine where you can look up any military job code and it will tell you the civilian equivalent.” P1 also noted that the search engine took all of the guesswork out of veteran resumes. P1 claimed, “Once the veteran job titles are converted you can see how they stack up to civilian resumes.” P1 stated that she would have bypassed some of her best veteran employees if she did not have the military job translator.

During my review of the archived resume files, I realized that the resumes were categorized in an order of merit listing based on simplicity, clarity, and understanding. Five out of the six respondent companies used a numbering system that also corresponded to the priority they would use to contact the candidates for an interview. Candidate resumes that had the highest numbers were placed in an inactive file and were not called for interviews. Over 80% of the resumes in the inactive files belonged to veterans.

The *resume review and communication* theme aligned with the body of literature and is associated with both conceptual framework theories, recruitment theory and human capital theory. Recruitment theory focuses on the methods and means of business leaders to acquire skilled workers for organizational fit (Dunlap, 2014; Dunnette, 1976).

Human capital theory focuses on business leaders next echelon thinking of not only hiring to fill a position now, but to also the investment and return from candidates (Nixon et al., 2012). Hiring employees and retaining workers are key strategies for a business to sustain (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). The procedures for business leaders include reviewing the applications and resumes of potential candidates.

Recruitment focuses on the business leader's ability to hire qualified applicants. The experiences and knowledge of business leaders serve as a catalyst for selecting qualified, skilled workers (Hyytinen et al., 2015). Communication and training are key factors that business leaders review when selecting candidates (Arendt & Sapp, 2014; Smith, 2014). The hiring process in terms of acquiring military veterans as skilled workers includes using various methods to find qualified candidates with the intent of ensuring quality and the lowest cost (Blatter et al., 2012).

The historical body of supporting literature for this study included information on reviewing resumes to find qualified candidates. Arendt and Sapp (2014) suggested that business leaders utilize resumes to acquire military veteran applicants to establish a pool of candidates that may benefit the business. Employee retention and turnover are associated with the hiring approaches of business leaders, which include resume review and qualification synchronization (Takatsuka, 2011).

Arendt and Sapp (2014) indicated that detailed resume review results in an amplified number of qualified candidates, which could result in productive employees. Information provided by the resume serves as a guide for business leaders to collect details about potential candidates. According to Arendt and Sapp, the resume aids hiring

managers with obtaining useful information on the applicants. Furthermore, based on the credentials required to fill positions, the resume is the point of entry to determining if a candidate has the necessary skills to fit into the organizational culture. Within this case study, the data collected revealed that business leaders that participated in the study used resume review as a strategy to acquire military veteran employees.

The body of literature supports the theme of resume review and communication barriers between possible veteran hires and employers. In this section of the findings, I focused on the literature regarding communication and understanding of veteran qualifications. The purpose of the TAP is to assist both veterans and business leaders in the process of employment (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Hall et al. (2014) highlighted that Federal Departments identified the communication disconnect and implemented programs and strategies to mitigate this concern. Government agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs offer websites with training and information to assist business leaders and their staff with understanding veteran qualifications (Ruh et al., 2009).

Business owners choose different methods for selecting military veterans. Resume review and selection is one procedure business leaders use in order to find candidates (Hall et al., 2014). Resumes may be obtained directly from the candidate, from a transition coordinator, or from an online platform such as LinkedIn. These methods assist business leaders with gathering detailed information about veteran work experience as it relates to the job description and requirements (Hall et al., 2014).

A traditionally initial resume review is conducted without the candidate being present. The resume determines if a candidate is called for an interview or is passed over due to a lack of communication (Arendt & Sapp 2014). Veterans often display their work history, abilities, and qualifications in military terms through their experience while they were serving (Hall et al., 2014). There was a strong connection to this theme from the participants during the interview process.

The second main theme identified supplementary strategies used by business leaders to hire military veterans for organizational fit. Within this theme, the respondents identified the significance of crucial factors as a method for acquiring the best applicant for the job. I found that business leaders actively attempting to hire veterans that fit into the organization understand the services of the organization, understand military transition programs, have some knowledge of military occupations, and have the ability to decipher military jargon. In support of employing strategies for resume review business leaders should have the ability, desire, and resources to research unfamiliar military qualifications.

Theme 3: Accommodations and Benefits

Theme 3 revealed business owners should be registered with TAP to gain an understanding of the accommodations and benefits associated with hiring veterans. Employers with the knowledge of how to properly transition veterans into the civilian workforce have a higher success rate of hiring and retaining veterans. Resume interpretation is not the only challenge facing business leaders and transitioning veterans.

Other challenges employers caution due to stigmas associated with PTSD, military life style transition, being called back to military service (King, 2012; Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). Acknowledging this stigma, it is important for business owners to know the facts concerning transitioning veterans as well as available resources.

