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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITIONING FROM A SENIOR MILITARY LEADER TO A
CIVILIAN LEADER

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Wallace (Mike) Mains

October, 2023

Laura Hyatt, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Wallace (Mike) Mains

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my children and fellow military leaders. Specifically, my two beautiful daughters, 16-year-old Launa and my 9-year-old Madison. I have sacrificed a lot of time with you in achieving my doctorate and want to thank you for your patience and understanding in me accomplishing this long- lasting goal of completing my doctorate in education. Additionally, I want to also thank my incredible fiancée, Marilyn Sanchez. Thank you for your encouragement and motivation in completing this journey. You have been instrumental in me crossing this finish line. Last, I would like to thank my military veteran leaders who have paved the way before me. You instilled the discipline in me to complete this arduous task. Without your mentorship, I would not have persevered.

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this qualitative study was to explore how senior military veteran leaders (SMVLs) employed Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to building a learning organization. The study investigated strategies for SMVLs to use after their transition from the military into civilian leadership roles. Senge's (1990) five learning disciplines of personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking are utilized as the theoretical framework. The researcher employed qualitative research by examining SMVL narratives. The researcher examined nonhuman subjects to ensure anonymity. Narratives were located from numerous publicly accessible data sources (published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media) to ensure diversity. These five core disciplines have been incorporated into many organizations worldwide with much success. Organizations such as Ford, Hewlett-Packard, British Petroleum, Harley Davidson, and Intel showed positive results by incorporating Senge's core disciplines (Senge, 1990).

This study identified leadership strategies for transitioning from a SMVL to a civilian leader by utilizing Senge's (1990) five core disciplines. The five primary themes emerged as 12 significant subthemes as being utilized by most of the SMVLs studied within their civilian organization. First, systems thinking strategies include looking at the big picture, examining interrelationships, and considering long- and short-term consequences of actions. Second, personal mastery strategies include continuously increasing their own and other's capabilities and having insight of self-knowledge and understanding. Third, mental model strategies include being aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions; and having the capability to reflect on those actions. Fourth, shared vision strategies include creating an image of the desired future, and outlining the organization's governing ideas,

core values, and purpose. Fifth, team learning strategies include aligning the skills and capacities of teams to create the desired results and cultivating a collective desire to create something new.

Further research of additional veteran groups could provide additional leadership strategies for veterans transitioning into civilian leadership roles. Additionally, service members worldwide could also benefit from future studies. Last, a mixed -method or quantitative study could explore a larger number of veterans, which could generate crucial additional data.

Chapter 1: Strategies for Transitioning From a Military Leader to a Civilian Leader

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has approximately 1.4 million service members within the four military services, with roughly 200,000 service members who transition out of the military every year and reenter their civilian community (Derefinko et al., 2018). Most service members experience a successful reentry, but some veterans struggle with their transition. Most veterans serve their country honorably but may have a difficult transition back to civilian status. The significance of this problem is that veterans risk their lives and place hardships on their families so that they can protect this country, then reenter into their communities where they face a different psychological battle, the conflict of becoming a leader within the civilian world. Studies have illuminated “high rates of veteran dissatisfaction with respect to their reentry into civilian life as well as disproportionate rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and alcohol/substance abuse” (Schreger & Kimble, 2017, p. 12). Shifting from a military culture into civilian employment is often complicated, prolonged, and usually upsetting (Storlie, 2010).

U.S. service members receive incredible leadership training while serving in the military. Each military branch has its own leadership academies that have created some of America’s best leaders. As a result, the U.S. military produced 31 out of 46 U.S. Presidents (DeSimone, 2021). Additionally, data show that the median duration of a CEO in the private sector with a military background is 7.2 years compared to a nonmilitary CEO which is 4.6 years (Sharma, 2014). The focus of this study is to explore Senge’s principles to building a learning organization to mitigate the struggle and increase the success for senior military leaders transitioning into a civilian leadership position.

Background

Although stories of great leaders have been around for centuries, leadership studies were rare until 1841, when the Great Man theory claimed that specific people, exclusively men, were created by God to bring the leadership required to further human life (Spector, 2015). Today there are many leadership theories and programs within academia. The study of leadership is complex because of the various leadership theories that can be employed. Scholars study leadership and how certain leadership traits, skills, and theories impact organizational performance. Leadership studies did not even exist in higher education until 1992, when the University of Richmond offered a degree in Leadership Studies (Riggio et al., 2003). Leadership studies, in reference to academe, have just begun (Hackman et al., 1999).

The Constructivism theory in education hypothesizes that people do not obtain knowledge and comprehension by inertly observing it within a direct process of knowledge transmission; instead, people construct new perceptions and comprehension through social discourse and their experiences incorporating added information with what they already know (Schreiber & Valle, 2013).

Constructivism is linked to the research of Jean Piaget who formulated his theory of cognitive development. Piaget focused on how people comprehend meaning as related to their experiences and ideas and focused on human development as to what is happening with an individual instead of development affected by others (Piaget, 1972). Cognitive learning theories concentrate on how learning is developed through mental processes, as well as attention, memory, insight, language, and thought (Hofmann & Asmundson, 2017). Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky established the Social Constructivism theory, which considers that individuals are working participants in the creation of their own understanding (Schreiber & Valle, 2013).

Leadership theories explored in this study include the Leadership Traits theory, which scholars began examining in the 1940s. During the 1940s, researchers at The Ohio State University examined specific leadership skills and traits that effective leaders possessed. Stogdill (1948) showed that effective leaders displayed certain leadership traits that successful leaders possessed, including having awareness, displaying self-confidence, being alert to their surroundings, taking initiative, and having intelligence. All were key to being a successful leader. Katz (1955) showed how successful leaders encompassed three basic administrator/leadership skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Mann (1959) continued to examine leadership and identified leadership traits and characteristics that included displaying masculinity and being dominant along with being conservative. Possessing intelligence and being an extravert were also key characteristics of great leaders. Stogdill's leadership traits and characteristics were modified in 1974, which added great leaders possessing a record of achievement, along with being cooperative and displaying influence on others as well as tolerance (Stogdill, 1974). During the 1980s, the leadership traits and characteristics of being dominant, intelligent, and displaying masculinity were viewed as essential (Lord et al., 1986).

Furthermore, the Behavioral Leadership Approach theory was founded from Stogdill's (1948) work that examined the actions of a leader's behavior toward their followers, which separated itself from the Trait Approach theory that emphasized a leader's personality characteristics along with the Leadership Skill's Approach theory that called attention to a leader's capabilities.

During the early 1960s, Blake and Mouton (1964) studied how leaders utilized task and relationship behaviors within an organization. The Situational Leadership theory was founded by Hersey and Blanchard (1969a), which emphasized that there is no leadership theory that can be

applied to every situation. Meaning that there is no best leadership theory that works in every situation. Successful leaders adapt their leadership style to the ability and willingness of the follower/followers. Different situations require leaders to direct and support those they oversee, depending on their follower/follower's competence and motivation to complete an assigned task. Likewise, a leader's actions are determined by the performance of their followers, as identified by House (1971). For example, with the Path-Goal theory, a leader's behavior is modified based upon the inspiration, performance, and satisfaction of their followers. In House's (1996) revised edition of the Path-Goal theory, leaders also enhance their followers' skills by adjusting for their weaknesses. In addition, the Leader-Member Exchange Theory identifies how a leader's and followers' characteristics along with their interpersonal relationship, work setting, cultural attributes, and consequences impact performance (Dulebohn et al., 2011).

The primary focus of the study and the theoretical framework is based on Senge's five learning principles of building a learning organization. Senge (1990) described how leaders can employ principles to mitigate learning disabilities that can reduce productivity and organizational success. Success for any leader is determined on the skills and attitude of their followers. Building a learning organization is the key to being a successful leader, producing intelligent and loyal followers, and achieving organizational success with continuous improvement.

Statement of the Problem

Although there has been an increased focus on veteran populations in research, substantial gaps continue (Elnitsky & Kilmer, 2017). Most studies of U.S. military veterans in transition concentrate mostly on junior enlisted or noncommissioned officer populations (Biniecki & Berg, 2020). Scholarly creation has been vague in reference to veterans transitioning out of the military, specifically veteran's rank and area of service (M. L. Anderson & Goodman,

2014). This vagueness could be caused by the lack of comprehension of the diversity that exists within the military and how the military works (Biniecki & Berg, 2020). Even though scholars are beginning to examine the diversity and gender within veteran populations (Berg & Rousseau, 2018), the trend to standardize veterans and their experiences remains. The veteran transition literature concentrates on veterans transitioning to undergraduate higher education (Alschuler & Yarab, 2018; Steele et al., 2018).

Senior veteran leaders are a distinct group (Vance, 2015). Senior military officer leaders are classified at the rank of O-3 or higher within the Army, Air Force, and Marines. Both senior enlisted and officer leaders encounter comparable transition obstacles, for example the large culture shock of going from a regimented military work environment into civilian education (Giardello & Appel, 2019). The senior military leader is an adult learner who is transitioning into not only postretirement, but transitioning into a new civilian career, which combines the radical feeling of retirement from the current occupation, and a mid-life occupation change. Some individuals who are transitioning from a new career are proactive in their commitment to learning new skills by seizing opportunities for learning and development, while others see themselves to be limited by their conditions, which can result in withdrawal from learning and development (Bimrose et al., 2008).

The identity of a person is everything, especially a senior military leader. A person's identity is individual and social, as they discover people within the world and negotiate relations with them (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Vital identities are constructed from people at work that affect a person's idea of how they feel about their work, connection to their job, and occupational culture. Shared identities at work come from feeling a sense of belonging (Tajfel, 1981). Roncoroni and Springer (2019) reported for a veteran to resolve their identity crisis, they must

understand that reintegration into the civilian world is a process that requires a change that happens from the inside out. “How you think in your head and feel in your heart must evolve before you can connect on an emotional level to inspire others as a veteran leader in society” (p. 35). Most organizations’ employees work in various teams, such as a particular department or project. Successful team members influence the construction and distribution of work that creates their sense of pride in belonging to a particular group (Garrick, 1998; Jones, 1990). Therefore, it is crucial for the veteran leader to understand the culture of their civilian organization and what leadership styles are required to maximize their team’s performance and morale.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore Senge’s (1990) core disciplines to build a learning organization for senior military leaders transitioning into civilian leadership positions. The study examines Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline*, as a strategy for veterans creating a learning organization. Even though there are studies and strategies on how veterans’ transition successfully into the civilian workforce, there is a lack of literature on how senior military leaders make the transition into civilian leadership positions. By examining various leadership theories along with Senge’s five disciplines of creating a learning organization, senior military leaders will be more informed and prepared for making their transition into civilian leadership positions despite the cultural and leadership differences that exist between the two.

Theoretical Framework

Senge’s (1990) core disciplines to building a learning organization provided the theoretical framework for this research study. An examination of scholarly literature reinforced the framework for this study with numerous scholars supporting Senge’s (1990) core disciplines

to building a learning organization, which include systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.

Senge's (1990) *The Fifth Discipline* adopted the principles of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team building as a strategy to identify and increase patterns of thinking, to incorporate collective actions, and to facilitate continuous learning to achieve the results desired. Additionally, Senge (1990) described how organizations can eliminate learning disabilities within their organization by adopting and incorporating the strategies of building a learning organization in which patterns of thinking are encouraged along with collective ambitions being liberated. By adopting Senge's (1990) principles for building a learning organization, leaders and their followers become aligned to create the results they truly desire faster than their competition; therefore, creating a win-win situation for leaders, followers, and the entire organization.

An extensive review of Senge's (1990) five disciplines to building a learning organization was conducted. The research identified many well-known organizations utilizing Senge's (1990) learning principles, such as British Petroleum that had trained more than 5,000 of its leaders during a 4-day training program on mental models and personal mastery. Consequently, the British Petroleum leaders appreciated the training and found it useful. "Harley Davidson likewise made changes in management structures, they implemented a radically different top management structure—in part to make working with mental models' part of managerial work" (Senge, 1990, p. 175). The new mental models training for Harley Davidson resulted in leaders acquiring strong listening, communicating, and influencing skills. Shell also incorporated training to alter its management's shared mental models of the organization, as well as its market and competition, thus creating institutional learning.

An extensive review of literature also showed numerous scholars who supported elements of Senge's (1990) five disciplines to building a learning organization. Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing systems thinking includes Ackoff (1979), Allenby (2009), V. Anderson and Johnson (1997), Aristotle (ca. 350/1924), Bertalanffy (1984), Dutta (2017), Gharajedaghi (2011), Haidekker (2013), Higgins (2013). Kunz et al. (2013), Lewis (2008), O'Connor and McDermott (1997), G. P. Richardson (2003), Schaveling and Bryan (2017), Stacey (2010), Walker and Salt (2006), and Wright and Meadows (2009).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing personal mastery includes Badaracco (1992), Bandura (1997), Bouilloud et al. (2017), Brown (2017), Cook (1986), Foucault et al. (2019), Fritz (1989), Grojean et al. (2004), Hackett and Wang (2012), Klein (2002), Kouzes and Posner (2012), Kumar (2017), Laver et al. (2017), Masuda et al. (2010), Palanski and Yammarino (2007), J. M. Richardson (1982), Schwartz et al. (2005), Stangis and Kruschwitz (2011), Wilson (2002), and Yoeli and Berkovich (2010).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing mental models includes Aguilar (2020), Argyris (1982), Argyris et al. (1985), B. Cohen and Murphy (1984), Griffin (2015), Jagacinski and Miller (1978), Johnson-Laird (1983), Park and Gittelman (1995), Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), Senge et al. (1994), Taylor (2015), and Toffler (1970).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing a shared vision include Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Kouzes and Posner (2012).

Scholarly support for organizations utilizing team learning includes Bonebright (2010), Edmondson (1999), Goh (2003), Hawkins (1994), Pearn et al. (1995), Pedler et al. (1997), Rowley and Gibbs (2008), and Savelsbergh and Storm (2012). This research explores how U.S. military veteran leaders within civilian leadership positions utilized Senge's (1990) five learning

disciplines to building a learning organization, along with examining the success or failure of implementing the learning disciplines.

Research Questions

- What are the strategies for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader?

Subquestions:

- What are the leadership strategies for systems thinking?
- What are leadership strategies for personal mastery?
- What are the leadership strategies for mental models?
- What are the leadership strategies for shared vision?
- What are the leadership strategies for team learning?

Methods

This study utilizes the qualitative approach to explore the answers to the research questions. Kumar (2014) explained that quantitative research,

...follows an open, flexible, and unstructured approach to enquiry; aims to explore diversity rather than to quantify; emphasizes the description and narration of feelings, perceptions, and experiences rather than their measurement; and communicates findings in a descriptive and narrative rather than analytical manner, placing no or less emphasis on generalizations. (p. 14)

Narrative inquiry supports a method to uncover both civilian and military leadership approaches within the study and are in alignment to the traits of leaders explored throughout the vast review of civilian and military leadership literature.

This study utilizes Senge's (1990) five core disciplines for building a learning organization as the foundation to investigate leadership approaches for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader?

Ethical Considerations

Researchers have a duty to act in an ethical manner as a result of gathering data and writing about people. The research will not involve the participation of human subjects, nor will data be collected from the individual (SMVL). Although, data will be collected from publicly accessed databases. Therefore, to protect the identity of senior military leaders studied, precautions have been implemented to protect their identity using Punch's (2013) ethical guidelines for conducting research. The guidelines include:

- Duties: What are my duties as conducting research to ensure that I am doing the right thing. Have there been any errors made while conducting the research whether made deliberately or because of neglect. If so, how can these errors be corrected?
- Consequences: How does each course of action by the researcher affect individuals or the organizations studied? What are the potential risk and benefits of each course of action?
- Virtues: How would a researcher with integrity act in this position? Is the researcher performing their duties morally? What values does the researcher want to manifest?

By incorporating Punch's (2013) ethical guidelines, the researcher ensures the privacy of all senior military leaders who are studied by maintaining anonymity for all individuals for whom data are collected. The researcher does not include the names or titles of senior military leaders who are studied. Additionally, the name of the senior military leader's organizations and employees are obscured to prevent identification of the individuals and their organization.

To ensure anonymity is present, the researcher will conceal all acquired data by designating a number to all the studied SMVL. For instance, the first SMVL will be designated as SMVL1. The second SMVL source will be designated as SMVL2. The third SMVL studied will be designated as SMVL3, and so forth.

Assumptions and Limitations

This portion of the study considers the main assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

The significant assumptions are:

- A qualitative method of research is suitable for senior military leaders transitioning into civilian leadership positions.
- Studied senior military leaders who have successfully made the transition into civilian leadership positions have produced positive outcomes for their organizations and employees under their charge.

Roberts and Hyatt (2018) reported, “It is imperative that you not try to generalize the findings from your population to other populations or settings. Instead, make reference to this situation in the limitations section of your dissertation” (p. 41). The researcher identified the following limitations of the study:

- Studied senior veteran leaders were enlisted or commissioned in the U.S. armed forces. Therefore, the findings of the study could contain a preconceived opinion of the United States military.
- A variety of differences within each military branch and the civilian organizations into which they transitioned.
- Last, the study includes a narrow amount of resources. Thus, not considered generalizable.

Significance of the Study

The United States military has been around for hundreds of years, some branches were founded even before the United States gained its independence from the Great Britain in 1776. For example, the United States Army was founded by the Continental Congress June 14, 1775 (U.S. Army, n.d.). Additionally, the United States Marine Corps was founded November 10, 1775 (U.S. Marine Corps, n.d.). Since the founding of the United States military, service members have had to make the transition from a military culture back to a civilian culture. Although the United States military provides exceptional training and leadership, the culture and leadership style between military leaders transitioning out of the service and civilian workplace leadership can be drastically different.

Each year, approximately a quarter of a million service members shift occupations from the military into the civilian workforce; most service members are not prepared for the challenges of their new identity and culture that awaits them in the civilian workplace (Louis, 2019). This is especially true for senior military leaders who are accustomed to their followers carrying out orders with respect and have an expectation of meeting a standard or code established. For example, the U.S. military has a rank structure in place to ensure respect for authority and compliance with orders. Service members are required to salute officers who are of a higher rank. Compliance with orders is reinforced with the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. Active duty service members who do not execute lawful orders given by their superiors are subject to being court martialed. Punishment can include fines, demotion in rank, imprisonment, and a dishonorable discharge from the military. These examples of respect and compliance are methods in which military leaders accomplish their assigned missions successfully. Unfortunately, these tools do not exist in the civilian workforce. Therefore, senior military

leaders who transition to a civilian leadership position will most probably have to adjust their leadership style so that their leadership style best suits the employees within the civilian organization.

Louis (2019), a retired United States Army Lieutenant Colonel, reported that finding a new job is not the most difficult phase of the transition for a veteran, but assimilating into the new civilian culture is the most challenging phase. He wrote:

For some of you, this last phase may seem relatively insignificant. For others, it may be one of the more troublesome periods since leaving the military. For all, it will involve some amount of adjustment over a time that could well stretch into several years. With all the work you've done, it may be hard to believe, but this final step of the process—acclimating, assimilating, and contributing to your new environment—is precisely where many transition efforts fail. (p. 223)

Operational Definitions

- *Championship culture*: Championship culture refers to being able to achieve goals even during adversity. To create a championship culture, the leader must define their core values and ensure that they are rooted in their followers' actions and behavior. Standards and goals are known and kept daily by holding each other accountable to reinforce the leader's core values (Kapitulik & MacDonald, 2019).
- *Charismatic leadership*: Charismatic leadership is characterized as one who is sensitive to environmental constraints. Second, can identify deficiencies and poorly exploited opportunities. Third, is receptive to their follower's needs and skills, as well as having the capability to create an ideal vision. Fourth, possesses outstanding impression and articulation management skills that distinguish them from other

- leaders. Fifth, is innovative and unorthodox in accomplishing their vision. Sixth, employ their individual power to influence their followers (Conger & Kanungo, 1998).
- *Career Readiness Standards (CRS)*: The CRS are tangible actions of a service member's preparation for their civilian career that increases their capacity to defeat successfully challenges during their post transition goals (DOD, n.d.-a).
 - *DOD*: The largest U.S. government agency is the DOD. The DOD traces its origins to the pre-Revolutionary period. Its mission is to equip the military to avoid war and safeguard the country. The defense budget is \$752.9 billion, encompassing 4,800 locations in more than 160 countries (DOD, n.d.-b).
 - *End of Active Service (EAS)*: The EAS acronym stands for end of active service for the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard use the term End of Active Obligated Service. Both terms refer to the conclusion of the commitment to which a service member agreed.
 - *Institutional leadership*: Institutional leadership is defined by Selznick (1957) as, "From the standpoint of social systems rather than persons, organizations become infused with value as they come to symbolize the community's aspirations, its sense of identity" (p. 19).
 - *Mental models*: Mental models are how individuals comprehend the world as well as influence our thinking, comprehension, and reasoning (Senge, 1990).
 - *Personal mastery*: "Personal mastery is the phrase we use for the discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are

- continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek” (Senge, 1990, p. 131).
- *Shared vision*: A shared vision refers to the question of what a leader wants to create within an organization. A shared vision creates “a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities” (Senge, 1990, p. 192). A vision is shared once a leader and their followers have the same picture and are both dedicated to obtaining it by being bound together by their mutual desire.
 - *Systems thinking*: “Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 68).
 - *Team learning*: “Team learning is a process of aligning and developing the capacity of the team to create the results its members truly desire” (Senge, 1990, p. 218).
 - *Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS)*: The TRS, also known as The Transition Assistance Program (TAP), is a mandatory week-long training for all separating service members to prepare them and their families for their transition to civilian life. The training provides the means and resources from various agencies required to pursue the Department of Defense (DOD) directed CRS. Topics include employment, transition resources available, Veteran Affairs benefits available and how to apply for them, planning financially for the transition, and person-to-person counseling from a professional development advisor (Marine Corps Community Services, 2022).