Involvement and education can better prepare business owners for vetting and hiring veterans (Hall et al., 2014; Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The responses of the participants and the body of literature supported this theme.

The recruitment theory concept can be viewed in this theme in the manner of screening for transitioning military veterans applies to this theme. Business leaders want to acquire the best candidate based on the needs of the company (Dunlap, 2014). Hiring managers prejudging veterans based on stigma may overlook highly skilled veteran based on deployments. Business owners want to recruit mentally sound, self-motivating, stable employees. Generalizing transitioning veteran under the stigma often doesn't allow them to do so. Recruitment strategies and techniques play a vital role in the process of hiring transitioning veterans.

The human capital theory concept is also displayed in this theme concerning the investment in a potential employee. Business leaders may be over cautious when considering veterans for employment (Tsai & Rosenheck, 2013). The possible additional cost associated with stigma may outweigh the benefit of hiring skilled veterans (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Veterans with certain conditions may require additional accommodations; however, the government often supplements business leaders who

accept these challenges. Hiring managers who pass on transitioning veterans often pass up a win-win situation for their business.

The participant's responses to the interview questions determined that while some business leaders enjoy the benefits of hiring veterans others avoid doing so due to various stigma. Respondent P2 stated, "all of our veteran employees have one deployment or less." P2 went on to say "it is part of our screening criteria to ask about the number of deployments for veterans." Respondent P2 concluded by saying "we would rather not hire veterans with issues." Respondent P3 also stated, "we hired a veteran that had multiple deployments he was a great worker but rigid without much initiative or conversation."

Respondent P3 also noted that they maintain enough veterans to qualify for government incentives. P5 noted that they avoid going over a certain percentage of veterans due to call backs from the military. P5 noted that "we are still required to hold their position until they return." P6 stated "after the recent shootings by veterans aired on the news we adjusted our screening process." P6 also noted that they also have a duty to make sure their employees and customers.

In comparison to the other respondents P1 and P4 describes different approaches in regards to making accommodations, addressing stigma, and benefits associated with veterans. Respondent P1 noted that "we have an open conversation with our veterans and ask if there are any accommodations that they may need." Respondent P1 continued and noted that almost half of their employees were veterans. Respondent P4 stated that following up with your veteran employees was very important in their transition from

military to civilian employment. P4 added “using the transition program has helped with finding great veteran employees and resources, we have not experienced any issues.”

My review of the archived resume and application files revealed that applicants were ranked in a similar fashion as the resume theme previously discussed. Forty percent of the veteran applicants that were called for interviews were recategorized and given a lower priority for hire after speaking with hiring managers during the interview. The number of deployments and possible accommodations needed for veterans was the discriminating factor. Sixty percent of the veterans with two deployments or more were also placed in the inactive file after an interview.

During the veteran selection process, I learned business leaders and hiring managers have different methods of screening candidates. Business leaders should evaluate candidates on their skills and ability to complete job requirements not their number of deployments. Some of the company guidance suggests that hiring managers ask veterans additional questions about their combat tours. The screening process used is proof that the stigma and lack of resources, knowledge is evident in business leaders. Company documents correlate with the stigma and indicated that candidates with more than two deployments were rarely hired.

The participants shared a common response focused on asking veteran candidates if they were deployed. All veterans who answered yes to being deployed were asked follow up questions to determine the number of deployments and the intensity. Business leaders prefer to hire a *safer* choice of transitioning veteran. Respondent P2 added to this theme by noting “hiring veterans can be risky,” if that person has an episode, “we will

have to find someone else” this increases time, resources and cost associated with hiring veterans. Respondent P6 noted that veterans that have an emotional event while working “causes an anxious environment” this can also lead to employee turnover, hiring new personnel, and overall cost to the business.

The respondent’s answers to interview questions were based on information obtained from veteran resumes; however, an important strategy is having the appropriate agencies and resources to properly assess a potential employee. Knowledge of transition programs an important tool needed for hiring transitioning veterans (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Transition programs help business leaders by providing an additional filter and liaison to gain skilled workers, a competitive advantage, and maintain business goals.

Applications to Professional Practice

During the data analysis process, three themes emerged. The six hiring managers and business leaders who I interviewed used these themes as strategies when hiring military veterans. At the conclusion of my research, it was evident that business leaders needed strategies to target, pool, understand, hire, and properly accommodate skilled transitioning veterans into their organizations. The findings of the research were significant to professional business practices in various ways.

Employing veterans with a baseline of skills or specific backgrounds require strategies for locating and selecting these employees. The emphasis on hiring skilled employees impacts businesses because leaders can build on the abilities of individuals to enhance their skills. Employing veterans help business leaders with gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage. The findings in this study can assist business

leaders with developing methods for selecting skilled veterans that properly fit into their organizational culture.