Summary

The remainder of the study is structured into four chapters, a bibliography, and appendixes in the subsequent method. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to civilian

leadership skills, traits, and theories, as well as military leadership, training, and experience related to senior military leaders transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology of the study, containing methods utilized to collect data, procedures abided by, and details of the sample of the study are specified. An analysis of the data is given, as well as a review of the findings is disclosed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. Last, the study ends with a bibliography and appendixes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Organizational leaders are not generally born, they are made by developing their leadership skills and learning from their experiences (Kippenberger, 1997). Senge (1990) suggested five core disciplines for leaders to utilize to create a learning organization. Building learning organizations is key to being an effective leader. An effective leader generates an environment for followers to shine as an alternative to dominating them (Dyer et al., 2013). Senge's core disciplines to create leaning organizations are personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. This dissertation explores Senge's five learning disciplines to assist veterans as they transition from a senior military leader to civilian leader.

Chapter Structure

An overview of leadership theories that are pertinent to this study provides a foundation for the study. This includes the Great-Man theory, Leadership Traits theory, Leadership Skills theory, Behavioral Approach theory, Situational Leadership theory, Path-Goal theory, and Leader-Member Exchange theory. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework of Senge's (1990) theory on the five core disciplines necessary for building learning organizations. The five corps disciplines examined are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.

Literature is also included that supports Senge's (1990) core disciplines for building learning organizations. Additionally, the literature review presents a summary of required military transition training prior to exiting the military, along with exploring military leadership. Finally, a summary of Chapter 2 is provided.

An Overview of Leadership Theories

Leadership studies, within academia, is in its beginning stage (Hackman et al., 1999). A pioneer of leadership studies is Tuckman (1965), who published a literature review-based article titled “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups.” The article highlighted the two fields of group development, which are interpersonal relationships and task activity. Tuckman theorized a four-stage mode. The modes include forming, storming, norming, and performing. Successful operation at every stage of the four-stage model is required to attain effective group functioning. These four modes for developing groups became extremely popular for the next 20 years. Team development and team building increased in popularity during the 1970s and 1980s to develop and advance interpersonal processes and productivity within an organization (Bonebright, 2010). Tuckman’s model is referred to as the most widely recognized in organizational literature (Miller, 2009).

Leadership studies was not offered in higher education until 1992, when the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, located at the University of Richmond, established a degree in Leadership Studies (Riggio et al., 2003). Subsequently, universities acknowledged the need for higher education leadership development (Welch, 2000) with approximately 100 new Leadership Studies programs offered (Riggio et al., 2003). “An increasing number of studies of leadership are finding that one of the key functions of a leader is to develop goals for the organization, which includes goals for the leader and the subordinates” (Locke et al., 1990, p. 289). The field of leadership includes various theories for leaders to utilize when leading organizations.

There are many leadership theories. The leadership theories examined in this study that veterans may utilize in their civilian leadership role include Great-Man theory, Leadership Traits theory, Leadership Skills theory, Behavioral Approach theory, Situational Leadership theory,

Path-Goal theory, and Leader-Member Exchange theory. In 1840, studies on leadership were sparse until the Great Man theory.

Great Man Theory

The Great Man theory claimed certain individuals, specifically men, were sent by God to deliver the lifting needed to elevate human life (Spector, 2015). Cawthon (1996) reported that before the 20th century, the Great Man theory influenced the beliefs of those seeking to characterize effective leadership because of the general agreement that leaders lack resemblance to their followers. In addition, this theory espoused the belief that destiny or providence played a role in the course of history. Furthermore, the belief that leaders are born with natural leadership capabilities and are not created, was commonly recognized by scholars and persons trying to influence the behavior of others.

The Great Man theory evolved from Thomas Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. The text reflected on the world of heroes and methods they use to employ heroic leadership. Carlyle (1841/2013) described a form of heroism called kingship, as well as how powerful the position of a commander is over men. It described how subordinates loyally surrender themselves to their commander. Furthermore, the theory stated that commanders provide continuous practical teaching to their subordinates.

Stogdill (1981) stated that history has been influenced by the leadership of great men. Examples included that without Moses, the Jews would have never departed Egypt. In addition, the United Kingdom would not have been as successful during World War II without the leadership of Winston Churchill. Furthermore, the theory included decisions of great men such as the United States President Thomas Jefferson's choice to acquire the Louisiana Territory

(530,000 acres) in 1803 from France for a meager \$15 million. As scholars began to study great leaders, they examined the hereditary background of successful leaders.

Galton (1871) was one of the first scholars to study link between great men and their hereditary influence. Woods (1913) conducted a study of heredity leadership that included examining 14 European countries for a period of up to 800 years. The study examined 368 reigns beginning in the early 10th century and ending in the 16th century during the French Revolution. The study of hereditary leadership identified that even the brothers of kings similarly managed to become men of power and influence. Metcalf (1931) claimed that intermarriage along with survival of the fittest created a superior class that contrasted naturally from the lower classes. Therefore, leadership is directly linked to being born into the higher class. Stogdill (1981) emphasized that although there were incredible female leaders such as Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, and Joan of Arc. Females have been disregarded in the great man theory. Over time, scholars examined other factors that affected leadership such as an individual's leadership traits or skills.

Leadership Traits and Characteristics Theory

Beginning in the 1940s, leadership studies began examining specific leadership traits that successful leaders possessed. Stogdill (1948) found leadership traits such as intelligence, self-confidence, perseverance, initiative, alertness, responsibility, sociability, and awareness essential to being a great leader. In addition, Mann's (1959) leadership traits and characteristics included masculinity, conservatism, dominance, intelligence, and extraversion. Furthermore, in 1974, there were some changes to Stogdill's leadership traits and characteristics since his 1948 study. The list included persistence, sociability, responsibility, initiative, and insight. The leadership traits and characteristics added were tolerance, influence, cooperativeness, and achievement

(Stogdill, 1974). During the 1980s, scholars began to shift their focus to leadership traits and characteristics such as dominance, intelligence, and masculinity (Lord et al., 1986).

During the 1990s, scholars Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) studied how leaders having the leadership traits and characteristics of self-confidence, leadership, motivation, drive, task knowledge of the business, integrity, and cognitive ability differed from nonleaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) indicated, “Leaders do not have to be great men or women by being intellectual geniuses or omniscient prophets to succeed, but they do need to have the right stuff and this stuff is not equally present in all people” (p. 59). Zaccaro et al. (2004) presented nearly a dozen different leadership traits that effective leaders possess. The traits focused heavily on social abilities such as problem-solving, social, and emotional intelligence, self-monitoring, cognitive abilities, extraversion, motivation, emotional stability, agreeableness, and openness. Katz (2009) moved away from studying leadership traits and characteristics and focused on specific skills required to perform effectively given tasks.

Leadership Skills Theory

People for years insisted that leadership skills are inherent in select individuals. This spawned, for example, the term a natural born leader. Indeed, several people naturally have greater ability or skills while leading, but research in psychology shows that people displaying robust skills and abilities can improve their skills through training and education. Additionally, those individuals lacking innate leadership abilities also have the capacity to improve their performance and effectiveness with training and education (Katz, 1955).

Skills may be studied and are not always instinctive. The principal measure of a leader’s skillfulness is their successful action during varying conditions. As a result, Katz (1955) identified the three-skills approach for administrators, which includes technical, human, and

conceptual skills. An administrator is defined as an individual (leader) who oversees the performance of other individuals and assumes the accountability for completing specific objectives.

The three skills are:

- Technical skills—Involves specialized knowledge and skills in a particular type of action and requires certain techniques and procedures. Additionally, possessing the systematic ability pertaining to a specialty, and efficiency of the tools and techniques of a particular discipline to complete task assigned.
- Human skills—The leader's capability to operate successfully as a group member and to develop a joint effort inside their team. A leader that has highly established human skills is conscious of their own beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions. In addition, leaders possess excellent communication skills, facilitating a safe environment for all team members to communicate themselves at liberty without worry of mockery or suppression by including them in the planning and execution of the objective process.
- Conceptual skills—Having the capability to observe the organization, understanding how the numerous functions of an organization affect each other. Furthermore, leaders must have the capability to visualize the connection of their business to the industry, the economic, political, and social forces, along with the individual community and nation. Identifying the relationships between elements and comprehending how the elements affect each other during any situation allows the leader to operate in a manner that advances the prosperity of the entire organization (Katz, 2009).

Scholars also focused their leadership studies on the behavior of the leader instead of just their leader's traits or characteristics (Stogdill, 1981).

Behavioral Approach Theory

The 1940s were a time of significant importance in leadership. A collection of researchers at Ohio State University, headed by Ralph M. Stogdill, Carroll L. Shartle, and John K. Hemphill, sought to identify the behavioral signs of effective leadership (Judge et al., 2004).

While at the University of Maryland, Hemphill (1949) introduced the study of leadership behavior. Additionally, Hemphill expanded on the study of leadership behavior while joining the Ohio State Leadership Studies. Hemphill and his colleagues developed a list of the different aspects of the behavior of successful leaders. Blake and Mouton (1964) also focused on the behavior of leader; specifically, what kind of leadership behavior generates excellent organizational performance.

The result of the Ohio State studies isolated two influences:

- Consideration, the extent that a leader displays respect and concern toward their followers by ensuring their good welfare and showing how the leader is appreciative (Stogdill, 1981).
- Initiating Structure, the level to which a leader describes and manages their role along with their followers' roles. Additionally, leaders are focused on goal attainment, and institute precise patterns and networks of effective communication (Fleishman et al., 1973).

Nebeker and Mitchell (1974) reported leader behaviors enable or prevent subordinates to achieve their occupational goals. In these as well as other studies, leader behavior is practically solely deemed to be an independent variable. If the most efficient and applicable leader

behaviors are to be promoted or generated, it is essential to comprehend why leaders behave in the manner they do.

Leader's responsibilities in the behavioral approach include:

- Become familiarized with the macro and micro variables that dominate their personal behavior.
- Work with their subordinates to uncover the customized collection of behavioral contingencies that control every subordinate's behavior.
- Leader and follower mutually find methods to manage their individual behavior to facilitate teamwork and positive organizational results.

Other studies have been conducted that take into consideration not just the behavior of the leader, but followers as well. Davis and Luthans (1979) stressed that efficient analysis cannot include just the role of the leader. Therefore, followers must be just as involved in achieving organizational goals as the leader. Other than focusing on the behavior of leaders and followers, scholars began to zero in on how circumstances and the situation are linked to leadership.

Situational Leadership Theory

The Situation Leadership theory originally emerged in *Training and Development Journal* as the "Life Cycle Theory of Leadership" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969b). Since its origin in 1969, the Situational Leadership theory has endured numerous modifications, which Blanchard et al. (1993) described as changes that enhanced the original model.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969a) argued that leadership depends on the circumstances and situation. "If an individual wants to influence another person's behavior, he must first understand what motives or needs are most important to that person at that time" (p. 14). The Situational Leadership Approach is one of the most recognized theories in the field of managerial leadership

but remains among the less proven models. Although the theory has been popular within management textbooks, scholars rarely criticize the lack of empirical data for the theory. However, situational theory is less critically viewed in areas such as management education programs and in university-educator training situations (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009).

Situational Leadership Theory II Model.

Blanchard et al. (1985) originally introduced their Situational Leadership II Model in 1985 in the book *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness Through Situational Leadership*. The Situational Leadership theory II model is based on the employee's commitment and capability to achieve tasks or goals, along with the appropriate leadership utilized by the leader.

In this newer version of Situational Leadership, *Situational Leadership Theory II*, the collaboration between leader behavior and follower developmental level has been changed. The Situational Leadership II Model identifies four follower developmental levels:

- The excited novice is at a low level on competence but elevated on commitment. This follower would profit from a directive style of leadership from a leader. Specifically, the leader would provide minimal supportive behavior in combination with high directive behavior.
- The dissatisfied follower is described as having little expertise, to possessing some competence, along with a low commitment level. The follower would profit from a coaching type of leadership such as a high supportive behavior along with high directive behavior.

- The competent and careful follower, that's modest to above average on proficiency but has inconsistent devotion. Follower's gain from a supportive type of leadership, such as high supportive and low directive leadership approach.
- Self-reliant employees are committed and capable and excel from a delegation type of leadership and require minimal support and direction.

The situational leadership theory model II approach to management has been incorporated into organizations such as Union, 76, Xerox, Mobil Oil, IBM, and Caterpillar (Blanchard & Johnson, 1983) and has remained a key component for more than 400 of the *Fortune* 500 companies within their training and education curricula (Hersey et al., 1996). House et al. (1975) focused their attention on a leaders' behavior and how it directly impacts the performance, motivation, and satisfaction of their followers. The Situational Leadership theory has endured numerous modifications (e.g., Blanchard et al., 1993; Blanchard et al., 1985) and has also created a new set of prescriptive principles (Blanchard and Ken Blanchard Companies, 2007). The continued popularity of situational leadership principles is further attested by the recent amended edition of Blanchard's (2019) Situational Leadership theory text. The situational theory II model develops followers over time to facilitate them reaching their full potential.

Path-Goal Theory

The Path-Goal theory originates from the expectancy theory, which is a motivational theory (Mitchell, 1974). The expectancy theory declares that a person's mindset and behavior can be calculated from:

- Expectancy, the level to which the behavior or job outcome is heading to.
- Valences, which are the evaluation of results.

Consequently, individuals are pleased at work if they believe their actions lead to items considered highly valued. Individuals also will operate at a high level if they trust that their actions are linked to things that are extremely valued. The theoretical foundation is useful to predict a range of trends associated with leadership, for example, why leaders act certain ways, or how leader conduct affects team member's inspiration (Nebeker & Mitchell, 1974). "The Path-Goal theory is basically a functional approach to leadership, calling for a diagnosis of functions which needs to be fulfilled in subordinate's work environments for them to be motivated and perform at high levels, and be satisfied" (Schriesheim & Neider, 1996, p. 320).

House (1971) introduced his version of the Path-Goal theory that asserts a leader's behavior is subject to the motivation, satisfaction, and performance of their followers. Additionally, the leader enables, coaches, and incentives great execution. The Path-Goal theory behaviors are:

- Directive leadership: A leader who informs their followers of what actions are expected of them. Additionally, leadership provides detailed guidance on what needs to be accomplished, makes their role within the group clear, and schedules tasks to be completed while maintaining distinct standards of performance. Furthermore, the leader directs followers to adhere to rules and regulations.
- Supportive leadership: A leader who is welcoming and approachable and displays worry for the desires and morale of their team members. A leader who also makes a pleasant work environment and treats followers as equals.
- Participative leadership: A leader who discusses issues with followers, seeks their recommendations, and takes all input into consideration before determining their decisions.

- Achievement-oriented leadership: A leader who establishes difficult goals and anticipates their employee to execute at their peak level. The leader also endlessly pursues an increase in performance and exhibits conviction that their followers will accept accountability and engage in the appropriate effort to accomplish difficult goals. An achievement-oriented leader continuously stresses superiority in performance and simultaneously exhibits confidence that followers will complete task at a high standard (House et al., 1975).

The Path-Goal leadership theory is based on the following assumptions: Personal productivity is a result of an individual's motivation to operate at a certain level. The motivation of an individual is contingent upon them achieving their goals and their perception of productivity behavior as a path to the achievement of their personal goals (Georgopoulos et al., 1957). The theory is described as the person's view of how their behavior or activity, the path, is linked to an individual's results, the goals. For example, if a follower realizes that their high or low output is a path to achieving their individual goals at work, they will tend to be a high or low achiever, presuming that their demand is high, or their goal is unrestricted from barriers that may prevent them from staying on their preferred path (high or low productivity). Evans (1970) reported the Path-Goal theory is the degree to which the path is either improving or impeding the person from reaching their objectives. Jermier (1996) reported that the path-goal was the first leadership theory that compellingly identified numerous leader behaviors. Additionally, the Path-Goal theory:

- Identified four types of leader behavior (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leader), rejecting the superiority of task and relationship-oriented behaviors. Incorporated achievement and participative-oriented behaviors.

- Hypothesized the impact on motivations of individuals by shifting expectations and, furthermore, affecting the satisfactions of their individual followers that facilitated individuals to welcome their leader. Additionally, it introduced studying individualizing methods to managerial leadership.
- Accelerated the push in the direction of possible methods in organizational behavior study by discovering other variables that controlled the impacts of leader behaviors. As a result, research revealed how mixtures of situational variables controlled the impact of leader behaviors, ending the notion that leadership effects are set in stone and are simple concepts.

Path-Goal Behavior. House (1996) reported the Path-Goal theory of leadership requires:

- Leaders analyze followers' performance goals;
- Leaders analyze methods that enable subordinates to complete tasks effectively;
- Leaders analyze standards that evaluate followers' performance;
- Leaders analyze beliefs that others possess for followers; and
- Insightful utilization of followers' rewards and discipline, depending on performance.

These behaviors are described as Path-Goal clarifying behaviors in that they clarify the subordinates' path to goal achievement.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The Leader-Member Exchange theory focuses on the activity of connections between the leader and follower, unlike other theories such as leadership traits, skills, and the style approach that are centered on the view of the leader, or the Path-Goal theory and Situational Leadership theory that are focused on the follower (Dansereau et al., 1975). The leader-member exchange model has discovered methods where successful leadership processes may be achieved because

of the role taken by organizational participants. Effective leaders are cable of exerting substantial additional inspiration with their followers as well as followers with their leader. This bond transpires once a leader creates a strong bond with their followers.

The quality of the leader-member exchanges is divided into two basic categories: the in group (characterized by high trust, interaction, support, and formal/informal rewards) and the out-group (characterized by low trust, interaction, support, and rewards). The focus is on a vertical dyadic relationship, and it is argued that nearly all leaders differentiate between subordinates in this way. (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p. 621).

In an established leadership relationship, leaders and followers encounter mutual influence, and additionally, fair behavior, shared trust, admiration, liking, and internalization of joint goals (Crouch & Yetton, 1988; Duchon et al., 1986). However, relationships of leaders and followers that are not well-established are characterized by minimum stimulus, contractual behavior exchange, and sloppily connected goals (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Schiemann, 1978).

Theoretical Framework of This Study

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Senge's (1990) theory on five core disciplines to building a learning organization. Senge began his research exploring how the five corps disciplines of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning influence positive work performance of an organization.

Senge's Core Disciplines When Building a Learning Organization

Numerous organizations attempt to develop learning organizations. However, implementation is vague and is rarely based on research regarding what establishes a learning culture (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Senge provided theory for how to maximize leadership

capabilities by tapping into the full potential of people. In 1990, Senge published *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. The text has been revised and updated several times since first published, including more than 100 new pages of new information with dozens of interviews with practitioners from companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Intel, British Petroleum, Ford, Unilever, and Saudi Aramco (Senge, 1990). Senge (1990) changed the way people view their managerial performance and their worldviews. Senge's theory is that certain core disciplines are required for creating a learning organization. People are the driving force for innovation and growth within a company or organization. A leader must understand how the subconscious mind works to maximize employee performance and to enhance relationships. Senge (1990) described Systems Thinking, Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, and Team Learning, which are required to enable a learning organization.

Systems Thinking

The philosophical roots of systems thinking within Western civilization is derived in Aristotle's identification of a whole, which is something besides the parts (Aristotle ca. 350 B.C.E/1924). In the late 1700s, modern-day systems thinking was created by Thomas Malthus when he communicated his philosophy on population dynamics (G. P. Richardson, 2003). During the 1930s and 1940s, a group of scholars introduced a new concept that described a system as a collection of subsystems and deemed the collection to be part of an even bigger system. The group of scholars were engineers and scientists that transferred academic focus from comprehending the elements that consist within the system, to viewing how each element works together as a whole, creating a holistic view (Higgins, 2013). Lewis (2008) defined a system as, "a collection of parts that interact with each other to function as a whole" (p. 160). Senge (1990)

described businesses and human beings as systems that are connected by hidden interconnected events that frequently can take years to comprehend completely how each event affects one another.

System thinking can be compared to a theoretical framework and tools that have been created during the last 50 years that allow people to observe patterns that make it easier to comprehend and to make changes. An example of systems thinking is looking at ways in which people and businesses influence others who may live thousands of miles away. System thinking requires leaders to examine how daily operations, products produced, and energy to create the goods or services affect others (Senge, 1990).

Leadership must identify how elements of a system are related and how certain actions or behaviors impact each element. Even air and automobile traffic are not just about the number of planes and vehicles in operation, but instead should be viewed as systems that need to be developed or coordinated. A systems approach in today's global economy is necessary and requires complex techniques and computers that exceed the capacity of a mathematician (Bertalanffy, 1984). People who utilize systems thinking have the capacity to examine if there are any interrelated factors to a problem. Developing solutions prior to considering the whole perspective is likely to be unsuccessful (Dutta, 2017). People normally isolate what the problem is, look for causes of the problem, and provide solutions, also known as event-oriented or linear thinking. Linear thinking works well with simple tasks and when effects are singular, neither of which is realistic in today's complex socioeconomic environment that is changing so rapidly that people frequently do not see or comprehend the consequences of crucial events (Higgins, 2013).

In addition, managers could find it difficult to evaluate properly a system of which they are part. The reason is that natural scientists are focusing on a phenomenon that is unique from

themselves, whereas managers are attempting to observe objectively human behaviors and actions in which they themselves are intimately involved. This resulted in second order systems thinking being created in which managers became aware of their role as observers, while being conscious of their own frameworks and knowledge of the system (Stacey, 2010).

Furthermore, systems thinking is required in today's global economy. By utilizing systems thinking, problems and issues are observed through a system of elements. People investigate how each of these elements works together to operate as a whole (Lewis, 2008). Senge (1990) stated, "This is the human side of globalization, and it is indeed, an alien place for us. We've never been here before—and the future is watching" (p. 343). An individual or business can unintentionally create problems for each other if they are not aware of systems thinking. Leaders must have the ability to observe a system as a whole and from other viewpoints (Walker & Salt, 2006). Connections to how one system impacts another can easily be missed if the problem is not observed as a whole, how each element works together, and how changes can influence others. An example is how Australian leaders did not see the impact of constructing the Eildon Dam in 1916, followed by several extensions in 1935 and 1950. The dam was originally constructed to regulate water for farmers, which provided an abundance of irrigation water. A major issue is no one had thought of or had been paying attention to the rising level of the groundwater table, which had begun to have a negative impact on the whole system. The lower catchment area had lost 97% of its native vegetation along with a substantial rise in water infiltration as a result of irrigation (Walker & Salt, 2006).

A major break in systems thinking came by acknowledging that even if everything is contingent on everything else, everything can be grouped into two separate categories. Elements that are capable of being controlled, and elements that cannot be controlled. This discovery

facilitated the definition of the system, environment, and system boundary. The system, which comprises all the intermingling sets of variables, can be manipulated by participating actors. The environment contains variables that can affect the system's behavior, but not control it. The system boundary is a line used to divide the system to be analyzed away from everything else. A second break in systems thinking came along with the discovery that although the actions of the variables in a situation are out of control, it can be somewhat predictable (Gharajedaghi, 2011).

Being able to predict behavior somewhat allows leaders to have a proactive approach instead of not being prepared for problems creating a reactive approach to problem solving. Lewis (2008) reinforced how critical it is for leaders to anticipate systems problems, stating, "When systems only respond to problems, rather than anticipating them, it may be too late" (p. 164). When a leader embraces a systems approach, looking at the bigger picture becomes their default behavior, including analyzing the underlying synchronization among elements (Dutta, 2017).

Ackoff (1979) acknowledged that managers encounter problems that are not independent of each other but are part of a complex system that interacts with each other and are always changing. V. Anderson and Johnson (1997) reported managers globally are discovering the benefits of utilizing systems thinking. Leaders who incorporate systems thinking obtain new insight on their organizational problems. Systems thinking allows people to:

- Comprehend the structures that form their organization;
- Recognize key patterns;
- Handle problems with more awareness;
- Predict trends, interruptions, and effects of decisions made;

- Decrease risk; and
- Create interventions to increase organizational performance.

Technological advancements have influenced how human beings can, intentionally and unintentionally, impact existing systems as well as designing new ones (Allenby, 2009).

Wright and Meadows (2009) stated the following advantages of looking through a systems lens:

- Allows us to see and comprehend the whole;
- Enhances our ability to comprehend other parts;
- Facilitates finding interconnections;
- Calls for leaders to ask what if questions regarding future behaviors;
- Grants bold and innovative changes for redesigning the system. (p. 6)

Reinforcing and Balancing Feedback and Delays for Systems Thinking. Feedback loops are, “The secondary effects of a direct effect of one variable on another, they cause a change in the magnitude of that effect” (Williams et al., 2017, p. 871). Systems thinking requires feedback, which establishes circularity (Lewis, 2008). Feedback loops enable systems to develop interconnected relationships (Kunz et al., 2013). When managers do not fully grasp feedback loops, unpredictable system behavior can appear (Allenby, 2009). Systems will adjust or change because of feedback from the external environment. The primary purpose of feedback is that it delivers stimuli to change behavior (V. Anderson & Johnson, 1997). Feedback control systems are created to reach detailed behavior of the output variable (Haidekker, 2013). The types of feedback for systems thinking are reinforcing, balancing, and delays (Senge, 1990).

Reinforcing feedback is described as the engine of growth (Senge, 1990). Reinforcing feedback pushes a system on the path it is going (O’Connor & McDermott, 1997). Senge (1990)

stated, “Whenever you are in a situation where things are growing, you can be sure that reinforcing feedback is at work” (p. 79). Additionally, Senge (1990) highlighted that reinforcing feedback may also produce a rapid decline, in which each small change builds on one another, causing an amplified movement in that direction. This snowball effect can result in a vicious cycle that begins badly and continues to get worse. An example is a gas crisis. The public hears on the news, social media, and through word of mouth about long lines forming at the pumps. The act of long lines causes others to panic and to fill up their gas tanks even when not required.

The second type of feedback is balancing or stabilizing, which functions when goal-oriented behavior is present. Where there is a stable system, balancing feedback is present (Schaveling & Bryan, 2017). If the goal is not to move forward, then balancing feedback would function as brakes operate on an automobile (Senge, 1990). Balancing or stabilizing feedback attempts to achieve a desired goal or state and to maintain position (V. Anderson & Johnson, 1997). Balancing feedback is the source of all stability. Schaveling and Bryan (2017) presented the following examples of examples of balancing feedback:

- When a person is hungry, they correct the action by eating.
- If you find you’re driving too quickly, you decrease your speed by lifting off the gas pedal.
- When filling a glass with water, you stop pouring it to avoid spillage over the glass.

Furthermore, feedback methods include delays that are disruptions of influence and have consequences. An example of a delay is when a signal arrives at the output of the system following a delay, such as when sound from a speaker reaches a microphone after a delay in time caused by the speed of sound and the distance between the speaker and microphone (Haidekker, 2013).

Personal Mastery

Senge (1990) stated that people within an organization are the driving force of success. Those people must be motivated by leaders who can influence their will, mind, and ways of thinking. Each person has their own viewpoint. It is up to the leader to increase motivation to face the challenges for achieving technological development and financial growth. If employees are not adequately motivated for these challenges, they will not achieve an increase in productivity, growth, or advancement in technological development.

The most effective leaders develop their management skills: These skills can be studied, utilized, and enhanced upon:

- Recognizing and communicating uncertainty;
- Welcoming error;
- Reacting to the upcoming future;
- Growing to be interpersonally competent by being nurturing, listening, and managing value disputes; and
- Increasing self-awareness. (J. M. Richardson, 1982, pp. 175–180).

These tangible areas are required to be an effective leader. Senge (1990) stated:

Personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills. It goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening, although it requires spiritual growth. It means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint. (p. 131)

The personal mastery discipline is achieved by incorporating two principles: The vision, what we want, and the current reality of where we currently are in the process to achieving the final desired outcome. This tension facilitates what is known as creative tension, with that being a

natural impulse stimulated from tension to seek the desired outcome. Individuals who pursue personal mastery are lifelong learners, always seeking to improve their skills, setting the foundation for achieving personal mastery, and continuously expand one's discipline of it.

Kazuo Inamori, the creator and president of Kyocera, a ceramics technology and electronics company says the power in all aspects of business is people. If employees are not encouraged to grow that there is no growth within technological development or productivity (Inamori, 1985).

Senge (1990) identified the following for nurturing personal vision within an organization.

- Holding creative tension,
- Commitment to the whole,
- Commitment to the truth,
- Compassion,
- Structural conflict,
- Using the subconscious,
- Integrating reason and intuition, and
- Seeing our connectiveness to the world.

Personal Vision. Founded on Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive theory, the most important function of a personal vision is to infuse purpose to push yourself in the direction of a momentous destination. Senge (1990) stated that most adults do not have a firm grasp on their vision. They have goals and objectives but are not in touch with their real vision. Vision is the result desired, a picture of the future on which a person's heart is set. A vision is solid, where a purpose is nonconcrete. There is a difference between purpose and vision. Purpose is an azimuth

toward a certain direction; vision is the specific location. It takes courage to stay committed with a personal vision. People who obtain and commit to their vision are separated from other people in that they possess high levels of personal mastery. Personal vision inspires motivation indirectly by establishing goals (Masuda et al., 2010). “Visionary leaders are not starry-eyed dreamers but future-oriented personalities who identify ambitious objectives and provide direction, motivation, and support to reach those goals” (Laver et al., 2017, p. 159).

Furthermore, there has been an increase in schools and other organizations creating their own personal vision as a method of managing organizational activity, usually in the structure of a formal doctrine (Yoeli & Berkovich, 2010).

Holding Creative Tension. When creating visions, people can feel hopeless because of the obstacles that can prevent or discourage obtaining their personal vision. There is a gap between a person’s vision and the reality of achieving the vision. An example is setting a personal vision of pursuing a doctorate. The reality is that it takes a lot of time and money to complete a doctorate. The gap between a personal vision and the reality of achieving it can discourage a person from obtaining their personal vision, but it can also be a source of motivation and power.

Without a gap there is no sense of urgency to advance. The gap provides what is called tension. The two potential outcomes to resolve tension are to “pull reality toward the vision or pull the vision toward reality” (Senge, 1990, p. 141). The outcome is based on whether we stay dedicated to the vision. To achieve a personal vision, we must learn how to coexist with emotional tension and to operate effectively to maintain our vision so that our goals do not deteriorate. Once a person has mastered their creative vision, their capacity for patience and perseverance increases (Senge, 1990). Leaders obtain their inspiration and energy through

creative tension. The tension generates potential power, not stress. Cook (1986) presented that creative tension is,

...analogous to the mechanism of a bow and arrow. The bow is nonfunctional as a weapon until tension is applied during the stringing. When the arrow is placed on the string and pulled to increase the tension, the power of the weapon is increased. Therefore, the power and effectiveness of the bow as a weapon lies in the tension exerted on the bow. (p. 75)

During an interview of Dave Stangis, the Campbell's Soup Vice President of social responsibility and sustainability, Stangis claimed that it is necessary to set large and daring goals to generate the tension required to inspire and motivate people to achieve them (Stangis & Kruschwitz, 2011).

Structural Conflict. Even extremely prosperous people maintain beliefs that are opposite to their personal mastery. Frequently, people's convictions are beneath their conscious awareness. Senge (1990) highlighted that most people possess two beliefs that counter their desire to achieve what they want. First, is our belief in being powerless to envision the things we truly desire. Second, is feeling unworthy to obtain that for which we yearn. The tension that is created from the pulling between these underlying beliefs and achieving our goal is called structural conflict.

Fritz (1989) described three methods for confronting the forces of structural conflict. First, allowing your vision to disintegrate. Second, is conflict manipulation, which is the ability to motivate ourselves by establishing artificial conflict by focusing on what we do not desire, such as not achieving goals established. Last, is the strategy of willpower to overcome all obstacles to achieving our established goals.

Klein (2002) explained that leaders need to engage in productive dialogue to eliminate structural conflict. First, recognize your desired results and investigate in detail whether your views are in conflict. Second, request feedback from your group members. Ask them to reveal honestly how they feel in relation to the outcomes you desire. Third, some group members may not be accustomed to this type of leadership but moving beyond structural conflict is the leader's obligation, and therefore, necessary to incorporate.

Commitment to the Truth. To speak the truth comes from the Greek term *Parrēsia*, translating to say everything without applying a filter, unrestrained and unobstructed. Moreover, it requires saying what our fear or embarrassment prevents us from speaking. In Addition, *Parrēsia* can translate to speaking truly or frank speech (Foucault et al., 2019). Speaking the truth is an ethical requirement and is essential for the growth of an organization. When the truth is absent, employees can submit to organization pressure and act unethically, or do nothing when unethical behavior is observed (Badaracco, 1992). Ethical leadership theories believe truthfulness is a vital characteristic of a leader and is essential (Hackett & Wang, 2012).

Being dedicated to the truth is the most important technique for leaders to know when to change their behavior. We limit our capacity and fool ourselves from observing reality. People must continuously confront their theories of why there is a particular outcome. We must continuously expand our awareness and understanding of current events to observe how tasks were not completed effectively either because of assigning an impossible task or not supporting or harming others from completing assigned tasks (Senge, 1990). Being truthful is a critical component to being a successful leader. Being truthful is being honest and not intentionally deceiving or knowingly omitting information (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Integrity is examined frequently regarding leadership, possibly because of the elevated level of influence

leaders regularly utilize (Grojean et al., 2004). When leaders are not truthful within their organization, their silence has an extraordinary personal and shared cost. The personal cost is their integrity, and the shared cost being discord within the organization along with sidestepping problem-solving (Brown, 2017). Surprising though, there is no theory of integrity within the research of leadership. As a substitute, integrity is generally stated as an individual component of leadership or a characteristic of good leaders (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

Kouzes and Posner (2010) expanded on commitment to the truth and explained:

Being honest means telling the truth and having ethical principles and clear standards by which you live. People need to believe that you are worthy of their trust. To be honest with others also requires being honest with yourself and taking stock of what is truly important to you. (p. 19)

Progressive managers and scholars acknowledge the existence of fundamental business ethics that include all business actions. They include being honest and acting in good faith (Schwartz et al., 2005).

Each leader must identify their personal type of truth telling, not only for themselves, but also the organization. Furthermore, it is critical to differentiate between opinion and truth. Leaders must define what information is dissimulated, and to whom. In addition, successful leaders must enforce and live by the rules of speaking truthfully. Finally, leaders must facilitate speaking the truth and model it for themselves and the entire organization (Bouilloud et al., 2017).

Using the Subconscious. Senge (1990) described people with elevated levels of personal mastery as individuals who can have grown a more advanced harmony among their normal awareness and their subconscious. To gain the discipline of personal mastery, one must continue

to expand one's understanding of normal awareness and subconscious. Having this skill is vital to personally mastery. An example is operating an automobile. Initially, when a person is learning how to operate a vehicle, they are focused utilizing their conscious attention, but eventually, over time, they operate a vehicle automatically, utilizing minimal or no conscious attention. Being able to operate at the subconscious level is a skill. Many people find meditation helpful for developing this discipline.

Wilson (2002) reported the human brain senses approximately 11 trillion bits of data every second. Consequently, the conscious brain can only handle, the most, 40 bits of data per second. The rest of the information is processed subconsciously. The human brain receives and transmits more than 10 million signals per second through the eyes alone.

Kumar (2017) explained that the human mind does not function on one level, but instead three different levels of consciousness. The three levels of the mind being the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. First, there is the conscious mind, which consists of the active mind or what the mind is mindful of in the current moment. The conscious mind is one's awareness of experiences in one's life, things, ideas, feelings, senses, environments, and so forth. The conscious mind also consists of whatever one is picturing and visualizing at the current instant. Second, the subconscious mind implies beneath or below the surface of one's awareness. Information that one directs one's focus toward that can be recalled later as memory. The subconscious mind is also a storage area for recent memories that can be recalled rapidly as well. In addition, the subconscious mind contains existing information that is utilized each day. Third, there is the unconscious mind, meaning not conscious, absent of awareness. An example is being asleep. The unconscious mind holds memories, images, and desires that are submerged deep in the mind, far beneath one's conscious awareness and a level beneath the subconscious. The

unconscious mind holds recollections and past events that are forgotten consciously. However, it is feasible that some forgotten recollections can be transferred into the subconscious, and conscious. An example is a forgotten event that arises after decades of absence.

The conscious and subconscious activities of the brain are connected but also separate. Excessive interconnectivity between the conscious and unconscious can decrease the mental stability of an individual. The conscious portion of the brain can become overwhelmed because of unnecessary data. As a result, the subconscious memory is not totally available to the conscious portion of the brain in order to prevent becoming overwhelmed (Hanson, 2017).

Kumar (2017) illustrated that the conscious mind has the capability to focus, imagine, and picture ideas that are not real. The conscious mind can recognize an event and save it in either the subconscious or the unconscious mind, depending on the significance of the event. The subconscious mind is not independent. It simply follows the instructions it receives from one's conscious mind. Kumar wrote:

Subconscious mind is like fertile soil and conscious mind like a farmer. Whatever farmer sow in the fertile soil, it germinates and grows; similarly, whatever conscious mind commands, subconscious mind obeys. It grows either crops or weeds in the fertile soil of your life whichever you sow by mental equivalents you create using your conscious mind. (p. 25)

Furthermore, Wilson (2002) explained that one of the most important features of the conscious mind is to make the deliberate choice of establishing long-term goals for the future.

Integrating Reason and Intuition. Senge (1990) highlighted integrating reason and intuition and that there has been an increase in management courses focusing on intuition after decades of being neglected. Although there is still a long way to go to reintegrate fully intuition

and rationality into our society and organizations, people who obtain the skill of intuition and reason possess high levels of personal mastery. People possess the skill of intuition and rationality naturally by being committed to utilizing all resources available to them. Senge (1990) gave an example of a blind man walking through a forest who happens to fall on a crippled man. The blind man informs the cripple that he cannot find his way out of the forest. The crippled man says that he cannot get himself up without assistance. The crippled man then says that he will show the blind man the way out of the forest if he helps him up and to walk. These actions display intuition by the blind man showing the importance of integrating resources available. The blind man displays rationality. Without intuition and rationale, both disabled men would not make it out of the forest.

Seeing Our Connectiveness to the World. Senge (1990) described how vital it is to see our connectiveness to the world. We begin to observe at an early age that the feedback to our brains is a result of certain conditions in our lives, such as a young child cuddling up to their parents to warm their body. As we begin to grow, new realities are conceived that will continue to change as we mature. The downside is that as we age, our rate of finding decreases. As we mature into adults, we begin to see less connections between our actions and the external forces that exist and become fixed in the way we view the world, much like a young toddler learning how to walk or move its hands. They may be able to move or walk, but initially they do not see the links between their actions and the external world. As adults, a goal should be to increase our connectiveness to the world. Albert Einstein believed that it was critical to erase the notion that our thoughts and feelings are separate from everything else. He believed this thought is somewhat of an optical illusion, and that people should escape this belief by expanding their compassion for all, including nature and its beauty.

Compassion. is another critical component of achieving the discipline of personal mastery. Senge (1990) believed that all people are confined within structures created by our way of thinking. The culture within which people grow up as well as people with whom they interact can shape these structures that can confine us. Many people are not even aware of the structures that exist in life. These invisible forces can control our ways of thinking. People view compassion as an emotional state instead of being embedded in our level of awareness. That is why it is so critical to have the capability of viewing the structures that live within our society as well as the pressures and struggles through which we live. Once this thought process is adapted, we naturally develop and increase our compassion and empathy.

Commitment to the Whole. Having an authentic commitment translates to being dedicated to serving the world and having a vision that is bigger than oneself. People who possess connectedness and compassion traits have elevated levels of personal mastery that facilitate them with a broader vision. People who are committed to this broader vision, a foresight that is beyond their self-interest, have no desire to pursue limited goals. Instead, they seek a personal commitment to a broader purpose (Senge, 1990).

Fostering Personal Mastery in an Organization. Leaders must be cautious about being too aggressive while incorporating personal mastery within the organization. Personal mastery growth is a choice; if personal mastery programs are forced with an organization, they can backfire. Compulsory training programs employees are forced to attend can conflict with their personal choice. Instead, Senge (1990) recommended that leaders cultivate a culture which the ideologies of personal mastery are embedded and followed during their daily activities at work. It is encouraged for people to develop their own vision that reflects the behavior of employees to challenge the current situation and seek the truth.

Senge (1990) identified the following practices and principles for increasing the discipline of mental models.

Mental Models

The discipline of having mental models is critical for building a learning organization. Mental models are a considerable discovery for building organizations. Mental models are so influential because they can affect what we observe. Philosophers' use of mental models goes back centuries. Examples of mental models given are Plato's allegory of the cave, and the classic story of "The Emperor's New Clothes" that depicts people restrained by mental models that prevented them from observing the emperor's naked figure. Beliefs, pictures, and stories are stored in our brain and can influence our decisions as leaders. Many organizations that traditionally were authoritarian in their leadership approach have modified their style and inspired employees by promoting the organization's mental models, values, and vision (Senge, 1990). Additionally, mental models may be reproductive, meaning a person can begin to create an attitude that they do not have. Creating new mental models transpires by connecting vision with execution. An example is how NASA scientists created the space program. They had to think beyond the status quo by thinking about unimagined possibilities in reference to changes in travel, research, and energy that still have not fully evolved (Senge et al., 1994). Mental models are crucial in organizations and using them is an important concept that increases cognition in groups (Banks & Millword, 2009). Mental models describe the reason people can observe an identical event and portray it differently because of observing different details (Senge et al., 1994).

Mental models, as applied to cognitive thinking, were introduced by Craik (1967), who introduced the concept that our mind creates models of reality that are utilized to predict events

and to bring about reason. In addition, the human brain is a computing machine capable of modeling events, which facilitates thinking and explanation. Furthermore, that if an individual holds a model of an external reality, along with its own potential behaviors within their head, an individual will have the capability to test numerous options, decide the best strategy, and employ the knowledge gained for the future. Johnson-Laird (1983) emphasized that mental models are high-grade simulations. Therefore, to comprehend a phenomenon is to develop a working model of it that includes simulated components.