The findings within this study uncovered the views of hiring managers and business leaders within six companies in Fayetteville North Carolina. These business leaders discussed best practices and strategies used to hire transitioning veterans for organizational fit. Business leaders who are attempting to acquire skilled veterans require information on programs and how these strategies affect their company.

Although traditional hiring methods include creating job descriptions, resume review, and interview procedures business leaders specified these strategies as sound methods for selecting veterans. In addition, during my literature review I found writings from scholars on these methods. For example, Hall et al. (2014) determined that business leaders use resumes to determine if a veteran candidate will be a proper fit for the company. Additionally, specific programs and resources have been created to assist business leaders and veterans with civilian employment (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Using strategies to hire veteran workers without regard to resume review, interview questioning, transition coordinator, or veteran workshops and job fairs, business leaders must comprehend how these methods impact the competitive advantage their business. The strategies used by business leaders should equate to a skilled pool of veteran candidates. Since the Fayetteville, North Carolina area is saturated with military veterans, business leaders acknowledged the importance of understanding a baseline of terminology used when communicating with veterans.

When reviewing resumes, the methods could include using key words from the descriptions, using military equivalent terminology, or transition search engines to acquire veteran workers. Once business leaders determine a pool of candidates to interview, asking about their combat experiences and skills is another strategy used by business leaders. For example, when a candidate states they have been deployed business leaders ask additional questions to determine if they qualify, organizational fit and possible accommodations needed.

Under the accommodation and benefits theme, business leaders should be informed and have resources available to understand and develop hiring strategies. The findings of this theme are comparative recruitment theory and indicate hiring managers need strategies to acquire the most qualified veterans (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Since business leaders influence the hiring process (Harrell & Berglass, 2012), investing in the best candidates is vital for organizational goals. P1 indicated that he attends workshops on military posts has a conversation with potential veteran employees to ensure he is hiring the best candidate for organizational fit.

The recruiting process gives business leaders the opportunity to target and hire skilled veterans who will work towards the goals of the company and be a catalyst (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). A paradigm shift of thinking for business leaders could include using additional strategies and resources for hiring veterans. In order to hire the most skilled and qualified veteran, having knowledge of transition programs and resources is a requirement. Therefore, TAPs as a recruitment strategy could be a method for acquiring veteran as part of the hiring process (Ghee et al., 2015). The findings also

relate to human capital theory because business leaders should make sound investment when determining which veteran to hire as well as the strategy to gain a competitive advantage (Arendt & Sapp, 2014; Hall et al., 2014).

The data from the respondents and company documents presented strategies for hiring veteran employees that could help business leaders various ways. The findings of the study were constructed and connected to the literature review. The study findings could improve company procedures by providing current and future hiring professionals with hiring strategies.

To achieve the strategies illustrated within the themes business leaders must adapt and support new initiatives for engaging members of their company concerning new and perspective hires. Business leaders may review (a) job descriptions and military transition workshops, (b) resume review and communication procedures, and (c) current facts and available accommodations and implement strategies using these themes to employ transitioning veterans for organizational fit. When vacancies are filled with talented and skilled military veterans in a positive, accommodating organizational culture the chances of gaining a competitive advantage increases significantly (Hall et al., 2014).

Implications for Social Change

Business owners utilize the expertise, recruitment, and personnel talent management of managers to acquire veteran's (Hall et al., 2014). Hiring veterans to fill positions serves as an important function of gaining and maintain high quality performance and retention within a business (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Hiring managers may reduce organizational cost by using TAPs as effective hiring strategies (Takatsuka,

2011). Improper hiring techniques increase business cost due to employee turnover (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The results of this study (a) job descriptions and workshops, (b) resume review and communication, and (c) accommodations and benefits offer business leaders a synopsis of present strategies used by other leaders to hire veterans for organizational fit and gain a competitive advantage.

Hiring hardworking, motivated, qualified, and efficient workers is beneficial for business leaders. Qualified and motivated workers remain with businesses for longer periods of time (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). The need to fill positions can impact organizational hiring practices. Arendt and Sapp (2014) determined that business leaders employ strategies to hire veterans based on job requirements and organizational fit.

The inadequate hiring of employees increases the direct cost for a business (Blatter et al., 2012). Direct cost includes recruitment, training, and education for new employees (Brænder & Andersen, 2013). Hiring managers must make effective hiring decisions to maintain competitive advantage (Arendt & Sapp, 2014).