Definition of Mental Models. Senge et al., (1994) reported, “Mental models are the images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world” (p. 235). Park and Gittelman (1995) presented that there is no universally recognized definition of mental models. Scholars normally describe them according to their research objectives and in very broad terms or detailed operational ones. Scholars such as Johnson-Laird (1983) and Toffler (1970) identified mental models as images of a situation, mirroring the significant aspects of the subsequent situation in the world. Similarly, Jagacinski and Miller (1978) described mental models as images or internal models to manage and perform behaviors and actions. Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) explained mental models as depictions of theoretical knowledge remaining in our long-term memory at fluctuating levels. B. Cohen and Murphy (1984) recognized that mental models consist of mental objects related to experiences or objects that act like reminders for recalling interactions and events. Cognitive psychologists termed mental models as a personal representation of a situation, mirroring the related qualities of the subsequent situation in the world (Johnson-Laird, 1983; Toffler, 1970).

The ladder of Inference. Our brain’s harmless false impressions can develop into extensive prejudice based on inaccurate labels. Human beings have the capability almost

immediately to comprehend situations into which we get ourselves. We observe, smell, and hear what is happening, then instantly determine what it implies; then we act. This thinking process is called the ladder of inference; it is a tool that allows us to hold up the meaning-making process to make it visible for examination (Taylor, 2015).

Argyris (1982) explained that every conversation consists of four levels of inference.

First is the relatively directly observable data—that is, the words and nonverbal cues.

Second is the culturally understood meaning. Third is the meaning that the actors impose on the first two levels regarding their effectiveness for double loop learning. Fourth is the meaning the researcher imposes. (p. xviii)

The ladder of inference model allows us to comprehend our thinking process. Senge adopted the ladder of inference concept from *Action Science* by Argyris et al. (1985). The ladder of inference model shows the thinking process as people climb the ladder, starting from observable data and experiences, to selecting data from what we observe, to making assumptions, drawing conclusions, and finally action based upon personal beliefs. We exist on a planet of self-creating ideas that continue to be mostly unproven. We adopt our beliefs based upon our observations and past experiences. The results that we seek to achieve can be eroded by personal emotions:

- Our views are true.
- The facts are evident.
- Our views exist from real data.
- The data we choose is accurate (Senge et al., 1994).

An example of the ladder of inference is, I am giving a presentation in front of the executive team. All but one member in attendance is participating and attentive. Larry, who is seated at the far side of the table, appears bored because of his body gesture of not looking at me

and placing his hand over his mouth as yawning. Larry does not ask me any questions during my presentation but does interrupt me just before the end of my presentation and ask me for a full report, which really means let's wrap it up. Each person begins to put their notes away. My thoughts are that Larry believes that I am incompetent and that he never likes my ideas, and the department could benefit from my recommendations. As I walked to my seat, I decided not to include any good information in the report to Larry since he would not read the report anyway, or worse use information against me. My thoughts as I sat down were that it was regrettable that I had a senior enemy within the organization. I had just climbed up what is known as the ladder of inference. A familiar mental route of a notion, that frequently leads to foolish opinions.

- Observable data—Larry's comment requesting the report along with body language that could be observed by video recording.
- Data selected from observation—selection of details such as Larry's yawn and lack of attentiveness.
- Cultural and personal meanings—I included my own meanings based on the culture of Larry wanting me to wrap up the presentation and asking for a report.
- Assumptions made—Larry is bored to death.
- Conclusions drawn—Larry and the other associates are opposed to me and believe that I am incompetent.
- Actions taken based upon my beliefs—I plot against Larry by not giving him a complete report (Senge et al., 1994).

Comprehending Mental Models. Consistently, employees and organizations fail to incorporate new visions because of not having the discipline of mental models. Specifically, “New insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held images that

limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting” (Senge, 1990, p. 163). Mental models influence how we act. An example is that human beings are more prone to talk to strangers if we believe most people are trustworthy than if we generally do not trust people (Senge et al., 1994). Senge (1990) indicated that many managers lack the critical skills required to put mental models into practice. Charlie Munger, a highly successful Swedish investor, and Warren Buffett’s personal financial partner claimed that nearly all individuals are only trained in one model in economics. The model is attempting to solve problems the same way every time, and as the old saying goes, “To the man with the hammer, the world looks like a nail. This is a dumb way of handling problems” (Griffin, 2015, p. 42). Additionally, Munger thought that by utilizing different models from different fields such as psychology, philosophy, biology, mathematics, history, and others, that a person can tap into the collective output that facilitates additional value rather than the quantity of its parts. For example, instead of utilizing a single tool to solve the issue, such as the hammer, in its place, think about using a Swiss Army Knife that gives you many tools to use within your toolbox (Griffin, 2015).

Utilizing the Ladder of Inference. By utilizing the ladder of inference, leaders can reflect on conclusions drawn. Leaders become better at communicating by implementing the ladder of inference in three ways:

- Identifying your own thinking and rationalization through reflection;
- Being transparent with others about your personal thinking and rationalization; and
- Question others’ thinking and renationalization (Senge et al., 1994).

Strategy or Establishing New Mental Models. One of the most difficult things about teaching within an organization is confronting unconstructed beliefs that an organization possesses. In addition, as we explore beliefs, we can become more mindful of our views that rest

just beneath our consciousness. By tapping into personal and organizational beliefs, leaders can determine whether their beliefs and actions are helping or hurting the organization (Aguilar, 2020). Reflection and inquiry are critical skills required to be an effective leader. Individuals must be able to reduce their reasoning process to be more conscious of how mental models are shaped. Additionally, inquiry is vital for establishing mental models. Leaders must foster collaboration where employees share personal views openly and learn each other's beliefs (Senge et al., 1994).

Leaders must slow down their thinking process and focus on the inferential steps that individuals take in going from the data to their conclusions. This is accomplished by reducing the pace of our processes and retracing the steps that individuals take in moving from data that indicate what occurred to their attributions about what happened. By examining the ladder of inference, leaders can help people regain their data, the cultural meanings imposed by the data, and the acknowledgments and theories that were made. This allows individuals to identify and test their inferences for any biases or systematic holes rooted within themselves (Argyris et al., 1985).

Senge (1990) recommended three parts to establishing an organization's competence to surface and test mental models: First, implement infrastructures that attempt to standardize consistent training with mental models. Second, create a philosophy within that encourages challenging everyone's way of thinking and advocates probing. This will also help mitigate group thinking. Third, provide the necessary tools and training that bolster reflective skills and promote personal awareness.

Senge (1990) identified the following practices and principles for increasing the discipline of a shared vision.

Shared Vision

A shared vision is required in creating a learning organization. An organization that facilitates a shared vision creates a sense of unity that spreads throughout the organization, granting unity during diverse tasks. Senge (1990) stated:

At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, what do we want to create? Just as personal visions are pictures or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so too are shared visions pictures that people throughout an organization carry. (p. 192)

A shared vision is legitimately shared once people within the organization are obligated together in achieving a common objective, not just as an individual, but all members within the organization acquiring it. Shared vision is critical because it contributes to the energy and focus required for a learning organization. Not having a shared vision by all limits the aspirations of people (Senge, 1990). Kouzes and Posner (2012) emphasized that an effective leader imagines a future by picturing exhilarating outcomes and recruiting others in a common vision to share goals. Furthermore, one can't order employees to obtain commitment; The leader must inspire it.

Leadership Inspiring the Shared Vision. Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted an extensive examination of 90 leaders through interviews and notes to determine uniformities of leadership behavior. The findings showed that all 90 successful leaders encompassed four major themes in relation to their core visions for the organization. The four strategies embodied within their leadership are:

- Attention through vision—All the 90 participants interviewed were obsessed with outcome. Their vision was so compelling that their followers gravitated toward them.

- Their personal vision grabbed everyone's attention. The connection involving leaders and followers is a transaction that generates harmony.
- Meaning through communication—Leaders may convey the meaning of their message differently. Communication may be verbal, nonverbal, music, or words. Successful leaders are aware of their responsibility to provide the blueprint to their followers that shapes their actions and is guided by common interpretations.
 - Trust through positioning—Trust is the cement that facilitates organizational integrity and drives organizations to operate. Trust encompasses reliability, predictability, and accountability. Trust is related to selling the organization's products and services and keeps the business operating. Followers mirror their leader's example because they are foreseeable, trusting, and define their positions openly.
 - Deployment of self through positive self-regard—None of the 90 participants displayed a hint of cockiness or self-adoration. Although, all participants knew their value, and trusted themselves not to allow their image or ego to interfere with decisions. The strategy for positive self-respect is to be aware of your strengths and adjust in weak areas—Continuous self-improvement to enhance skills with discipline. The most successful leaders focus on what is most important for their organization. Furthermore, successful leaders facilitate a learning environment within their organization by establishing a set of skills to develop and master.

A shared vision is not just an idea; it is a stimulation of one's heart that generates a force of extraordinary ability. People within the organization begin to observe the vision as if it truly is present. Senge (1990) stated to think about a large and successful organization such as Apple. The business began inside of a home garage. Steve Jobs, the CEO, and cofounder of Apple Inc.

had a shared vision to create the first personal home computer. Many skeptics could not see Steve Job's vision and did not believe people would desire their own personal computer. Today, most people do desire and utilize their own personal computer, just as Steve Jobs envisioned. Senge (1990) provided another example of a powerful shared vision with Henry Ford. His shared vision was to create an automobile for the common people and not just the wealthy elite. This shared vision led to a major change in transportation globally. It is difficult to think of organizations such as Apple and Ford without the shared vision of the leadership and people within the organization. Acquiring a shared vision allows removal of personal views and to determine any personal and organizational deficiencies.

Organizations must recognize that personal vision and shared vision are linked. Senge (1990) illuminated this connection by stating that organizational leaders must foster personal visions of their team members or there is no buy-in for the shared vision. The reason is that members must have their own vision to commit to a shared vision. Therefore, it is critical that organizational leaders contribute to fostering member's personal visions so that they are committed to the shared vision and not just compliant. Under other conditions, when members have obtained their own personal direction, they can unite, creating a powerful synergy of a group focus on what is truly desired by all.

Senge (1990) identified the following practices and principles for increasing the discipline of team learning.

Team Learning

When team members are not aligned, their efforts become wasted energy. Even if team members are focused and work hard to complete tasks, their achievements do not convert to a team effort. When teams are in harmony, there is less wasted time and energy, along with a

common course on which all members are fixed, focusing on working well together to maximize results (Senge, 1990).

Senge (1990) identified disciplines to facilitate team learning within an organization.

- Ponder intelligently about difficult issues;
- Facilitate joint execution within the organization;
- Master the practice of conversation; and
- Learn to manage those who oppose productive discussion and dialogue.

Effective communication is critical between leaders and followers. Bohm (1996)

identified three fundamental requirements required for effective dialogue:

- All participants need to suspend their assumptions.
- In addition, all participants need to consider each other as colleagues.
- Furthermore, a mediator must be there to maintain the framework of the dialogue.

When completing tasks, organizations strive to assemble high-performance teams. The skills of each person depend on their individual excellence and how well they operate within their team together. Bonebright (2010) explained that the harmony created from a team's joint direction results in less wasted energy because of the team's shared vision and loss of personal concerns, which boost each team member's performance. While individual achievement can be inspiring to a team member, it can also be a reason that reduces the potential for the team to achieve joint success. Savelsbergh and Storm (2012) reported learning as a team that strives for combined success, rather than individual excellence, can be a difficult task. The mutually supporting execution of tasks requires successful harmonization with the performances of numerous team members. Good leadership and accommodating conditions are necessary to

create a high-performing team. Nevertheless, to perform as a high-performing team, the team must first learn to learn.

Savelsbergh and Storm (2012) identified the following tools for leaders and managers to foster team learning:

- Provide support to teams in their quest to learn to learn. This is accomplished by providing team members with learning and performance objectives.
- Team leaders need to be conscious of how their choices and behaviors impact the amount of team learning within the organization, both directly and indirectly.

Leadership's commitment and participation to foster team learning are of critical importance.

- Team leaders need to set an example for others to emulate.
- Team leaders will require effective training so they can provide the necessary support their fellow team members require to improve their group learning performances.

According to Edmondson (1999), team learning behaviors are actions executed by team members through a process of acquiring and analyzing data to adjust continuously and improve. Specific learning behavior activities include feedback, distributing information, requesting help when needed, experimenting, and discussing errors. These learning behavior activities allow teams to detect fluctuations in the environment, access information about their customers' needs, enhance team members' joint awareness of an issue, or discover unforeseen outcomes of the team's previous procedures. Rowley and Gibbs (2008) described team learning as a discipline. Furthermore, Rowley and Gibbs stated that successful leaders realize that their teams are a vital learning unit, and that team learning is facilitated within organizations through team discussions, where group thinking, learning, and action occur.

Goh (2003) proposed the following as building blocks of a learning organization and team learning:

- Clarity of mission and vision;
- Leadership commitment and empowerment;
- Experimentation and rewards;
- Effective transfer of knowledge; and
- Teamwork and group problem-solving (pp. 217–218).

Some authors have mentioned the vagueness of the theory of the learning organization (Garvin, 1993; Leitch et al., 1996). Some scholars believe that ambiguity is not beneficial for practitioners or building theory and indicated that Senge's five disciplines do not offer ample assistance on the development of building a learning organization (Jackson, 2000; Örtenblad, 2007). In contrast, many authors imply that uncertainty or vagueness is valuable because of the flexibility to employ and modify the concept to match different organizations (Hawkins, 1994; Pearn et al., 1995; Pedler et al., 1997).

Table 1 reflects Senge's (1990) five disciplines to building a learning organization along with authors who are in alignment with a particular discipline.

Table 1

Five Disciplines to Building a Learning Organization and Authors in Alignment With Each

Discipline

Systems Thinking	Personal Mastery	Mental Models	Shared Vision	Team Learning
Ackoff (1979)	Badaracco (1992)	Aguilar (2020)	Nanus (1985)	Bonebright (2010)
Allenby (2009)	Bandura (1997)	Argyris (1982)	Kouzes and	Edmondson (1999)
V. Anderson and	Bouilloud et al.	Argyris et al. (1985)	Posner (2012)	Goh (2003)
Johnson (1997)	(2017)	Cohen and Murphy		Hawkins (1994)
Aristotle (ca. 350	Brown (2017)	(1984)		Pearn et al. (1995)
B.C.E./1924)	Cook (1986)	Griffin (2015)		Pedler et al. (1997)
Bertalanffy (1984)	Foucalt et al. (2019)			

Dutta (2017)	Fritz (1989)	Jagacinski and	Rowley and Gibbs
Gharajedaghi (2011)	Grojean et al. (2004)	Miller (1978)	(2008)
Haidekker (2013)	Hackett and Wang	Johnson-Laird	Savelsbergh and
Higgins (2013)	(2012)	(1983)	Storm (2012)
Kunz et al. (2013)	Klein (2002)	Park and Gittelman	
Lewis (2008)	Kouzes and Posner	(1995)	
O'Connor and	(2012)	Rumelhart and	
McDermott (1997)	Kumar (2017)	Ortony (1977)	
G. P. Richardson	Laver et al. (2017)	Senge et al. (1994)	
(2003)	Masuda et al. (2010)	Taylor (2015)	
Schaveling and Bryan	Palanski and	Toffler (1970)	
(2017)	Yammarino (2007)		
Stacey (2010)	J. M. Richardson		
Walker and Salt (2006)	(1982)		
Wright and Meadows	Schwartz et al.		
(2009)	(2005)		
	Stangis and		
	Kruschwitz (2011)		
	Wilson (2002)		
	Yoeli and Berkovich		
	(2010)		

By means of these disciplines organizational leaders can create a culture and environment where leaders, followers, and the organization continuously learn and grow.

Military Leadership

For centuries, military leadership and military leaders have been used as illustrations of what leaders can bring about (Taylor & Rosenbach, 1984). Corporate CEOs can be taught a lot from military leaders. Statistics show that the median time of occupancy of a CEO who has military experience is 7.2 years; however, the average time of responsibility of a CEO that is not a military veteran is 4.6 years (Sharma, 2014). Military leadership is unique from civilian leadership. In the warrior community, it is the responsibility of all service members to uphold the values of their military institution that makes it different than other professions (Sims & Quatro, 2005).

Malone (1983) showed how military leadership is unique:

- A commander in the military has zero input in the interview or selection of their new employee. Service members are assigned to their military job.

- All service members sign a contract to perform their duties and are not subject to being fired or laid off as in the civilian world. The leader must work with the service member to increase performance.
- There is a large turnover rate in the military, and it can be overwhelming for leaders who are understaffed.
- Service members are younger than their civilian counterparts compared to their responsibility level. The average age in the United States military is 21.
- Military leaders have more power than a civilian leader because of having the authority to fine and even jail service members, depending on their infraction. The Uniformed Code of Military Justice is far harsher than civilian law.
- Military leaders are responsible for their service members 24 hours a day, their end of responsibility toward their team members does not end at 5 p.m. as in many civilian jobs.
- Military leaders control their service members' time 24 hours a day. There is no 8 hour work schedule or overtime. Members stop working when the mission is complete.

The U.S. Army (1999) defined leadership as, “the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation” (p. 1). The U.S. military utilizes five field manuals on leadership doctrine. Every manual focuses on detailed leadership requirements that support doctrine and adds to the U.S. military’s fighting capabilities. The five manuals are:

- Field Manual 22-100 tells leaders how to lead in a direct, face-to-face mode.
- Field Manual 22-101 tells leaders how to conduct leadership counseling.

- Field Manual 22-102 tells leaders how to develop soldier teams at company level and below that can meet the challenges of combat.
- Field Manual 22-103 gives principles and a framework for leading and commanding at senior levels.
- Field Manual 25-100 provides expectations and standards for leaders on training doctrine (U.S. Army, 1999, p. IX).

Military Leadership Traits

Military leadership cannot be defined with one definition. One type of leadership does not work in all situations. Each military branch or business has a distinct objective, criteria, and goal. However, we can distinguish leadership traits and principles that push and produce a leader.

For example, Peterson (2012) highlighted the 14 Marine Corps leadership traits that facilitate a great leader:

- Judgment: Judgment in leadership is evaluating the circumstances prior to making the correct decision at the correct time.
- Justice: Being fair is a premier characteristic of a leader. This implies that the leader will make rulings without any biases or any outside pressure.
- Decisiveness: It is critical that a leader is timely and an effective decision maker.
- Integrity: Righteousness of character and correctness of moral standards. Possessing honesty.
- Dependability: A leader must be known for their constant dependability for the members of the group. The leader has a past record of doing the right thing.

Additionally, the leader must build trust and belief in their followers. This is accomplished by the leader always having their follower's back, no matter what.

- Tact: Leaders must possess tact, a crucial skill in managing individuals thoughtfully and respectfully.
- Initiative: Leaders must make effective and timely decisions in the absence of orders.
- Endurance: leaders in the military encounter extreme challenges all the time. A leader must exhibit endurance to survive hardships and obstacles.
- Bearing: Constantly producing a positive impression in posture, appearance, and personal behavior.
- Unselfishness: Professional leaders are unselfish and consider everybody else before their own needs.
- Courage: The physical, mental, and moral strength to make the correct decision, to hold oneself to a higher level of individual conduct. In addition, to execute difficult choices under pressure and stress.
- Knowledge: Possessing professional knowledge and insight of your Marines. Knowledge provides credibility for a leader with his Marines and boosts their skills to make correct decisions.
- Loyalty: A effective leader is one who is loyal to their work and followers.
- Enthusiasm: Leadership is being enthusiastic and heartfelt about their performance and job.

Personal Mastery Within the Military

Personal mastery within the U.S. military is critical. Brigadier General Lincoln C. Andrews was the Commander of the Army's 86th Infantry Division during World War I and is a

prime example of continuous improvement of personal mastery. After retiring from the U.S. Army, he worked as the assistant secretary of the treasury responsible for prohibition's execution. Brigadier General Andrews highlighted the importance of personal mastery. He stated to attain the respect and confidence of your followers you must possess superior knowledge. Knowing your job will create the self-confidence needed as a leader and will justify your followers following you. Additionally, never appear in front of your followers unprepared to execute your job. This makes the leader appear incompetent. You become a pretend leader whose followers know your job better than you do. There will be times when a leader will advise with his followers, but they must understand that you have the final say. However, there will be times when a leader makes mistakes. It is critical to own it and not to try and fake your way through it. Followers will appreciate your courage instead of identifying you as a fraud for whom leadership is hopeless (Newbold, 2018).

General Colin Powell found that in every productive military organization, and all thriving enterprises, different qualities of leadership must be present. If the leader at the top does not possess effective leadership, then other individuals around him must supplement to get the job done (Powell, 2010). Therefore, it is critical to create a learning environment in the military so that leaders can learn how to lead. Part of being a good leader in the military is constantly improving your personal mastery.

Burns (1978) claimed that leadership is probably the most examined, however smallest familiar marvel on the planet. To obtain personal mastery requires a person to view it as a discipline requiring principles that must be practiced to master. Major General William A. Cohen USAFR, the author of *Heroic Leadership*, explained that it should be obvious that you know your job whether you are in the military or civilian job. However, many leaders do not possess

the skills or knowledge necessary to be an effective leader. Many leaders are less focused on being an expert in their field and more worried about getting ahead and office politics (W. A. Cohen, 2010).

Military Learning Structures

The corporate sector can discover a lot from the U.S. military, which is unarguably the best run organization in the world. Although the military is a distinctive model and consists of unique practices and procedures, there are lessons learned from which commercial organizations could profit. There are parallels between the business world and the military. There are numerous tactics and lessons that corporate organizations can discover and modify from the U.S. military (Sharma, 2014). The U.S. Army is known as a pioneer in creating learning infrastructures. Senge (1990) reported that the U.S. Army's learning infrastructure includes:

- Training and formal education: Institutions such as the Army War College, West Point, and the Military Academy provide a 12-month education program for senior positions within the U.S. Army.
- Practice: Physical and computer simulations are conducted to practice, and After Action Reports are utilized to examine and learn from the simulated exercise. An example of an innovative large-scale simulation is the National Training Area, where multiday simulations are conducted.
- Research: The U.S. Army's Center for Lessons Learned analyzes lessons learned to help formulate future education, training, simulations, which finally become doctrine.
- Doctrine: The Office for Doctrine is directed by a senior general and is responsible for integrating core assumptions and beliefs for facilitating a prosperous command.

Institutional Leadership

The U.S. military is known for displaying institutional leadership. Selznick (1957) described institutional leadership as,

...far more than the capacity to mobilize personal support; it is more than the maintenance of equilibrium through the routine solution of everyday problems; it is the function of the leader-statesman—whether of a nation or a private association—to define the ends of group existence, to design an enterprise distinctively adapted to these ends, and to see that the design becomes a living reality. These tasks are not routine; they call for continuous self-appraisal on the part of the leaders; and they may require only a few critical decisions over a long period of time. (p. 37)

Organization was the key to General George C. Marshall's successful institutional leadership. From September 1939 to November 1945, General Marshall performed his duties as the chief of staff by determining lessons learned from past events as well as an awareness of the institutional values that impacted organizational modernization. Additionally, General Marshall successfully led the U.S. Army by growing, streamlining, and preparing the U.S. Army for World War II. General Marshall focused his exceptional management skills on enhancing relationships between the U.S. Army and key organizations and leaders that shaped defense and security policy, as well as enhancing the U.S. Army's organizational capability and morale (Bland et al., 2017).

The U.S. Marine Corps is an example of institutional leadership. The Marines are known to resist actions that would change their identity. In 1950, President Truman favored Marine Corps affiliation over other branches of service on the Joint Chiefs of Staff describing them as a “‘propaganda machine’ like Stalin’s” (Selznick, 1957, p. 19). The president's favoritism of the

Marine Corps caused protest from other branches of service, which ended with an apology from the president.

Charismatic Leadership

The U.S. military is known for having charismatic leaders. Veterans of the Army, Navy, and Air Force may argue over who is the best leader in their own branch, although there is no debate that Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell “Chesty” Puller is the champion of the U.S. Marine Corps, the symbol of the institution. His attention-grabbing image is engraved forever into all Marine’s head practically from the start at boot camp or officer candidate school. General Puller’s grim, tough, square-jawed photo hangs on every major building throughout the Marine Corps. His name is repeated everyday like a mysterious spell, by officers and noncommissioned officers. His forceful words, courageous actions, and lively gestures are rooted into the culture of the organization (Hoffman, 2017).

General Puller is referred to as the most decorated Marine in history. Although, his heroism was only a minor component of his famous reputation. What Marines endeared about him most was his leadership style. As with other charismatic commanders, General Puller was capable of motivating and persuading his followers on a personal level. Certain leaders may appear to acquire naturally a charismatic personality; General Puller’s skills were embedded in his behavior and attitude from years of education and effort (Hoffman, 2017).

Conger and Kanungo (1998) identified three specific stages of a charismatic leader. First, the leader must decisively examine the status quo or current situation of the organization or institution. Charismatic leaders know how to use their available resources to the fullest and remove roadblocks that prevent obtaining goals. Additionally, charismatic leaders know the capabilities, needs, and level of satisfaction of their followers. Second, upon completion of

evaluating the situation and the followers' needs and satisfaction, the leader formulates and articulates goals. Finally, the leader explains how organizational goals will be accomplished. "It is along these three stages that we can identify behavioral components unique to charismatic leaders" (p. 49).

Championship Culture

According to Kapitulik and MacDonald (2019), to succeed on any battlefield, we must learn to defeat adversity. Maybe not at the same level experienced by U.S. military in Afghanistan, but corporation cutbacks, poor decisions by the umpire, injured or ill players, a weak economy, or other circumstances will challenge everyone. Regardless of hardship encountered, an organization's culture must facilitate the team's capability to accomplish the mission. To accomplish the mission on your selected battlefield and create a championship culture, an organization must:

- Acquire and retain the best people;
- Create goals and standards; and
- Hold one another accountable for achieving goals and upholding standards.

Leaders Are Role Models

War and business are extremely similar to each other. Kiyosaki (2015), a successful entrepreneur who was also a Marine Corps helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, reported both organizations (war and business) are difficult, often risky, environments. In addition, many people desire to be an entrepreneur, but do not possess the discipline, skills, or determination to continue to exist in business. Furthermore, instead of taking the risk to start their own businesses, generally, individuals pursue more secure work environments, favoring employment security and steady income to additional capital. Moreover, many people hang on to their job security because

of the fear of failing. Conventional schools train students to be employees; however, military schools make students leaders. Leaders are role models who hold themselves to a higher standard and lead by example. Additionally, leaders must also accept feedback and are not arrogant but humble. Kiyosaki (2015) reported that during his 4 years at the academy, he trained as an officer responsible for multimillion-dollar ships, filled with millions of dollars of cargo, and for a big crew conducting various jobs aboard the ship. As a result, “That training prepared me for leadership in the world of entrepreneurship” (p. 62). Storlie (2010), a 21-year Army veteran who served with the U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets), reports the following strategy that veterans can use while transitioning back into civilian life from the book *Combat leader to corporate leader: 20 lessons to advance your civilian career*.

- Understand: Comprehending how you, the Veteran, increases value to an organization. Veterans must leverage their skills and characteristics that they bring to a business. A veteran’s military skills can guide them to a lucrative corporate career. Military training and experience create a firm ethical groundwork, a devotion to greatness, as well as an extended group of professional veteran friends with whom to discuss ideas and common veteran errors. This networking will increase your understanding of the business, organization culture, and business relations, and identify how you can increase your worth to the organization’s effectiveness.
- Plan: Careful, thorough, well-timed, and resolute planning is critical to a prosperous business, just as it is to a military operation. Business and military planners must present sufficient information for a plan to be successful, but not so much detailed coordination and analysis that the window of opportunity is missed. Excellent planning includes comprehending the competition as well as the market’s situation

- and company mission statement. Furthermore, it includes comprehension of supporting tasks, procedures to foresee and overcome competitors' movements, and the ability to organize and harmonize the company's resources to achieve fully business goals. It also requires the leader to utilize proven methods to mitigate risk and guarantee an effective operation. Great planning facilitates the company's actions while considering the market, competition, risks, and resources available to guarantee achievement of goals.
- **Execute:** Effective execution and the competence to complete a plan successfully while achieving the indicated business goals and objectives, despite hurdles such as competitors or situation, is a real sign of a professional in the military or business. Excellent execution demands a comprehensive plan, wise leadership, team building, and astute management standards to execute effectively. Components of great execution include standard operating procedures to ensure routine procedures are constantly executed successfully, subsequent backup plans to guarantee tasks are constantly achieved successfully, the ability to establish and inspire teams to ensure organizational and individual achievement and make certain the plan stays on course despite any crisis. Last, if failure is pending, employ a thorough exit plan to decrease loss.
 - **Improve:** A major trait of being a great leader is having the skills to lead and improve an organization by recognizing vulnerabilities in individuals and processes. True improvement is manifested by continued improvement, the skill to get organizations to adjust enthusiastically when required, and for followers to recognize the change required in their behavior to achieve their career objectives. Finally, improvement is

constant; utilize action plans, planned training, and after-action plans to guarantee continuous improvement occurs and stays within the organization. Assist not only your business success, but other veterans as well. Utilize the after-action report to enhance operations, counseling sessions to increase followers' performance, and additional military procedures to improve other commercial demands.

Transitioning From the Military

Each year, nearly 200,000 service members depart the U.S. military and once again, become a civilian. This activity is called the military transition into civilian life (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). There are numerous policies to set up veterans for success after serving their country honorably. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act on June 22, 1944, additionally known as the G.I. Bill. The bill was instrumental in providing transition assistance for veterans for college education, housing, and unemployment insurance (National Archives, 2022). Furthermore, the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act of 2011 also increased opportunities for veterans to succeed upon their EAS, revising the DOD TAP by requiring counseling, employment, and training services (H.R.2433 - 112th Congress (2011-2012), 2011).

The most notable legislation that has impacted the TAP is the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. This key legislation authorized programs to support service members with pre-separation counseling and transition strategies. The 2019 defense act also enlarged the Small Business Association loan program by presenting professional assistance and training for service members on transitioning to employee ownership (H.R.5515 - 115th Congress (2017-2018), 2018). DOD 5124.10 lists the responsibilities and

functions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. The duties include developing policy and oversight of the DOD's TAP (DOD Directive 5124.10, 2018).

TAP Curriculum

DOD Instruction 1332.35 (2019) established policies and responsibilities for DOD TAP, which regulates training, information, and resources for all service members departing from the military to prepare them for the next chapter of their lives. Service members are educated in pursuing options such as education, locating a job in the civilian world, or becoming an entrepreneur. The intention of the TAP is to provide services and training to prepare veterans to pursue their postmilitary career goals. The program is an outcome-based curriculum that prepares service members for the civilian sector transition. The TAP curriculum provides resources, tools, services, and skills training required to meet the CRS established by each branch of military service. Before transitioning from the military, service members demonstrate achievement of the CRS in a confirmation procedure called Capstone. This process does provide the occasion for service members who may require further support with DOD affiliates (DODI 1332.35, 2019).

DODI 1332.35 (2019) requires the TAP curriculum to include:

- A Personal Self-Assessment Pinpoints service members' posttransition goals along with transition assistance required.
- Provide Departure/Transition Counseling: Provides counseling for service members on numerous services, tools, benefits, programs, along with other privileges for which veterans could be eligible.
- A DOD Transition Day: Provides resilience training required through transition. The training also pinpoints and converts service members' present military title

descriptions into their civilian counterpart and delivers financial training in preparation for transition.

- VA Benefits and Services: Delivers information on VA benefits that service members earned, along with how to apply for them.
- Department of Labor: Provides a summary of employment in the civilian sector.

Two-Day Tracks provides training according to the track selected by service members to complete their goals indicated in their individual self-assessment and post transition objectives.

These include:

- Department of Labor Employment Track: Provides instruction on numerous employment areas.
- DOD Education Track: Provides guidance on selecting a college/university, planning for the application, and expectations while attending.
- Department of Labor Vocational Track: Provides guidance in performing self-assessments to establish an occupational route that lines up with the service member's skills, attractions, and capabilities to find a vocational post transition career along with establishing a technical school.
- Small Business Association Entrepreneurship Track: Provides information on owning a business as well as self-employment within the private and nonprofit sectors.
- Capstone Review: The commanding officer or designee verifies accomplishment of the service member's CRS. If the service member did not achieve their CRS before departing the military, the commander or designee validates, verifies, and documents that the service member was directed to appropriate interagency partners or local resources.

TAP Timeline Example

Marine Corps Order 1700.31 stated that the mandatory TAP curriculum will be conducted at the TRS for separating service members. Service members who are pending discharge are authorized to attend TRS as early as 18 months prior to their EAS. Marine Corps Order 1700.31 also stated that service members must attend TRS no later than 180 days from their EAS. Retirees are authorized to attend TRS 24 months from their EAS, and no later than 180 days from their EAS (Marine Corps Community Services, 2022). By having service members start the transition process no later than 180 days from their EAS, there is sufficient time to complete CRS.

Conclusion

There are high levels of veteran disappointment pertaining to their return into civilian life (Schreger & Kimble, 2017). In 2019, congress authorized the John S. McCain National Defense Act to empower veterans during their transition back to civilian life. Additionally, the military transition training (TAP) that service members receive prior to their EAS is continuously improving and setting up veterans for a successful shift into civilian employment. There are numerous strategies and lessons that corporate organizations can learn from and modify from U.S. military veterans (Sharma, 2014). Scholars inform veterans to incorporate military procedures such as standard operating procedures and after-action reports into their new civilian occupation to exploit their leadership skills (Storlie, 2010). Veterans run the most powerful organization in the world: the U.S. military. Veterans also obtain incredible leadership training while in the military. Transitioning from the military into the civilian workplace is difficult, lengthy, and can be disappointing, especially for a combat veteran who can experience two major transitions simultaneously: The first transition being from a combat zone into peace, and the

second transition being the shift from a military culture into a civilian employment culture (Storlie, 2010). Veterans can utilize Senge's core disciplines to building a learning organization, the transition readiness seminar, and their military leadership experience and training to create strategies to implement as they make their move from being a senior military leader to a successful civilian leader.

Chapter 3: Methodology

U.S. military veterans can make incredible leadership contributions to the civilian community upon their transition out of the service. History has shown that the U.S. military has produced 31 out of 46 U.S. Presidents (DeSimone, 2021). Furthermore, data show that the median duration of a CEO in civilian organizations with military experience is 7.2 years, compared to a nonmilitary CEO, which is 4.6 years (Sharma, 2014). Many U.S. military veterans have made a successful transition into civilian leadership position. However, many veterans have found the transition overwhelming. Specifically, senior military veterans struggle with the transition of a new occupation as well as creating a new identity within a drastically different culture: a civilian culture where new leadership styles and strategies are required to lead successfully. Storlie (2010) reported that a veteran's transition from the military into a civilian job market is difficult, long-lasting, and usually disappointing. This study seeks to understand how senior military leaders transitioning out of the military may utilize Senge's (1990) five core disciplines within their new organization to create continuously the results they truly desire.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to increase knowledge of how to transition successfully from being a senior military leader into a civilian leadership position. Schreger and Kimble (2017) have shown high levels of veteran dissatisfaction in reference to transitioning back into civilian life. Louis (2019), a retired Army lieutenant colonel, reported assimilating into a new civilian culture is the most difficult phase of a veteran's transition. Adapting and contributing to their new environment is specifically where many veterans struggle and fail.

Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to building a learning organization, *The Fifth Discipline*, has been incorporated into dozens of corporations such as The World Bank, British Petroleum, Ford, Intel, HP, Saudi Armco, Unilever, Oxfam, and Roca.

A review of Senge's (1990) core disciplines revealed five themes to building a learning organization:

- *Systems Thinking*: "Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots" (Senge, 1990, p. 68).
- *Personal Mastery*: "Personal mastery is the phrase we use for the discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek" (Senge, 1990, p. 131).
- *Mental Models*: Mental models are how individuals comprehend the world as well as influence our thinking, comprehension, and reasoning (Senge, 1990).
- *Shared Vision*: A shared vision refers to the question of what a leader wants to create within an organization. A shared vision creates "a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities" (Senge, 1990, p. 192). A vision is shared once a leader and their followers have the same picture and are both dedicated to obtaining it by being bound together by their mutual desire.
- *Team Learning*: "Team learning is a process of aligning and developing the capacity of the team to create the results its members truly desire" (Senge, 1990, p. 218).

While there have been studies on U.S. military leaders transitioning back into the civilian workforce, there is inadequate information on how senior military leaders transition into civilian

leadership positions, specifically, utilizing Senge's core disciplines. By obtaining a deeper understanding of Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to build a learning organization, veterans will be better prepared to successfully lead their followers within their new civilian leadership role.

Research Questions

- Primary Research Question: What are the strategies applied by military leaders transitioning to civilian leaders?
- Research Question 1: What systems thinking strategies are applied?
- Research Question 2: What personal mastery strategies are applied?
- Research Question 3: What mental models' strategies are applied?
- Research Question 4: What shared vision strategies are applied?
- Research Question 5: What team learning strategies are applied?

Methodological Approach and Study Design

This study utilizes Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to building a learning organization for the basis for the theoretical framework to investigate successful strategies for senior military leaders transitioning into civilian leadership positions to facilitate successful learning organizations with positive results. The study focuses on SMVLs who have served in civilian leadership positions that encompass several different types of organizations such as nonprofit, entrepreneur, small privately owned businesses, as well as large well-known organizations. Veteran civilian leaders are described as individuals who have held or currently hold a position of leadership in which their title is recognized as being an upper-level leader. The researcher examined successful leadership approaches those veterans incorporated within their civilian organizations. The researcher located and studied veteran leaders by means of numerous

publicly available and unrestricted sources such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media.

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology design by incorporating narratives researched during the data collection process. Narratives collected by means of publicly available and unrestricted sources are examined with reference to the purpose of the study. Riessman (2020) describes narrative research as a design of inquiry in which the researcher studies the life of individuals. Additionally, individuals offer information by telling stories about their lives. The material is then collected by the researcher and frequently restated into a narrative chronology in which the researcher often blends the participant's life experience with themselves into a joint narrative. Furthermore, narrative inquiries are created around a particular phenomenon, usually research questions or research problems (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Terms associated with narrative inquiry are “personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of a place (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical three dimensional inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third. Using this set of terms, any particular inquiry is defined by this three-dimensional space: studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50).

A qualitative methodology approach was selected to provide a copious description of the complex phenomena that senior veteran leaders incorporate when successfully transitioning into their new civilian leadership roles. As Roberts and Hyatt (2018) reported, “Rather than generalizing information, the intent of qualitative research is to discover and illuminate the lived

experience associated with the study topic” (p. 148). Narrative inquiry facilitates a design to uncover leadership strategies researched within the study. Themes were gathered from the data by means of a thorough review of literature and are analyzed to ensure they support the essential attributes of veteran leaders who have successfully created a prosperous civilian learning organization.

Data Sources and Data Gathering Process

Without exception, any data collected was publicly accessible text. Additionally, during the study, there was no contact or communication made by the researcher with any human subjects. Therefore, this study meets the criteria for nonhuman subjects, thus not requiring Institutional Review Board approval. The researcher selected numerous publicly accessible data sources (published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media) to ensure diversity and “rich descriptions of the participant’s experiences” (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018, p. 148).

The researcher incorporated a data gathering procedure to facilitate a detailed and transparent record of the process utilized throughout the study. This permits readers to comprehend the exact data gathering process that includes how and when the data was collected. As a result, the document can be utilized by future researchers to replicate the study if so desired.

The researcher employed the narrative approach as the strategy of inquiry during data collection and analysis. Data were collected utilizing purposefully selected publicly available “documents or visual material that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2014, p. 189).

The purposefully selected sample characteristics of the study that were applied are:

- Information was gathered from people who had held the rank of O-3 or above.

Generally, military rank goes from E-1 to E-9 (enlisted) and O-1 to O-10 (officers).

Limitations

Roberts and Hyatt (2018) reported every study has certain limitations, such as limits related to methods design, population, sample size, and cultural or regional variations. The limitations identified with this study are as follows:

- The sample size of this study is limited to U.S. senior military leaders with the rank of O-3/Captain to O-10/General within the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.
- There are cultural and regional limitations because of the study only including the U.S. military.
- The methods design selected was qualitative. Further studies utilizing quantitative or mixed-methods research could investigate and expand on the topic further.

Credibility and Dependability

For validity, credibility, and dependability a second reviewer will also be employed to ensure creditability and dependability of the study, the researcher incorporated a systematic approach to safeguard creditability and dependability. First, the researcher applied triangularization, a process in which numerous and various publicly accessible sources were searched and reviewed for themes, such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, podcast, TED Talks, and social media. Diverse sources were used to identify common themes and to eliminate overlapping areas within the study. Next, the researcher applied disconfirming evidence by searching the data collected for information that is consistent with or disconfirms the themes of the study. Then, people external to the study were also used to ensure credibility and dependability of the study. To ensure credibility and dependability, a second

reviewer is utilized to analyze objectively the coding method of the researcher by applying the same coding procedures. Additionally, the second reviewer suggests any other themes gathered from their analysis of the data, separate from what the researcher had presented. Finally, to prevent definitional drifting of the coding process, the second reviewer and researcher tested the credibility and dependability of the coded data by reviewing it separately and comparing notes afterward for accuracy. Gibbs (2018) reported definitional drifting as a problem that occurs as a researcher creates codes incorrectly and is a type of inconsistency that the researcher should guard against by writing memos about their codes. To prevent definitional drift, the researcher, from the beginning of the coding process, created memos to remind the researcher and the second reviewer of what the thinking was behind each code and to use the memos later in the coding process to check for consistency.

Ethical Principles

As stated by Atkins et al. (2012), the researcher incorporated an ethical approach of anatomy from the initial planning stages, data collection, and analysis. At each stage the researcher asked: “is this action ethical? Is it honest and moral? Is it respectful of others and of key values?” (p. 30). These ethical considerations are more than a statement of actions taken by the researcher to safeguard anonymity. Ethical considerations also involve attention to issues such as how the researcher will react to unanticipated ethical issues since there are practically always unforeseen ethical issues in which can be life-changing, therefor, places the researcher in a position of enormous ethical responsibility (Atkins et al., 2012).

Researchers contribute to their field of study by conducting meticulous research that combines responsible methods while at the same time exhibiting extraordinary ethical principles (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018). “Social Science researchers need to be alert to the various constraints

around their research and to the ethical implications of any decisions they make” (Punch, 2013, p. 37). The researcher finished the CITI program’s course to ensure compliance of codes of ethics (view Appendix A). Additionally, the researcher utilized Creswell’s (2014) ethical considerations to ensure that the research was executed ethically while analyzing data.

The researcher incorporated the Belmont Report (1978) utilizing the three moral principles for respect.

- Respect for persons—Respect for persons includes two moral values. First, that people are studied as anonymous agents. Second, people with diminished independence are granted protection.
- Beneficence—Beneficence refers to being kind to people and looking out for their well-being. The two primary principles in beneficence are to do no harm and maximize benefits while minimizing harm.
- Justice—Justice refers to ensuring all people are treated equally, a fairness in distribution, and that no entitlements are denied.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis and interpretation must identify the steps taken by the researcher while analyzing the diverse types of qualitative data to facilitate comprehension of the text. “It involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together” (Creswell, 2014, p. 194). For this study, the researcher utilized Creswell’s (2014) five-step data analysis model to analyze and interpret the data:

1. Arrange the data for analysis. This step requires the researcher to consolidate all material and memos of researched data into different categories based on the sources of information.