The findings of this study may contribute to social change by addressing hiring challenges faced by small business owners, military veterans, and our society as they are interdependent. When business leaders obtain insight into effective veteran hiring strategies, the results include successfully hiring skilled workers, decreasing the veteran unemployment rate, and saving taxpayer dollars. When business leaders understand the strategies needed for hiring skilled veterans for organizational fit, hiring costs and challenges, decrease while the business reputation increases within the community. When business leaders hire veterans, the business may sustain progression in the community

and contribute to the success and wellbeing of the employees, families, communities, economy and overall outlook of veterans transitioning from military service.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose this qualitative multiple case study was to research the strategies of business leaders to hire veterans that fit into the organization. Business leaders require detailed criteria and strategies to hire skilled veterans at lower cost to maintain a competitive advantage (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Present and future business leaders should consider the findings of this study as an approach to gather the significance of job descriptions and transition workshops, reviewing resumes and communication practices, and using transition programs and accommodations.

I recommend business owners in the Fayetteville, North Carolina area pay close attention to the results and share them with other leaders. I will provide the contributors with information about the findings. If possible, I will publish these results using platforms such as seminars, training, and lectures. I will also inform the contributors of the publication of this doctoral study. My final recommendation is for business leaders outside of Fayetteville, North Carolina to also pay attention to the results and findings.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this qualitative study was on business leaders with experience implementing strategies to hire veterans for organizational fit. The population consisted of six small businesses where at least 20% of the employees were veterans. The primary limitation was the singular geographic location of the participants. Limitations are potential shortfalls of the study that are beyond the researcher's control (Rubin & Rubin,

2012). An additional limitation of this study was that the study focused solely on small businesses and may only be applicable to similarly structured organizations which may limit the implementation of the strategies found on a larger scale (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Recommendations for further study include a study involving small businesses in other geographic locations with military posts. Because military veterans relocate away from military posts, future researchers should explore geographic locations with no military posts that have a population of unemployed veterans who have returned home. Another recommendation for further research is to include larger businesses.

Data saturation was achieved after interviewing the six participants in this study. Data saturation involves continually adding new participants while still obtaining the same patterns of information creating redundant data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I also recommend a study based in different locations outside of the Fayetteville, North Carolina area with military posts. To complete this study, I used the qualitative multiple case study design. Researchers could use other designs and methodologies on veteran hiring strategies for further research.

Reflections

While going through the doctoral process, I immediately realized that this was a very challenging yet worthwhile experience. Numerous obstacles and barriers presented themselves during this process. While in this process, I gained knowledge about veteran hiring strategies in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I used the interview questions (Appendix A) and I dismissed any bias within prior to the interviews. Additionally, I had no knowledge or prior experience of the selected company practices where the participants'

locations. This allowed me to stay open and control reactions to the participant's responses.

I have adjusted my views concerning veteran hiring strategies since interviewing the participants. The additional challenges and considerations they discussed have assisted me with gaining a better understanding and new found respect for the participants. I felt informed by the results of the study and gained additional knowledge from the findings. I felt accomplished by contributing new understanding of the body of literature on this topic.

Summary and Study Conclusions

I achieved data saturation when no additional data, themes, or information emerged (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies of business leaders to hire skilled veterans for organizational fit. In order to collect the data, I used methodical triangulation of multiple sources for data collection and gathering. I used semistructured interviews to collect my data. I used member checking to fortify the reliability of interpretations of the participants' answers. The secondary data consisted of company documents on recruiting, interviewing, and organizational culture (Eckstein, n.d.).

After the collection process, I transcribed, analyzed, and coded the information until themes emerged. The themes linked to the company documents, the existing body of literature, and the conceptual frameworks recruitment theory and human capital theory. The findings were detailed and the three themes included (a) job description and transition workshops, (b) resume review and communication, and (c) accommodations

and benefits are vital to the successful hiring of veteran employees, and increasing competitive advantage.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

- I. Introduce self to the participant(s).
- II. Present consent form, go over contents, answer questions and concerns of participant(s).
- III. Give participant copy of consent form.
- IV. Turn on the audio recording device.
- V. Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym and coded identification; note the date and time.
- VI. Begin interview with question #1; follow through to the final question.
- VII. Follow up with additional questions and collect company documents.
- VIII. End interview sequence; discuss member checking with participant(s).
- IX. Thank the participant(s) for their part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for follow up questions and concerns from participants.
- X. End protocol.

Interview Questions

The following interview questions are for this qualitative case study. Question 1 is the initial research question. Questions 2-7 focuses on expectations and accommodations of the business owners as it relates to military veterans. Question 8 is to ensure depth of interview.

1. What strategies do you employ to recruit military veterans?
2. What benefits does the hiring of military veterans bring to your business?

3. How do the costs associated with hiring a military veteran differ from hiring civilians?
4. What methods do you use to equate military training to match business job requirements?
5. What skills and experiences do you expect veterans to have before transitioning into civilian jobs?
6. What type of training do you provide to military veterans after hiring them?
7. What accommodations do you provide for military veterans that might differ from civilian hire?
8. Is there any additional information related to this topic that you would like to share?