2. Review all the data. This step delivers a viewpoint of all the information and allows a chance for the researcher to consider its overall meaning. It is during this time that the researcher will take notes, record thoughts, and create a sketchbook of concepts about the data.
3. Begin coding all the data. This step involves the researcher systematically organizing all the data into segments and assigning a word for each category gathered during the data collection process.
4. Utilizing the coding, create a description of the people, themes, categories, and setting for analysis.
5. Describe how the descriptions are represented.

Internal Study Dependability

The researcher utilized Roberts and Hyatt's (2018) dependability process, by "using a second reviewer who independently reviews the responses for consistency using the same coding process as the researcher" (p. 150). Additionally, Hyatt's (2017) 10-step procedure for dependability and trustworthiness of data analysis was utilized. Therefore, to create interreviewer reliability and to validate the dependability of this study:

1. The researcher investigates all data. Next, the researcher connects with the reviewer to discuss the coding procedures related to themes discovered.
2. The researcher chooses a transcript to explain to the second reviewer.
3. The researcher retains the copy of the transcript that has been analyzed and highlighted.
4. The second reviewer is provided with a copy of a clean transcript.

5. Prior to investigating the data, the researcher and second reviewer will review the transcript. Additionally, the researcher will respond to questions regarding the transcript.
6. The researcher helps the second reviewer in finishing the investigation of the transcript.
7. On the left side, meaning units are entered. explanations and conclusions are inserted on the right side. Once this is accomplished, the examination of the transcript is complete.
8. The second reviewer utilizes the exact process to the other transcripts without the researcher's aid.
9. Upon completion of all transcripts, the primary researcher and second reviewer will reunite and assess the collective findings, talk about variations, and reach an agreement on the outcome. A document will be designed to distinguish joint themes.
10. The standards for significant themes are when more than half of SMVL studied offer supportive data for the theme(s).

Researcher and Reflexivity

Creswell (2014) stated that reflexivity is how researchers think about their personal biases, culture, values, social economic status, and history that influence their analysis constructed throughout the study. Creswell and Miller (2000) reported:

It is particularly important for researchers to acknowledge and describe their entering beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds.
(p. 127)

The researcher ensured reflexivity was incorporated into the study by journaling during the entire research and data collection process.

Meyer and Willis (2018) stated that reflexivity journaling can assist a researcher in the progress of comprehending unforeseen research experiences and enhance consciousness of the researcher's biases to display a detailed understanding of the data, to investigate findings, and aid in the advancement of independent researchers. "Reflexive journaling can add a discursive component to decisions made throughout the research process and increase self-awareness, thereby enabling new researchers to more confidently make their way through the sometimes murky waters of qualitative research" (Meyer & Willis, 2018, p. 584). Reflexive journaling will be utilized by the researcher to assist in challenges during the study and help recognize positionality. Reflexive journaling will also assist the researcher with technical and ethical decisions during the study. The researcher's reflexive journal questions will be recorded spontaneously, prompted by self-conscious interests in relation to the research and how individual experiences may possibly influence the interpretation of the data. Furthermore, the researcher incorporated Rallis and Rossman's (2012) framework for reflexivity that requires the continuous interrogation of:

- What do I see?
- How and why do I see this?
- How might others see it?
- What does it mean to me?
- What does it mean to others? (p. 77)

Additionally, a systematic self-assessment was also utilized throughout the research process to identify personal biases.

Summary

In chapter 3, the researcher described how and why qualitative research methodology was used within the study. Second, the researcher discussed the purpose of the study. Third, the researcher identified research questions being asked during the study along with the methodological approach and study design. Fourth, the data sources of the study were listed as well as the data gathering procedures. Fifth, the researcher identified the limitations of the study. Sixth, the researcher declares credibility and dependability procedures to ensure the study is credible and dependable. Seventh, the researcher examines ethical considerations. Eighth, the proposed data analysis processes are detailed. Ninth, the researcher highlights methods to safeguard internal dependability of the study. Tenth, the researcher discussed how to manage reflexivity within the study. Eleventh, Chapter 4 explains the study's findings. Last, Chapter 5 describes the conclusion, implications of the study, along with any proposals for future study.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study utilized qualitative inquiry to explore senior military veterans who had incorporated Senge's (1990) learning disciplines as a strategy to successfully build a learning organization. "Learning in organizations means the continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose" (Senge et al., 1994, p. 49). The purpose of this study is to examine senior military leaders that have successfully moved into a civilian leadership position while incorporating Senge's (1990) core learning disciplines.

The primary research question of the study was: What are the strategies for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader? Senge's (1990) core disciplines to building a learning organization are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. These five disciplines are the foundation of this study and have been integrated into countless organizations such as Hewlett-Packard, British Petroleum, Ford, Intel, and Harley Davidson with positive results (Senge, 1990). This study seeks to identify leadership strategies for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader while incorporated Senge's (1990) five corps disciplines.

Chapter Structure

Chapter 4 first describes the purpose of the qualitative study and restates scholars who support Senge's (1990) core disciplines to building a learning organization. Next, the description of the sample and demographics of the veterans studied are described, and the research questions are reiterated as the theoretical framework of the study. Then, the findings by thematic categories are presented along with narratives with supporting graphics and direct quotes. The summary of key findings follows at the end of the chapter.

A comprehensive examination of literature related to Senge (1990) was conducted. There were many scholars who supported one or more of Senge's (1990) core disciples to building a learning organization as a leadership strategy. The following authors supported utilizing certain disciplines within an organization.

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing systems thinking includes Ackoff (1979), Allenby (2009), V. Anderson and Johnson (1997), Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E./1924), Bertalanffy (1984), Dutta (2017), Gharajedaghi (2011), Haidekker (2013), Higgins (2013), Kunz et al. (2013), Lewis (2008), J. O'Connor and McDermott (1997), G. P. Richardson (2003), Schaveling and Bryan (2017), Stacey (2010), Walker and Salt (2006), and Wright and Meadows (2009).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing personal mastery includes Badaracco (1992), Bandura (1997), Bouilloud et al. (2017), Brown (2017), Cook (1986), Foucault et al. (2019), Fritz (1989), Grojean et al. (2004), Hackett and Wang (2012), Klein (2002), Kouzes and Posner (2012), Kumar (2017), Laver et al. (2017), Masuda et al. (2010), Palanski and Yammarino (2007), J. M. Richardson (1982), Schwartz et al. (2005), Stangis and Kruschwitz (2011), Wilson (2002), and Yoeli and Berkovich (2010).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing mental models includes Aguilar (2020), Argyris (1982), Argyris et al. (1985), B. Cohen and Murphy (1984), Griffin (2015), Jagacinski and Miller (1978), Johnson-Laird (1983), Park and Gittelman (1995), Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), Senge et al. (1994), S. Taylor (2015), and Toffler (1970).

Scholarly support for leaders and organizations utilizing a shared vision are Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Kouzes and Posner (2012).

Scholarly support for organizations utilizing team learning includes Bonebright (2010), Edmondson (1999), Goh (2003), Hawkins (1994), Pearn et al. (1995), Pedler et al. (1997), Rowley and Gibbs (2008), and Savelsbergh and Storm (2012). Table 1, located in Chapter 2, illustrates the authors who support a particular learning discipline.

Description of Sample

The subsequent research questions were established based upon the veteran's studied. The description of the sample in this study is senior military officer leaders, who are classified as having obtained the rank of O-3/Captain or higher.

Demographics

To join the U.S. military, it is required that the applicant be a U.S. citizen or have a current permanent resident card (green card). The age of the veterans studied varies. The minimum age to join the U.S. military is 17. Some veterans studied may no longer be living. The maximum age of the veterans within the study is unknown. The applicant must be fluent in English, which includes speaking, reading, and writing English. Each applicant who desires to join the U.S. military must also be able to pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test. Each branch of service establishes its own minimum score to be eligible to join that service. Education requirements are that each applicant possess a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma to enlist. To be considered for an officer, an applicant must possess a 4-year degree or higher. Last, each applicant must pass a medical exam and physical fitness test to verify that they are healthy and fit enough to serve in the U.S. military (USA, 2023).

The subsequent research questions are based upon Senge's (1990) disciplines for building a learning organization as the theoretical framework:

- Research Question 1: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating systems thinking within an organization?
- Research Question 2: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating personal mastery within an organization?
- Research Question 3: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating mental models within an organization?
- Research Question 4: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a shared vision within an organization?
- Research Question 5: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating team learning within an organization?

The study utilized a qualitative approach by reviewing and collecting data by exploring narratives relevant to Senge's (1990) core learning disciplines for building a learning organization. A qualitative design of research was selected that "enables a researcher to obtain language and words of participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 191). To examine leadership strategies, narrative inquiry was used related to the five research questions. Narratives were collected by way of publicly available and unrestricted sources such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, and websites. The narratives were then analyzed for common subthemes within each of Senge's (1990) core disciplines.

Limitations

Roberts and Hyatt (2018) reported that all studies have limitations such as methods, design, population, sample size, and cultural or regional variations. The limitations identified in this study are as follows:

- The sample size of this study is limited to U.S. senior military leaders with the rank of O-3/Captain to O-10/General within the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.
- There are cultural and regional limitations because of the study only including the U.S. military.
- The research was performed exclusively on nonhuman subjects.
- The study was restricted to text discovered in publicly available and unrestricted resources such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media.
- The methods design selected was qualitative. Quantitative or mixed-methods research could investigate and expand on the topic further.

Data Analysis

The study incorporated Creswell's (2014) six-step data analysis model below to collect, examine, and interpret narrative data in preparation to identify themes and categories.

- Organize narratives and sort into categories depending on the source to prepare for data analysis.
- Review all data and determine the overall meaning of what the SMVL are saying. What are their ideas, are they credible? The researcher writes notes and thoughts within the margins of narratives.
- Begin coding all data by linking text and writing words identifying a category in the margins.
- Create a description of the people studied along with identifying themes or categories for analysis.

- Describe how themes are represented within the qualitative narrative.
- Translate the qualitative research findings and results.

The study incorporated an inductive process to create themes from data collected.

These themes are developed into patterns, theories, or generalizations that are compared with personal experience or with existing literature on the topic. The development of themes and categories into patterns, theories, or generalizations suggests varied end points for qualitative studies. (Creswell, 2014, p. 65)

This study's themes are composed of data collected from SMVL research and the literature review.

Means to Ensure Dependability and Trustworthiness of Data

To strengthen the reliability and credibility of analyzed data, Hyatt's (2017) 10-step procedure was incorporated by utilizing a second reviewer for the coding process.

1. The researcher investigates all data. Next, the researcher convenes with the second reviewer to discuss the procedures related to themes discovered.
2. The researcher chooses a transcript to explain to the second reviewer.
3. The researcher retains the copy of the transcript that has been analyzed and highlighted.
4. The second reviewer is provided with a clean copy of the transcript.
5. Prior to investigating the data, the researcher and second reviewer will review the transcript. Additionally, the researcher will address inquiries regarding the transcript.
6. The researcher helps the second reviewer in finishing the examination of the transcript.

7. On the left side, meaning units are entered. explanations and conclusions are inserted on the right side. Once this is accomplished, the examination of the transcript is complete.
8. The second reviewer utilizes the exact process to the other transcripts without the researcher's aid.
9. Once all transcripts are completed, the primary researcher and second reviewer will reunite and assess the collective findings, talk about variations, and come to an agreement on the conclusions. A form will be designed to distinguish joint themes.
10. The standards for significant themes are when more than half of SMVL studied offer supportive data for the theme(s).

Table 2 displays the coding process utilized between the researcher and second reviewer in reference to the first research question.

Table 2

Coding Comparison Sheet for Research Question 1: Systems Thinking Strategies

Senior Leader	Primary Researcher Themes	Second Reviewer Themes	Agree	Disagree	Final Subthemes
SMVL1	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long and short term of actions -Looks at underlining reasons	-Looks at the big picture, the whole. -Identifies ad test assumptions -Considers long and short term of actions -Looks at underlining reasons -Examines interrelationships		X	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions -Looks at underlining reasons -Examines interrelationships

Senior Leader	Primary Researcher Themes	Second Reviewer Themes	Agree	Disagree	Final Subthemes
SMVL2	-Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required	-Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required.	X		-Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions. -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required
SMVL3	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Considers long- and short-term actions	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Considers long- and short-term actions -Observes patterns of behavior/trends		X	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Considers long- and short-term actions -Observes patterns of behavior/trends
SMVL4	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Recognizes impacts of delays -Looks at underlining reasons	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Recognizes impacts of delays -Looks at underlining reasons	X		-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Recognizes impacts of delays -Looks at underlining reasons
SMVL5	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required	X		-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Evaluates feedback and makes changes when required
SMVL6	-Considers long- and short-term actions	-Considers long- and short-term actions	X		-Considers long- and short-term actions
SMVL7	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Observes patterns of behavior/trends -Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions	-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Observes patterns of behavior/trends -Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions	X		-Looks at the big picture, the whole -Examines interrelationships -Observes patterns of behavior/trends -Identifies and test assumptions -Considers long- and short-term actions.

The primary researcher and second coder independently analyzed all the data. Upon completion of the coding, the intercoder reliability coding was calculated. This is conducted by reporting the percentage of subthemes that the primary researcher and second reviewer agree on (Feng, 2014; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). C. O'Connor and Joffe (2020) reported, "Evaluating the intercoder reliability (ICR) of a coding frame is frequently recommended as good practice in qualitative analysis" (p. 1). The researcher used Landis and Koch's (1977) agreement measures below to interpret the intercoder reliability coding results.

- 0.00 Poor
- 0.00-0.20 Slight
- 0.21-0.40 Fair
- 0.41-0.60 Moderate
- 0.61-0.80 Substantial
- 0.81-1.00 Almost perfect. (p. 165)

Disagreements in coding were solved by reviewing subthemes and "jointly reviewing the articles until a consensus was reached" (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991, p. 245). The intercoder reliability coding results for the coding process is 0.91, which according to Landis and Koch's (1977), is almost perfect.

Research Results

The primary purpose of the research was to investigate how SMVLs incorporated Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to build a learning organization upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. The primary research question was: What are the strategies for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader? The researcher established five research questions to investigate learning organization strategies that may have been utilized by

senior military veterans in the past. The study identified 45 initial subthemes for building a learning organization. Next, a category was selected for each initial theme by comparing them to Senge's (1990) five core themes to building a learning organization: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.

Table 3 shows the 45 initial subthemes identified in relation to primary themes.

Table 3

Themes and Initial Subthemes for Each Research Question

Question	Theme	Subthemes
Research Question 1: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating systems thinking within an organization?	Systems Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks at the big picture (whole) Examines interrelationships Observes patterns of behavior/trends Recognizes impacts of delays Identifies and test assumptions, conducts experiments Considers long- and short-term consequences of actions Evaluate feedback and make changes when required Balances loops Looks at underlining reasons
Research Question 2: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating personal mastery within an organization?	Personal Mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually increases own and other people's capability Keeps learning alive/lifelong learner Creates a clear picture of current reality/creative tension Cultivates a new way of thinking Has insight of self-knowledge and self-understanding Conducts self-examination Continues to pursue a picture of what you want Tells the truth, is honest

Question	Theme	Subthemes
<p>Research Question 3: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating mental models within an organization?</p>	Mental Models	<p>Challenges assumptions/beliefs/status quo</p> <p>Is aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions</p> <p>Has capability to reflect on their actions</p> <p>Be aware of your and others' biases</p> <p>Slows down thinking processes to become more aware of mental models</p> <p>Openly share views and develop awareness of others' assumptions/develops inquiry skills</p> <p>Test current model of customers/conduct experiments</p> <p>Educates organization on the ladder of inference</p> <p>Encourages multiple perspectives</p>
<p>Research Question 4: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a shared vision within an organization?</p>	Shared Vision	<p>Instills a sense of purpose that brings people together</p> <p>Comprehends the organization's larger sense of purpose</p> <p>Creates a collective shared meaning</p> <p>Spreads shared vision through personal contact</p> <p>Creates an image of the desired future</p> <p>Maintains a fluid vision/vision will change</p> <p>Outlines the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose</p> <p>Is responsible for the vision/leadership by example</p> <p>Creates a calculated plan of the shared vision process</p>
<p>Research Question 5: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating team learning within an organization?</p>	Team Learning	<p>Aligns and develop the skills and capacities of teams to create desired results</p> <p>Develops reflection and inquiry skills of mental models</p> <p>Utilizes strategies within team for building a shared vision/shared aspiration</p> <p>Utilizes systems thinking as a tool for seeing things as a whole</p>

Question	Theme	Subthemes
		<p>Cultivates a collective desire to create something new</p> <p>Team develops their own ground rules for effective communication</p> <p>Facilitates team training for improving the organization's communication, problem-solving</p> <p>Creates a safe setting to discuss difficult subjects where team members feel safe to speak freely</p> <p>Creates organization/team assessment to identify current reality of organization</p> <p>Teams suspend their assumptions and avoid imposing their personal views</p>

Research Question 1 With Related Data

Research Question 1: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating systems thinking within an organization? The research question relates to systems-thinking strategies that may have been utilized by SMVL upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Systems thinking is defined as, “a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 68). Of the SMVLs studied, 100% incorporated initial subthemes of systems thinking within their civilian occupation. There were nine initial subthemes identified for systems thinking.

Upon completion of reviewing the data, the primary researcher and second reviewer identified three significant subthemes for systems thinking from seven sources in relation to the first research question. The three significant subthemes that were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVLs studied are: (a) looking at the big picture (four SMVL), (b) examine interrelationships (four SMVL), and (c) considers long- and short-term consequences of actions (four SMVL). Here are examples of the data collected.

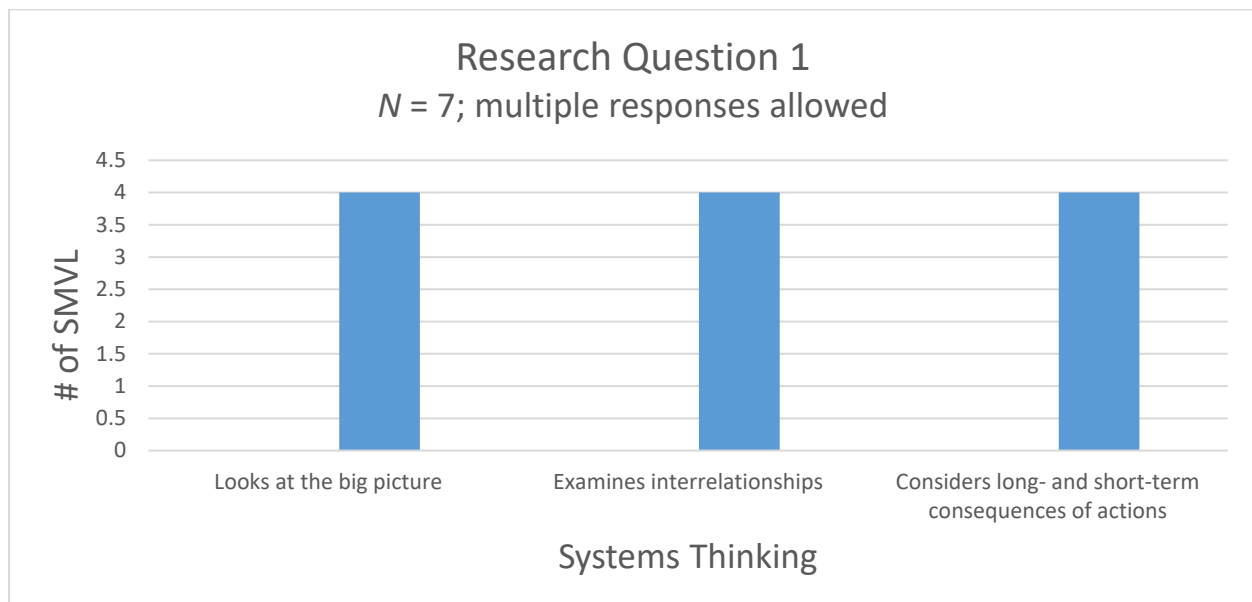
- Examine interrelations, areas within the organization such as accounting procedures and information technology that may appear not important but are the foundation of how contemporary companies successfully conduct business. Change the systematic issues that are causing problems within the organization, question the status quo. (SMVL1)
- We have a business that is being run poorly so different tests are being conducted. Feedback is evaluated, store managers are explaining to the chairman of the board that he is incorrect, and this is why. An effective leader listens to feedback and makes changes when required. (SMVL2)
- Companies are focusing on logistics and supply chains to be more competitive. Companies do not desire multiple suppliers, but instead yearn for an integrated strategy that includes connecting all points of the network through a central hub. (SMVL3)
- One of the primary issues within the cybersecurity industry is obtaining a security clearance which can cause delays in getting hired. Approximately 200,000 U.S. troops transition from the military each year who already possess a security clearance, so we have established this pathway for them to this industry so that these veterans can help protect our country from intellectual property theft from countries such as China and additional rogue countries. (SMVL4)
- The projects that this organization supports facilitate federal health agencies to enhance the delivery of healthcare by improving safety, quality, and the real time data exchange between systems. This allows quick responses to feedback which constantly boosts healthcare for veterans. (SMVL5)

- By looking at the long-term and short-term consequences of our actions, the organization eventually implemented our long-term plan which dramatically transformed our supply chain capabilities. The transformation occurred by modernizing and centralizing our production facilities. Additionally, we extended from a regional to a national market which led to the company becoming the dominant brand throughout the United States. (SMVL6)
- An organization must establish their own guideline for systems to determine what will be their process for generating income, along with the services and products offered. (SMVL7)

Figure 1 shows the total population sampled (N) along with the significant subthemes produced from Research Question 1.

Figure 1

Significant Subthemes Produced From RQ1



Research Question 2 With Related Data

Research Question 2: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating personal mastery within an organization? The research question relates to personal-mastery strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Personal mastery is defined as, “the phrase we use for the discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek” (Senge, 1990, p. 131). Of the SMVLs studied, 100% incorporated initial subthemes of personal mastery within their civilian occupation. There were eight initial subthemes identified for personal mastery.

Upon completion of reviewing the data, the primary researcher and second reviewer identified two significant subthemes for personal mastery from seven sources in relation to the second research question. The two significant subthemes that were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVLs studied are: (a) Continually increases own and other people’s capability (seven SMVL), and (b) has insight of self-knowledge and self-understanding (four SMVL). Here are examples of the data collected.

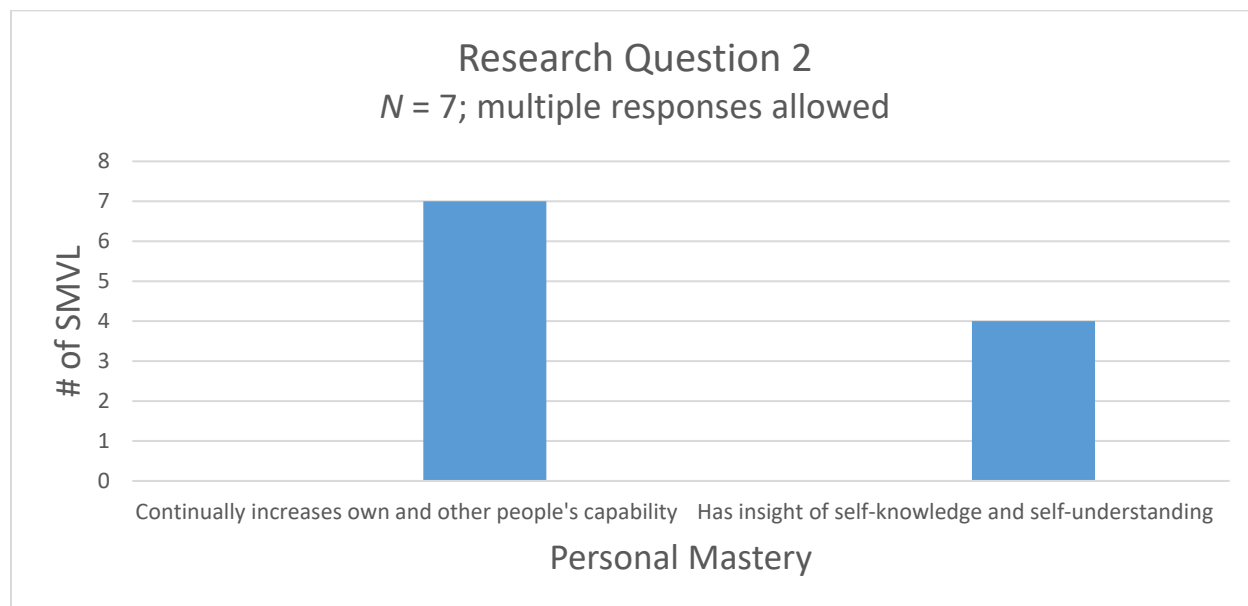
- A leader must have insight into their knowledge and skills. Military leadership skills are passed on to civilian corporate jobs, they are transferable. Effective leaders take their leadership skills and knowledge with them as they depart into new organizations. As a leader you must have the capability to define your reality. (SMVL1)
- One of the most important leadership skills is to be honest. The second is to seek personal results and to develop others. I am committed to building on our success and continuing our organization’s progress. (SMVL2)

- One of the most important duties of a leader is to ensure that the learning and education of your organization is continuous. Also, cultivating a new way of thinking is crucial, having an effective strategy to facilitate a culture of innovation. (SMVL3)
- Whether you served 20 years in the military or two years, it does not matter. The experience is going to improve your life. Veterans do not have to transition out of the military as a General. You can transition out as a Sergeant or as a Captain, like me, and still accomplish amazing things due to the years of developing your character while in the service. (SMVL4)
- After I transitioned out of the Army. I wanted to offer a new perspective on hiring and training veterans for jobs after their military service. I passionately wanted to stay connected to the military after my personal transition. This desire is what fueled me to create my own business and transform and modernize the government's health care. (SMVL5)
- My military experience had a massive impact on me and was an enormous value during my life. This experience led to the creation of a strong organization culture of my organization that included physical and mental toughness. My military experience included managing several hundred men, a large amount of equipment, and difficult logistical challenges. This taught me leadership skills, maintaining a sharp appearance, and the value of discipline. (SMVL6)
- My goal is to increase the cooperation with federal agencies, non-profits, education institutions, and commercial entities to increase the success of women veterans that own small businesses. This is accomplished by removing any obstacles that may stand in their way to benefit their success. (SMVL7)

Figure 2 shows the total population sampled (N) along with the significant subthemes produced from Research Question 2.

Figure 2

Significant Subthemes Produced From RQ2



Research Question 3 With Related Data

Research Question 3: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating mental models within an organization? The research question relates to mental model strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Mental models are how individuals comprehend the world as well as influence our thinking, comprehension, and reasoning (Senge, 1990). Of the SMVLs studied, 100% incorporated initial subthemes of mental models within their civilian occupation. There were nine initial subthemes identified for mental models.

Upon completion of reviewing the data, the primary researcher and second reviewer identified three significant subthemes from seven sources in relation to the third research question. The three significant subthemes identified as being utilized by a majority of the

SMVLs studied are: (a) Challenges assumptions, beliefs, and status quo (six SMVL); (b) is aware of generalizations, assumptions, and beliefs that influence our actions (five SMVL); and (c) has capability to reflect on actions (four SMVL). Below are examples of the data collected.

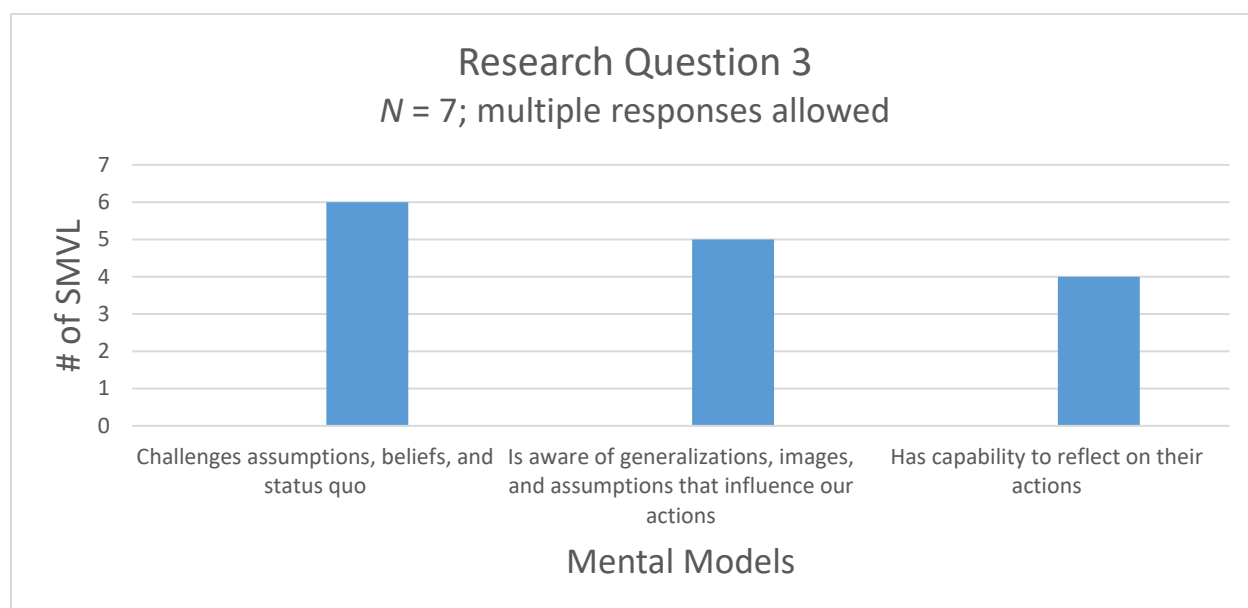
- You must be willing to challenge the status quo. The way in which your industry or organization has operated in the past may be flawed. No matter how biased you are to the methods of the past. You must have the capability to define the current reality and axe some of the past methods that have been a major part of the organization. (SMVL1)
- Remember to listen and ask questions, encourage multiple perspectives. (SMVL2)
- Today, it is difficult to recall when organizations did not have the capability to ship their products overnight. I remember challenging these assumptions and beliefs and was able to do the unthinkable. (SMVL3)
- My passion was to address the urgent need for improving health care for veterans, specifically mental health. I have seen the mental health challenges firsthand while serving in the Army and unwaveringly campaigned to erase the stigma of military veterans from seeking mental health treatment. (SMVL4)
- Being different can make you vulnerable. While an intern on Capitol Hill, I was astonished about how people were ignoring common-sense solutions on important issues such as obtaining the right equipment and care for our troops. Most members remained biased to their party. Reflecting on these actions I observed a large disconnect of what troops really required. Being aware of these biases, I thought to myself, I can do a better job than this. So, I created my own company to address these issues myself. (SMVL5)

- By challenging the status quo, we transformed our supply chain capabilities by centralizing all production and distribution in one location. We also expanded our market share from a regional to national basis. People within the industry were asking how our small and young company had risen to be the industry leader so quickly. (SMVL6)
- Reflecting on your actions is critical so that you can learn from your mistakes and give your best to your organization. When you are your best, we set the example for others to be excellent. Additionally, when we are excellent as leaders, we are telling others that they need to be excellent too, to step up their game. Lastly, when we are excellent, and join with other excellent people, excellence occurs. (SMVL7)

Figure 3 shows the total population sampled (N) along with the significant subthemes produced from Research Question 3.

Figure 3

Significant Subthemes Produced From RQ3



Research Question 4 With Related Data

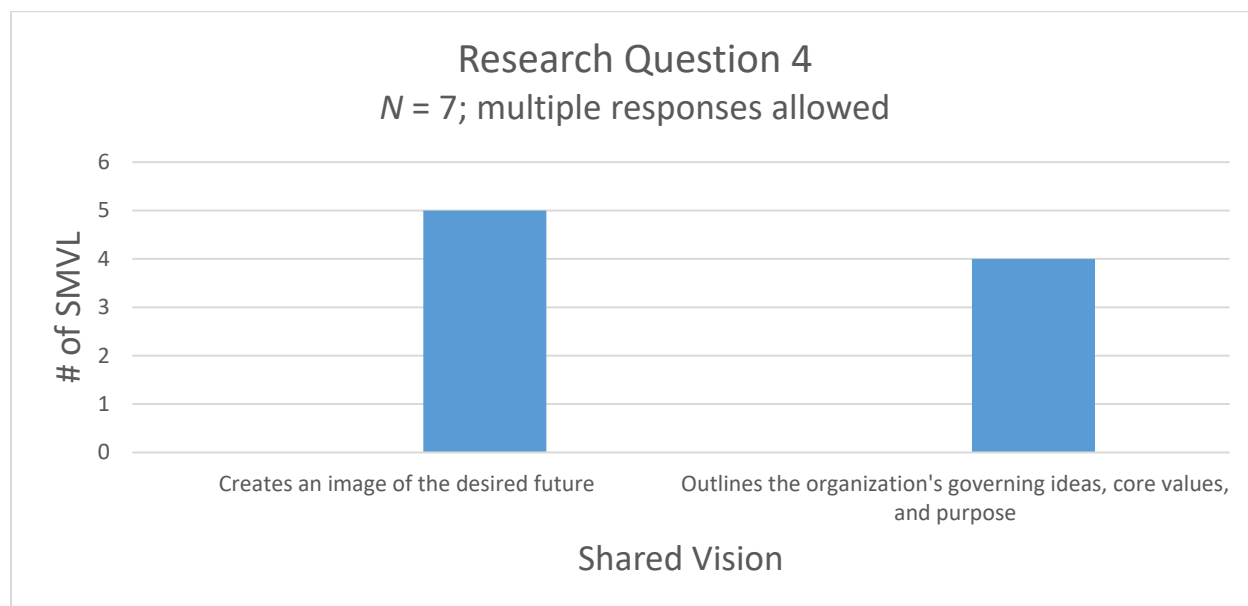
Research Question 4: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a shared vision within an organization? The research question relates to shared vision strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Shared vision “refers to the question of what a leader wants to create within an organization. A shared vision creates a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities” (Senge, 1990, p. 192). Of the SMVLs studied, 100% incorporated initial subthemes of a shared vision within their civilian occupation. There were nine initial subthemes identified for creating a shared vision.

Upon completion of reviewing the data, the primary researcher and second reviewer identified two subthemes for shared vision from seven sources in relation to the fourth research question. The two subthemes identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVL studied are: (a) creates an image of the desired future (five SMVL), and (b) outlines the organization’s governing ideas, core values, and purpose (four SMVL). Below are examples of the data collected.

- We share a common vision for the organization and are heading in the right direction, which has resulted in the best quarterly profit in six years. (SMVL1)
- The organization is set to profit tremendously due to our clear vision and incredible talent throughout the company, which is critical to our long-term growth. (SMVL2)
- The key to success is creating a successful strategy that outlines the organization’s purpose in which all employees grasp. Employees must recognize that the organization must constantly be changing. Consequently, visions will change as well, or your organization will end up out of business. (SMVL3)

- Our vision is focused on being innovative and efficient, holding each other accountable, and molding the future of veteran's assistance and empowerment. (SMVL4)
- Our organization's shared vision is improving healthcare by designing, creating, and modernizing applications for the government to facilitate enhanced security and health for all Americans. (SMVL5)
- Our clear vision and focus of effort are to be recognized as the leading company within the food industry due to our value to the marketplace and a strong foundation of excellence within the organization. (SMVL6)
- Our vision brings substantial value to the federal government by focusing on people by continuously improving our processes and technology to increase opportunities for women veterans who own small businesses. (SMVL7)

Figure 4 shows the total population sampled (N) along with the significant subthemes produced from Research Question 4.

Figure 4*Significant Subthemes Produced From RQ4****Research Question 5 With Related Data***

Research Question 5: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a team learning within an organization? The research question relates to team-learning strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. “Team learning is a process of aligning and developing the capacity of the team to create the results its members truly desire” (Senge, 1990, p. 218). Of the SMVLs who were studied, 100% incorporated initial subthemes of team learning within their civilian occupation. There were 10 initial subthemes identified for team learning.

Upon completion of reviewing the data, the primary researcher and second reviewer identified two significant subthemes from seven sources in relation to the fifth research question. Two of the subthemes were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVLs studied: (a) aligns and develops the skills and capacities of teams to create desired results (five SMVL), and

(b) cultivates a collective desire to create something new (six SMVL). Here are examples of the data collected.

- I asked team members to give three or four examples of issues within the organization that need reforming. I mentioned that if it is no longer working, then we must stop doing it. An effective leader must be patient with their team and allow members to speak freely and constructively. (SMVL1)
- It has been an honor to be the CEO of this company. The company's performance and success are a direct result of our teams' robust sales for the last 19 quarters. We have achieved this success collectively by having exceptional teamwork throughout the entire organization. (SMVL2)
- We had to embrace information technology, team members had to create new methods to keep up with the market and technology. We created a whole new process. (SMVL3)
- We unite with organizations such as the government, research laboratories, academia, cyber security, think tanks, media, and professional sports so that we can train and develop this country's next generation of leaders. (SMVL4)
- I am proud of the progress that this organization has achieved, which is due to the loyalty and commitment of the entire team. You all have established a new standard of excellence. (SMVL5)
- Our team members are action oriented and maintain a close relationship with their customers. Team members possess advanced technological capabilities and are committed to providing quality products and outstanding customer satisfaction. The

organization displays an energetic team effort in which is united in purpose.

(SMVL6)

- Our team’s mission is to bring partnerships together to collaborate about how we collectively can increase access and learning opportunities for women veterans that own or desire to own small businesses. (SMVL7)

Figure 5 shows the total population sampled (*N*) along with the significant subthemes produced from Research Question 5.

Figure 5

Significant Subthemes Produced From RQ5

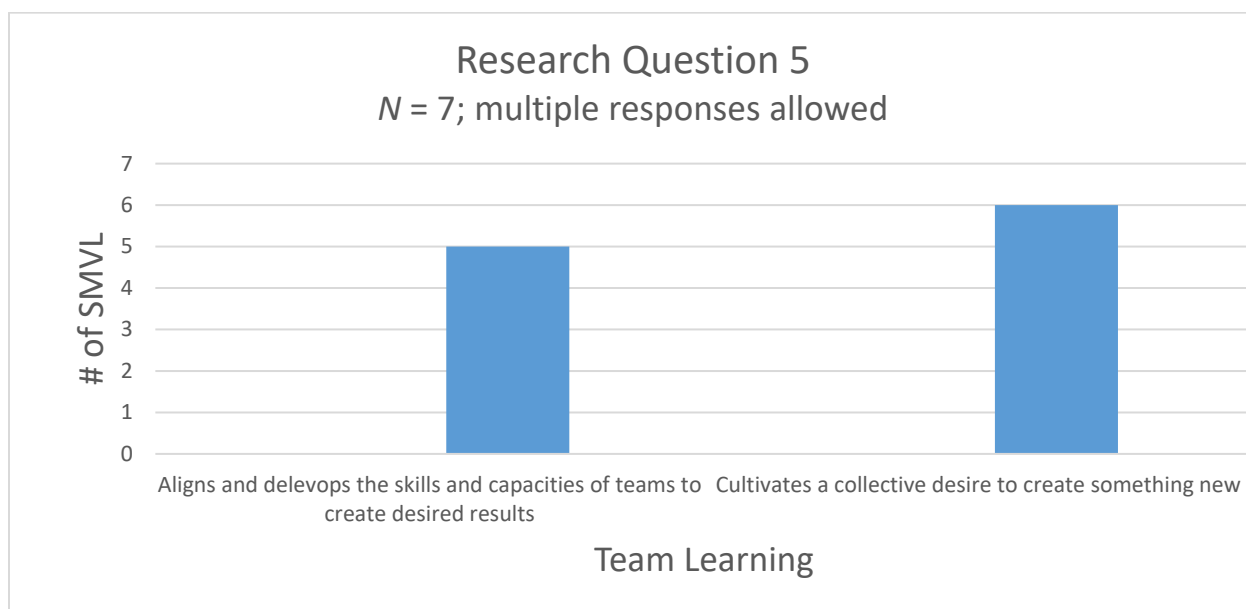


Table 4 shows significant subthemes for each research question.

Table 4

Significant Subthemes

Question	Theme	Significant Subthemes
Strategies for creating	Systems Thinking	Looks at the big picture (whole)
Strategies for creating		Examines interrelationships

Question	Theme	Significant Subthemes
systems thinking		Considers long- and short-term consequences of actions
Strategies for creating personal mastery	Personal Mastery	Continually increases own and other people's capability Has insight of self-knowledge and self-understanding
Strategies for creating mental models	Mental Models	Challenges assumptions/beliefs/status quo Is aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions Has capability to reflect on their actions
Strategies for creating Shared vision	Shared Vision	Creates an image of the desired future Outlines the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose
Strategies for creating team learning	Team Learning	Aligns and develop the skills and capacities of teams to create desired results Cultivates a collective desire to create something new

Summary

Chapter 4 concluded with a reporting of the research findings. Seven SMVL sources were examined based upon five research questions. The data analysis shows the five primary themes for SMVLs' transitioning into a civilian leadership role as systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. The five primary themes included 45 initial subthemes which were narrowed down to the following 12 subthemes as being utilized by most of the SMVLs studied within their civilian organization:

- Looking at the big picture,
- Examining interrelationships,
- Considering long- and short-term consequences of actions,
- Continuously increasing their own and other's capabilities,

- Having insight of self-knowledge and understanding,
- Challenges assumptions/beliefs/status quo,
- Being aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions,
- Having the capability to reflect on those actions,
- Creating an image of the desired future,
- Outlining the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose,
- Aligning the skills and capacities of teams to create the desired results, and
- Cultivating a collective desire to create something new.

Last, an interpretation of the study issue, key findings, study conclusions, implications for practice, studies limitations, recommendations for future research, and closing comments are depicted in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of Findings and Study Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and conclusions of the study. First, the chapter opens with a summary of the studies underlying issue. Next, the theoretical framework utilized, along with the methodology and methods of the study. Then, key findings, study's conclusions, and implications for practice are reviewed. Finally, limitations, internal study validity, and recommendations for future research are presented along with closing comments.

Summary of the Study Issue

The DOD has approximately 1.4 million service members within the four military branches. Every year, approximately 200,000 service members transfer from active duty military and reenter into their civilian community (Derefinko et al., 2018). For many service members, this reentry is successful. Nevertheless, some veterans struggle with this major transition. Most veterans serve honorably while in the military but may experience a difficult transition back to civilian employment. The significance of this problem is that veterans risk their lives and place their families in hardships so that they can safeguard their country, then reenter into their civilian communities where they face a psychological battle: The challenge of being a leader within the civilian world. Studies have shown “high rates of veteran dissatisfaction with respect to their reentry into civilian life as well as disproportionate rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and alcohol/substance abuse” (Schreger & Kimble, 2017, p. 12). Military veteran leaders are accustomed to their followers' respecting authority, being disciplined, and having an instant willing obedience to their orders. Service members who don't comply with their orders are subject to legal punishment or discharge. Veterans can discover that transitioning from a

military leader into a civilian leader is complicated, prolonged, and usually upsetting (Storlie, 2010).

The purpose of the study was to explore Senge's (1990) core disciplines to build a learning organization for SMVL's transitioning into civilian leadership positions. The study investigates Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*, as a strategy for veterans creating a learning organization. Veterans are provided transition training prior to their discharge from the military at the transition assistance seminar. However, there is a lack of literature on how senior military leaders make their transition into civilian leadership positions. By investigating Senge's (1990) five disciplines of creating a learning organization, senior military leaders will be more informed and prepared for making their transition into civilian leadership positions despite the cultural and leadership differences between the military and civilian workplace.

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to building a learning organization supplied the theoretical framework for this research study. An investigation of scholarly literature strengthened the framework for this study with many scholars supporting Senge's (1990) core disciplines to building a learning organization. The five core disciplines include systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Senge (1990) implemented the principles of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team building as a strategy to identify and increase patterns of thinking, to incorporate collective actions, and to facilitate continuous learning to achieve the results desired.

Senge's (1990) five core disciplines are defined as:

- *Systems thinking*: “Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 68).
- *Personal mastery*: “Personal mastery is the phrase we use for the discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek” (Senge, 1990, p. 131).
- *Mental models*: Mental models are how individuals comprehend the world as well as influence our thinking, comprehension, and reasoning (Senge, 1990).
- *Shared vision*: A shared vision refers to the question of what a leader wants to create within an organization. A shared vision creates “a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities” (Senge, 1990, p. 192).
- *Team learning*: “Team learning is a process of aligning and developing the capacity of the team to create the results its members truly desire” (Senge, 1990, p. 218).

Additionally, Senge (1990) explained how organizations can eradicate learning disabilities within their organization by implementing the five core disciplines. The result is patterns of thinking are encouraged along with collective goals being freed. By embracing the five core disciplines, leaders and their followers become united in generating the results that they truly desire.

Table 5 shows Senge’s (1990) five core disciplines to building a learning organization along with authors who are in alignment with a particular discipline.

Table 5

Five Disciplines to Building a Learning Organization and Authors in Alignment With Each

Discipline

Systems Thinking	Personal Mastery	Mental Models	Shared Vision	Team Learning
Ackoff (1979)	Badaracco (1992)	Aguilar (2020)	Bennis and	Bonebright (2010)
Allenby (2009)	Bandura (1997)	Argyris (1982)	Nanus (1985)	Edmondson (1999)
V. Anderson and Johnson (1997)	Bouilloud et al. (2017)	Argyris et al. (1985)	Kouzes and Posner (2012)	Goh (2003)
Aristotle (ca. 350 B.C.E./1924)	Brown (2017)	B. Cohen and Murphy (1984)		Hawkins (1994)
Bertalanffy (1984)	Cook (1986)	Griffin (2015)		Pearn et al. (1995)
Dutta (2017)	Foucault et al. (2019)	Jagacinski and Miller (1978)		Pedler et al. (1997)
Gharajedaghi (2011)	Fritz (1989)	Johnson-Laird (1983)		Rowley and Gibbs (2008)
Haidekker (2013)	Grojean et al. (2004)	Park and Gittelman (1995)		Savelsbergh and Storm (2012)
Higgins (2013)	Hackett and Wang (2012)	Rumelhart and Ortony (1977)		
Kunz et al. (2013)	Klein (2002)	Senge et al. (1994)		
Lewis (2008)	Kouzes and Posner (2012)	S. Taylor (2015)		
O'Connor and McDermott (1997)	Kumar (2017)	Toffler (1970)		
G. P. Richardson (2003)	Laver et al. (2017)			
Schaveling and Bryan (2017)	Masuda et al. (2010)			
Stacey (2010)	Palanski and Yammarino (2007)			
Walker and Salt (2006)	J. M. Richardson (1982)			
Wright and Meadows (2009)	Schwartz et al. (2005)			
	Stangis and Kruschwitz (2011)			
	Wilson (2002)			
	Yoeli and Berkovich (2010)			

Summary of Methodology and Methods

This study applies a qualitative methodology design by integrating narratives researched through the data gathering process. Narratives were collected by searching publicly available and unrestricted sources with reference to the purpose of the study and research questions. Riessman (2020) described narrative research as a design of inquiry where the researcher investigates the life of persons being studied. Additionally, people being studied offer data by telling life experiences. The data is then collected by the researcher and paraphrased into a narrative history

that the researcher often combines the participant's life experience with themselves into a shared narrative. Furthermore, narrative inquiries are generated from a certain phenomenon, usually research questions or research problems (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

A qualitative methodology approach was selected to provide a copious description of the complex phenomena that senior veteran leaders incorporate when successfully transitioning into their new civilian leadership roles. As Roberts and Hyatt (2018) reported, "Rather than generalizing information, the intent of qualitative research is to discover and illuminate the lived experience associated with the study topic" (p. 148). Narrative inquiry enables a design to reveal leadership strategies researched within this study. Themes were gathered from the data by conducting a detailed review of literature and examined to verify they support the necessary aspects of senior veteran leaders who have successfully created a flourishing civilian learning organization. Data were collected utilizing purposefully selected publicly available "documents or visual material that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Creswell, 2014, p. 189).

All data collected for this study is publicly accessible text. There also was no contact or communication made by the researcher with any human subjects. Therefore, this study meets the criteria for nonhuman subjects, thus not requiring Institutional Review Board approval. The researcher selected numerous publicly accessible data sources (published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media) to ensure diversity and "rich descriptions of the participant's experiences" (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018, p. 148).

The researcher incorporated Creswell's (2014) data gathering procedure to safeguard a thorough and transparent recording of the process. This allows readers to understand the exact

data gathering process of how and when the data was collected. As a result, the document can be utilized by future researchers to replicate the study if needed.

Creswell's (2014) six-step data analysis:

- Organize narratives and sort into categories depending on the source to prepare for data analysis.
- Review all data and determine the overall meaning of what the SMVL are saying. What are their ideas, are they credible? The researcher writes notes and thoughts within the margins of narratives.
- Begin coding all data by linking text and writing words identifying a category in the margins.
- Create a description of the people studied along with identifying themes or categories for analysis.
- Describe how themes will be represented within the qualitative narrative.
- Interpret the qualitative research findings and results.

The study incorporated an inductive process to create themes from data collected.

These themes were developed into patterns, theories, or generalizations that were compared with personal experience or with existing literature on the topic. The development of themes and categories into patterns, theories, or generalizations suggests varied end points for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014, p. 65).

This study's themes are composed of data collected from SMVL's research.

Summary of Key Findings

Conclusion 1

Research Question 1 asked: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating systems thinking within an organization? This research question relates to systems-thinking strategies that may have been utilized by SMVL upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. The three significant subthemes that appeared from the data were (a) looking at the big picture (four SMVL), (b) examine interrelationships (four SMVL), and (c) considers long- and short-term consequences of actions (four SMVL). Below are examples of SMVL strategies within civilian organizations.

- Strategy (a) Companies are focusing on logistics and supply chains to be more competitive. Companies do not desire multiple suppliers, but instead yearn for an integrated strategy that includes connecting all points of the network through a central hub. (SMVL3)
- Strategy (b): Examine interrelations, areas within the organization such as accounting procedures and information technology that may appear not important but are the foundation of how contemporary companies successfully conduct business. Change the systematic issues that are causing problems within the organization, question the status quo. (SMVL1)
- Strategy (c): By looking at the long-term and short-term consequences of our actions, the organization eventually implemented our long-term plan which dramatically transformed our supply chain capabilities. The transformation occurred by modernizing and centralizing our production facilities. Additionally, we extended

from a regional to a national market which led to the company becoming the dominant brand throughout the United States. (SMVL6)

Conclusion 2

Research Question 2 asked: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating personal mastery within an organization? This research question relates to personal-mastery strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Two significant subthemes for personal mastery were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVL studied: (a) Continually increases own and other people's capability (seven SMVL), and (b) has insight of self-knowledge and self-understanding (four SMVL). Below are examples of SMVL's personal-mastery strategies within civilian organizations.

- Strategy (a): One of the most important duties of a leader is to ensure that the learning and education of your organization is continuous. Also, cultivating a new way of thinking is crucial, having an effective strategy to facilitate a culture of innovation. (SMVL3)
- Strategy (b): A leader must have insight into their knowledge and skills. Military leadership skills are passed on to civilian corporate jobs, they are transferable. Effective leaders take their leadership skills and knowledge with them as they depart into new organizations. As a leader you must have the capability to define your reality. (SMVL1)

Conclusion 3

Research Question 3 asked: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating mental models within an organization? This research question relates to mental models'

strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Three significant subthemes' categories were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVL studied: (a) Challenges assumptions, beliefs, and status quo (six SMVL); (b) is aware of generalizations, assumptions, and beliefs that influence our actions (five SMVL); and (c) has capability to reflect on actions (four SMVL). Below are examples of SMVL's mental model strategies within civilian organizations.

- Strategy (a): By challenging the status quo, we transformed our supply chain capabilities by centralizing all production and distribution in one location. We also expanded our market share from a regional to national basis. People within the industry were asking how our small and young company had risen to be the industry leader so quickly. (SMVL6)
- Strategy (b): Today, it is difficult to recall when organizations did not have the capability to ship their products overnight. I remember challenging these assumptions and beliefs and was able to do the unthinkable. (SMVL3)
- Strategy (c): Reflecting on your actions is critical so that you can learn from your mistakes and give your best to your organization. When you are your best, we set the example for others to be excellent. Additionally, when we are excellent as leaders, we are telling others that they need to be excellent too, to step up their game. Lastly, when we are excellent, and join with other excellent people, excellence occurs. (SMVL7)

Conclusion 4

Research Question 4 ask: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a shared vision within an organization? This research question relates to shared vision

strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. In this study, two subthemes for creating a shared vision were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVL studied: (a) creates an image of the desired future (five SMVL), and (b) outlines the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose (four SMVL). Below are examples of SMVL's shared vision strategies found within civilian organizations.

- Strategy (a): Our organization's shared vision is improving healthcare by designing, creating, and modernizing applications for the government to facilitate enhanced security and health for all Americans. (SMVL5)
- Strategy (b): The key to success is creating a successful strategy that outlines the organization's purpose in which all employees grasp. Employees must recognize that the organization must constantly be changing. Consequently, visions will change as well, or your organization will end up out of business. (SMVL3)

Conclusion 5

Research Question 5: What are the senior military veteran leadership strategies for creating a team learning within an organization? This research question relates to the theme of team-learning strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs upon transitioning into civilian leadership positions. Two significant subthemes were identified as being utilized by a majority of the SMVLs studied: (a) aligns and develops the skills and capacities of teams to create desired results (five SMVL), and (b) cultivates a collective desire to create something new (six SMVL). Below are examples of SMVL team learning strategies within civilian organizations.

- Strategy (a): We had to embrace information technology, team members had to create new methods to keep up with the market and technology. We created a whole new process. (SMVL3)
- Strategy (b): I am proud of the progress that this organization has achieved, which would not have been feasible without the commitment and dedication of the whole team. (SMVL5)

Overview of Results

This study investigated Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to build a learning organization for SMVL's transitioning into civilian leadership positions. A qualitative methodology design was utilized by researching narratives through the data gathering process. Themes were collected from the data by means of a thorough review of literature and SMVLs who have designed a thriving civilian learning organization. Data were collected utilizing purposefully selected publicly available "documents or visual material that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Creswell, 2014, p. 189).

The primary research question was: What are the strategies for transitioning from a senior military leader to a civilian leader? The researcher created five research questions from Senge's (1990) five core disciplines to explore learning organization strategies that may have been utilized by SMVLs in the past. The five primary themes for the SMVLs studied are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Consequently, the study discovered 45 initial subthemes for building a learning organization.

The 45 initial subthemes were narrowed down to 12 subthemes as being utilized by most of the SMVLs studied within their civilian organization. The key findings are systems-thinking strategies include looking at the big picture, examining interrelationships, and considering long-

and short-term consequences of actions. Second, personal-mastery strategies include continuously increasing their own and other's capabilities and having insight of self-knowledge and understanding. Third, mental-model strategies include being aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions; and having the capability to reflect on those actions. Fourth, shared-vision strategies include creating an image of the desired future, and outlining the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose. Fifth, team-learning strategies include aligning the skills and capacities of teams to create the desired results and cultivating a collective desire to create something new.

Implications for Practice

The findings and conclusions reflect that Senge's (1990) five core disciplines can be utilized as a successful strategy by SMVLs who are departing the U.S. military and entering civilian leadership positions. Of the data points (systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning) 100% were found to be utilized by all seven SMVLs who were examined in this study. SMVLs studied included many prosperous leadership roles within their new civilian communities. Roles such as CEOs of *Fortune* 500 companies, entrepreneurs, nonprofit, politician, government agencies, and other miscellaneous civilian leadership roles.

Taken together, these findings have identified highly effective strategies for SMVLs within their new role as a civilian leader. As such, Senge's (1990) five core disciplines are recommended as a leadership strategy for SMVLs as they enter the civilian workforce. Table 6 shows successful strategies utilized by SMVLs studied after they entered their new civilian leadership role.

Table 6*Strategies Demonstrated by SMVLs Creating a Learning Organization as a Civilian Leader*

Systems Thinking	Personal Mastery	Mental Models	Shared Vision	Team Learning
Looks At the big picture (whole)	Continually increases own and other people's capability	Challenges assumptions, beliefs, and status quo	Creates an image of the desired future	Aligns and develop the skills and capacities of teams to create desired results
Examines interrelationships	Has insight of self-knowledge and self-understanding	Is aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions	Outlines the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose	Cultivates a collective desire to create something new
Considers long and short term consequences of actions		Has capability to reflect on their actions		

Study Limitations

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- SMVLs studied were commissioned in the United States armed forces with the ranks of O-3 Captain to O-10 General. The limitations are that the study focused only on senior military leaders.
- There are a variety of differences within each military branch and the civilian organizations into which SMVLs transitioned.
- There are cultural and regional limitations because of the study only including the U.S. military.
- The research was performed exclusively on nonhuman subjects.
- The researcher was confined to publicly accessible and unrestricted sources such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media.

- The study includes a finite amount of resources, as a result, is not considered epitomized.
- Last, the researcher is a retired military leader. Therefore, the study's findings may contain a preconceived opinion of the United States military.

Internal Study Validity

For validity, credibility, and dependability, a second reviewer was employed to safeguard creditability and dependability of the study. The researcher integrated a systematic approach to safeguard creditability and dependability. First, the researcher examined numerous and various publicly accessible sources for themes, such as published books, news articles, magazines, journals, websites, and social media. Diverse sources were used to identify common themes and to eliminate overlapping areas within the study. Next, the researcher applied disconfirming evidence by searching the data collected for information that is consistent with or disconfirms the themes of the study. Then, people external to the study were also used to ensure credibility and dependability of the study.

To ensure credibility and dependability, a second reviewer was used to investigate objectively the coding method of the researcher by applying the exact procedures that the researcher employed. Additionally, the second reviewer was asked to suggest any other themes gathered from their analysis of the data, separate from what the researcher had presented. Finally, to prevent definitional drifting of the coding process, the second reviewer and researcher tested the credibility and dependability of the coded data by reviewing it separately and comparing notes subsequently for accuracy. To avoid definitional drift, the researcher generated memos to prompt what the logic was behind each code. The memos were also utilized later during the coding process to check for consistency.

Hyatt's (2017) 10-step procedure for dependability and trustworthiness of data analysis was incorporated to ensure interreviewer trustworthiness and to reinforce the dependability and validity:

1. The researcher investigates all information. Next, the researcher meets with the reviewer to discuss the coding procedures related to themes discovered.
2. The researcher chooses a transcript to explain to the second reviewer.
3. The researcher retains the copy of the transcript that has been analyzed and highlighted.
4. The second reviewer is given a copy of a noncoded transcript.
5. Before investigating the data, the researcher and second reviewer will review the transcript. Additionally, the researcher will address any inquiries regarding the coding.
6. The researcher helps the second reviewer in finishing the examination of the text.
7. On the left side, meaning units are entered. explanations and conclusions are inserted on the right side. Once this is accomplished, the examination of the transcript is complete.
8. The second reviewer utilizes the exact procedure to the other transcripts without the researcher's aid.
9. Once all transcripts are completed, the primary researcher and second reviewer will reunite and assess the collective findings, talk about variations, and come to an agreement on the conclusions. A form will be designed to distinguish joint themes.
10. The standards for significant themes are when more than half of SMVL studied offer supportive data for the theme(s).

Recommendations for Future Study

Senge's (1990) five core disciplines (systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning) were used as the theoretical framework for this study of how SMVLs can transition from being a senior leader in the military to a civilian leader. A limitation of this study is that the researcher focused exclusively on senior military leaders who used Senge's (1990) core learning disciplines within their civilian organization. Further research of veterans classified differently from those in this study could offer more information that may advance the topic of the study. Specifically, research on how Senge's (1990) five core disciplines can be utilized by all service members as a leadership strategy, not just senior leaders as they depart the military and reenter civilian organizations. Additionally, the researcher recommends that future studies be conducted outside the United States. Military service members regardless of their location could possibly benefit from Senge's (1990) core disciplines as a leadership strategy. This study also utilized a qualitative approach to explore SMVLs strategies for entering civilian leadership positions. The researcher recommends a quantitative approach in future studies to examine a larger population of veterans. Also, this study used nonhuman subjects. It is recommended that future studies conduct interviews of veterans so that specific questions may be asked during the interview process giving the researcher additional data to contribute to the field. Additionally, this study gave rise to how specifically systems thinking as a leadership strategy could be incorporated for veterans within their new civilian organization to increase their critical thinking and possibly contribute more data to this field. Furthermore, the researcher recommends future studies on SMVLs implementing resiliency as a leadership strategy. Military veterans are very resilient while within the military, but many struggle after their transition. Studying how veterans embraced resiliency as a leadership strategy within their new civilian

organization could possibly contribute additional data to this field. Last, the researcher recommends future studies on how Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) can be used as a leadership strategy for veterans within their new civilian organizations. A.I. could be incorporated as a SMVLs leadership strategy possibly making them more educated within a specific field and more data driven.

Closing Comments

The DOD has approximately 1.4 million service members currently serving within the four military branches. Approximately 200,000 service members transition out of the military every year (Derefinko et al., 2018). Many SMVLs experience a successful reentry into civilian employment, but some grapple with adjusting their leadership to their new environment. Most veterans serve their country honorably but may have a difficult transition back to civilian status. The significance of this problem is that veterans risk their lives and place hardships on their families so that they can protect this country, then reenter into their civilian communities where they face a psychological battle, the conflict of becoming a leader within the civilian world. Studies show “high rates of veteran dissatisfaction with respect to their reentry into civilian life as well as disproportionate rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and alcohol/substance abuse” (Schreger & Kimble, 2017, p. 12).

While there has been an increased focus on veteran populations in research, significant gaps continue (Elnitsky & Kilmer, 2017). Most studies conducted on U.S. military veterans departing the military concentrate on junior enlisted populations (Biniecki & Berg, 2020). Scholarly creation has been vague in reference to veterans transitioning out of the military, specifically veteran’s rank and area of service (M. L. Anderson & Goodman, 2014). This vagueness could be the result of the lack of scholarly wisdom of the variety of service members

that exists within the military (Biniecki & Berg, 2020). While scholars are beginning to examine the diversity and gender within veteran populations (Berg & Rousseau, 2018), the trend is to generalize veterans and their experiences (Alschuler & Yarab, 2018; Steele et al., 2018).

The key findings of this study show that SMVLs studied were successful within their civilian organization by incorporating systems-thinking strategies that included looking at the big picture, examining interrelationships, and considering long- and short-term consequences of actions. In addition, SMVLs studied incorporated successful personal-mastery strategies that included continuously increasing their own and other's capabilities and having insight of self-knowledge and understanding. Moreover, mental-model strategies were successfully utilized such as being aware of generalizations, images, and assumptions that influence our actions; and having the capability to reflect on those actions. Furthermore, SMVLs studied facilitated shared-vision strategies of creating an image of the desired future, and outlining the organization's governing ideas, core values, and purpose. Last, SMVLs studied included team-learning strategies of aligning the skills and capacities of teams to create the desired results and cultivating a collective desire to create something new.

All seven SMVLS studied successfully utilized each of Senge's (1990) five core disciplines as a leadership strategy after they transitioned into a civilian organization. It is crucial that SMVLs incorporate a systematic leadership approach while leading a civilian organization. That is what SMVLs have become accustomed to while leading in the military. Therefore, it seems logical that Senge's five core disciplines to building a learning organization is a successful leadership strategy for SMVLs to utilize when transitioning from being a military leader to a civilian leader.

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APPENDIX

Completion of CITI Program Course: Basic Course



Completion Date 14-Jan-2022
 Expiration Date 13-Jan-2027
 Record ID 46631552

This is to certify that:

Wallace Mains

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

GSEP Education Division

(Curriculum Group)

GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)

(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course

(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Pepperdine University

CITI
 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative