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Success of the African American Female Military Field Grade Officers in An Army Environment

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Success of the African American Female Military Field Grade Officers

in an Army Environment

by

Sandra M. Thompson

MS, Central Michigan University, 1995

BS, Morgan State University, 1988

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Organizational Psychology

Walden University

February 2016

Abstract

African American female field grade officers perform many missions in the United States Army and often excel in their careers. Unfortunately, the factors accounting for the success of African American female military officers' career are understudied, and this gap in knowledge may prevent younger female military officers from advancing their careers. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the success factors of African American female field grade officers. Participants were women who were currently serving on active duty, who retired after serving 20 or more years, or who had resigned their commissions. Success was defined as achieving rank as a field grade officer with high levels of responsibility and receiving no negative reports. Twenty participants underwent a detailed interview that lasted approximately 60 minutes. The analysis of data consisted of applying codes to portions of each participant's responses. Once applied, new codes were modified or added when new meanings or categories evolved. Throughout this study, the participants reported challenges and barriers that were based mostly on their gender, not their race. The primary challenges reported by these women were being viewed negatively as leaders, feeling as if they had to choose between raising a family or continuing to serve while in the military, feeling unable to be as competitive as her male counterparts for promotions for certain military commands, and struggling to overcome the stereotypes that still exist. This research helps illuminate factors that are related to career success of African American female military officers. This knowledge creates a positive change in the military and in other workplaces where females are increasingly working in leadership positions.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my husband, Fernando, son, Mason, siblings, Charmian and Rhonda, and parents, Willie and Aldena Clifford for their encouragement and faith in my abilities.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Kizzy Dominquez and Dr. James Brown for having more faith in me than I did in myself. Your encouragement and expertise made this all possible. I'd like to thank Dr. Edman, my URR, for his assistance and quick response with revisions. I'd like to thank Dr. Cheryl Rushing for her assistance throughout the development of this paper. I would like to personally thank those 20 dynamic female military officers who contributed their time and honest responses to this research project. Most of all I would like to thank God for giving me the intelligence and strength to complete this dissertation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In spite of challenges, such as (e.g., working over 8 hours a day for 7 days a week, transferring to different states and countries, and separating from family members; Jeffrey, 2007), female Army officers have been promoted to the highest ranks in the Army. Ann Dunwoody, achieved the rank of four-star general in 2008; she is the first female to hold the top position in the officer ranks. As a White female, her promotion was no surprise to due to her mentorship from white male counterparts (Branch, 2007). In addition, Marcia Anderson was promoted to Major General (or, two star general) in 2011she is the first African American female military officer to hold this rank.

Both of these officers work in military occupations that were open to women. General Dunwoody was a logistician and Major General Anderson was in the Human Resources occupational fields. For the past few years, females were prohibited from working in combat roles and other areas designated by the Combat Exclusion Rule. As a result, according to a 2013 report by the Defense Manpower Data Center ([DEOMI], 2013), there was a total of 2,901 females of all races promoted to the ranks of major through general, out of a total of 14,734 females ranging from the ranks lieutenant through general officer in the military, all services, in comparison to 27,797 males. One reason why the number for females is lower is due to their inability to serve in specific command positions during combat.

In spite of their succession in the Army, African American female officers, whose numbers were lower than their peers, were the focus for this research. I focused on African American female officers for two primary reasons. First, the numbers of female military officers drastically decreased from 829 for majors to two for general officer (DEOMI, 2013). In other words, initially there were 829 majors. These majors progressed through the system, however,

the numbers decreased as their eligibility for promotions decreased. Additionally, changes made in the 2014 updating of its uniform regulations, which specified acceptable hairstyles for females, appeared to target African American females (Tan, 2014). These changes addressed the need to have a neat appearance and established standards on braids or cornrows, which are hairstyles popular with African American females who had chosen to wear their hair naturally (Tan, 2014). The uniform standards regulated the width of each braid and eliminated the twist hairstyle, which is a popular natural style for African American women in the Army. Although some females are able to wear their hair naturally, due to their hair texture, some of them will be limited based on this regulation (Tan, 2014). As a result, they may have to settle for a short haircut, like an afro. Add concluding sentence. Tie your main points together. Reinforce why you chose to focus on African American female Army officers.

Problem Statement

African American female military officers face obstacles as they seek career advancement within the Army. Although researchers have addressed women and their struggles, they have not adequately addressed their successes (Gervais and Vescio, 2012). Also, because of a lack of information about those in senior positions, many female African American officers have not pursued higher ranks (Herring, 2009). A possible cause of this problem derived from the fact that African American females did not progress through the rank progression as rapidly as their male counterparts (Executive Leadership Council, 2008). The analysis done by researchers will be addressed in the following paragraph.

Some researchers have analyzed African American women in management and leadership positions (Byrd, 2009). But, most researchers focused on the obstacles that these women faced and their lack of career progression (Harris, 2009), as opposed to how these women had succeeded in spite of the obstacles. I believe that investigating the experiences and

obstacles faced by African American female field grade officers in the Army may provide useful insight to those female officers who aspire to progress during their military careers.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in carrying out this qualitative study was to examine the experiences and obstacles African American female field grade officers face in the Army environment. By eliminating the Combat Exclusion Laws in 2013, the Army created an environment that encouraged and provided an avenue for females to receive the jobs they needed to move up in rank (DOD, 2013). This policy change was critical because, under the Combat Exclusion Laws, low promotion rates prevented and prevented junior officers from reaching the higher ranks within the military (DOD, 2013). By interviewing African American female army officers, I was able to explore how the current climate within the Army, although challenging, did not hinder the success of African American female field grade officers. I sought to fill a gap in the literature by addressing the successes African American female military officers in the U.S. Army.

Nature of the Study

In this study examine the experiences and obstacles that African American female field grade officers face while seeking career advancement in the current Army environment. I used a qualitative design based on my research questions, which focused mainly on female officers' experiences (Creswell, 2009). By using qualitative methods, I can gain more in-depth understanding of peoples' lived experiences. I decided to use the phenomenological theory. Using this approach, I required only a small number of participants (Creswell, 2009). I conducted interviews and surveyed African American female Army field grade officers (in the rank of major and higher) who were currently serving, had retired, or had resigned their commissions.

I used a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach because it allowed me to delve into the experiences of my participants, to find out how culture impacts my participants' views and experiences, and to identify variables for further testing (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I used interviews, supplemented by questionnaires, in order to allow participants to reflect on their careers and address both the positive and negative experiences that had contributed to their successes.

Research Questions

The focus of my interviews was on providing participants with an opportunity to explain how their experiences and obstacles impacted their career advancement in the Army environment. My primary research questions were, What is your definition of success in the Army? and How do African American female military officers overcome obstacles in the United States Army? In order to fully answer these questions, I also asked the following sub questions:

1. Were these barriers or obstacles imbedded in the Army culture?

2. Were the skills required learned in school or on the job?

3. Was success defined the same by male and female officers, in your opinion?

4. Were these obstacles prevalent throughout your career or after achieving a certain rank?

Conceptual Framework

African American females in the U.S. military, namely the Army, faced challenges that were found in many male-dominated workplaces. The two theories that I selected, were gender schema (Bem, 1981) and role congruity (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Both of these theories were relevant to this research study because they provided an explanation about how and why women

in leadership positions face extra hurdles that often prevented them from rising in the ranks as quickly as their male counterparts.

Bem (1981) who developed gender schema theory described why and how people learned the expectations of their gender based on societal expectations. According to Martin and Ruble (2004), there are three stages of gender recognition development that children went through. In the first stage, when they are toddler through preschool age, they learn the various characteristics of males and females in a society. In the second stage, when they are 4-5 years of age, children begin to differentiate between the sexes and internalize or act out the appropriate role. During the final stage, when they are 5-7 years of age, children understand their particular gender and act accordingly (Martin & Ruble, 2004). For example, as a girl grows up she plays with dolls and wear dresses. However, a male plays with trucks and wears pants. As a result, some adult women are viewed negatively when they choose to work in professions that have been associated with males (U.S. Department Labor and Statistics, 2007). This negative view stemmed from the beliefs and stereotypes that males and females carried with them from their childhood (Brown & Dickman, 2010). As stated previously, gender schema theory is attributed to how males and females developed their masculine and feminine behaviors. Since female officers are required to wear the same uniform as their male counterparts, they can be viewed as more masculine than feminine.

The next theory, role congruity will be addressed. Role congruity theory is the belief that men and women perform roles that were stereotypically accepted (Eagly & Karau, 2002). For example, a man working as a supervisor is accepted as natural. However; a female serving in the same position is viewed differently and somewhat negatively. This response could have been based on stereotypes. Heilman (2001) identified two stereotypes, descriptive and prescriptive,

that are used to categorize women. Descriptive stereotypes are how women were perceived, and prescriptive stereotypes are how they were expected to act (Heilman, M.E, 2001).

Relevance of Theories

Both of the above described theories--gender schema and role congruity--were relevant to this research. Female military officers, upon receipt of their commissions to lieutenant, are automatically placed in leadership roles. The female lieutenants are expected to lead male and female soldiers while performing a variety of leadership roles. Gender schema was relevant to this research topic because the female officer's role as a leader goes against the traditional expectation that people had of females. As a result, women's leadership skills are questioned and viewed negatively (Berdahl, 2007) by males who believe females should not be leaders.

Role congruity is relevant to this research topic because military female officers are not perceived as the norm in the military environment, by people who do not believe women should be leaders. One of the reasons was because females are viewed as being the kinder and sweeter sex (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristikari, 2011). According to Eagly and Karau's (2004) role congruity model, these views stemmed from women being stereotyped in terms of communion and agency. Communion consists of the emotional traits of women and agency pertain to the stereotypical behaviors of men and leaders. As a result, when women are placed in a leadership position, they are viewed negatively because of the expectations that society placed on them. Several researchers have studied these theories (see Brown & Dickman, 2010; Jones & Greer, 2011; Hill, Joseph, Roche & Tannenbaum, (2010). I will discuss their findings in more detail in Chapter 2.

Operational and Theoretical Definitions

I used the following operational definitions:

Company grade officer: A commissioned officer with a rank ranging from second lieutenant to captain. (DOD, 2013)

Field grade officer: A commissioned officer with a rank ranging from major to general officer. These ranks range hierarchically, from major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, and brigadier general to major general, lieutenant general, and general (DOD, 2013).

Military officer: An individual who has a commission within a military service and serve as a leader or authority within a military organization. (Department of the Army, 1988)

Reserve Officer Training Corps (*ROTC)*: A program, located within universities and college that was developed to train military cadets to become officers upon graduation. This program consists of classes that were named military science (MS). There are four levels to achieve: MS I (freshman), MS2 (sophomore), MS3 (junior), and MS4 (senior) (DOD, 1988).

United States Army: A volunteer organization that consists of the regular Army, National Guard, Army Reserves (Department of the Army, 1983).

ROCKs Organization- A mentorship organization that was named after an Army officer, General R.C "Rock" Cartwright who was the first Army African American Field Artillery General officer. In homage of his contributions to mentorship, his nickname, ROCKS, was capitalized, pluralized and used for the name of the organization, it was not an acronym (Wright, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

According to Loughlin and Arnold (2007), women have faced barriers because of their working in the Army's masculine environment. I made four assumptions in carrying out my research. The assumptions are (a) There were barriers that especially prohibited African American females from succeeding as military officers.

(b) All of the participants interviewed identified the skills that enabled them to succeed or fail. By selecting his assumption, I was sure that I would select participants who had the required criteria.

(c) I received the participant responses required to make up the research sample. By using this assumption, I anticipated that I would receive the appropriate number or participants to develop this study.

(d) My knowledge and experience within the military was valuable in interpreting the research questions and responses. As a retired military officer, I understood the language and could therefore interpret the responses of the participants.

Limitations

My research has several limitations. The sample population, and, therefore, the interviews only included African American female officers who achieved the ranks of major to colonel. Because I focused on females, I excluded males from my investigation.

The project did not include a cross-sectional study from all of the services−Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard. This does not impact the outcome of this study since it focused on females in the Army. The interviews involved participants who were field grade officers ranging from the ranks of major to colonel. In comparison to the larger numbers of officers in the Army, this was a very small sample. A small sample of African American female Army officers was used for this research project; it was representative of the larger population.

Delimitations

This study is limited to African American female officers who achieved the ranks of major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. The reason why this study was restricted to the field grade ranks was due to the fact that as officers progress, the numbers of African American field grades

declined (DEOMI, 2013). These officers are retired, serving on active duty, or resigned their commissions. The officers are selected from the ROCKS organization, which is not an acronym but named after an Army officer, General R.C "Rock" Cartwright who was the first Army African American Field Artillery General officer. In homage of his contributions to mentorship, his nickname, ROCKS, was capitalized, pluralized and used for the name of the organization. The major source for participants is the ROCKS Internet Site. The ROCKS was a U.S. Armed Forces organization founded in 1974 in the Washington D.C. area that established a formal mentorship program for junior officers. As a national member, I have access to this site and its leadership.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in explaining the experiences of the African American female field grade officers who succeeded in the Army despite obstacles. Additionally this study addresses the stereotypes and negative perceptions that females face while serving in leadership positions.

The results of this study contribute to literature that highlights the leadership style gender differences between male and female leaders. It also addresses how ethnicity impacted the perception of the leader. This information is anticipated to greatly contribute to the leadership manuals and/or regulations that govern leadership within the military. By placing this information in these manuals, the military could provide awareness to all officers on how African American females are viewed as leaders. This knowledge would also contribute to creating a better environment that encouraged respect for everyone's racial and/or gender differences. By understanding how other officers before them excelled, junior officers would be more optimistic and hopeful about continuing a career in the military.

Social Change Impact

The social change impact of this research would lower and eventually eliminate barriers faced by African American female military officers. Not only would this create a positive change in the military but also in any work place where females could work in a leadership position. It would also be beneficial to those leaders who have female subordinates.

The results of this study are significant for creating a positive social change for a few reasons: (1) By identifying the possible challenges, the future female officers is prepared to overcome them, (2) the experiences relayed by these field grade officer through interviews enable future African American females in other occupations besides the military to succeed, and the (3) outcome of this study creates an awareness in the Army as well as society about fair treatment for every human being.

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 introduced the overview of why the topic was significant and relevant to African American female Army officers. After identifying and sharing the positive experiences of female Army veterans, this research prepared future officers to succeed. The remaining chapters will cover the following:

Chapter 2 reviewed of the literature pertaining to African American females in the military and Chapter 3 covered the research design.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Many journal articles have been written on the roles of successful African American and Caucasian women working in various occupations (Harris, 2009). However, according to my literature review, no researcher has highlighted the methods that contribute to the success of African American female leaders in the U.S. Army. Given the limited number of journal articles that specifically address African American females leaders in the military (Herrara, Duncan, Green & Scaggs, 2012), this review contains articles that examined the theories of gender schema and role congruity, gender boundaries, stereotypes, leadership, limitations on leaders, types of leadership, education, mentorship, diversity, exclusion of women, and military versus corporate leadership. I addressed these topics in the following paragraphs.

I reviewed journal articles and book chapters published between 1999-2012 dealing with African American female leaders in the U.S. military. I used the following databases as part of my literature review: PsycINFO, PsychARTICLES, Sage Journals, SOCindex, Military and Government, Business Source Complete, Management & Organization Studies, and Academic Search Premier. I used these key terms when conducting my searches: *leadership, female leaders, females in the military* and *African American female leaders in the military*.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, I used gender schema and role congruity theories in my investigation. The comparison between females working in academia and the military was examined. Harris (2009) compared the challenges of females working in a university to those faced by females serving in the military. Women in both fields faced similar challenges. According to Marschke, Laursen, McCarl, Nielsen, & Rankin (2007), the numbers of female professors continue to decrease in comparison to their male counterparts. This article was relevant to this research topic because it cited how working females faced the same challenges,

whether in the educational arena or in the military. These challenges were in the areas of maintaining a family life and struggling with the promotion hierarchy within the various respective professional areas. The article examined how females in both professions experienced the same difficulties in moving up the ladder. Females in both of these fields believed that having a family could negatively impact the way they were viewed on the job (Harris, 2009). Women in educational as well as military organizations must navigate three challenges (Currie, Harris, & Thiele, 2000): handling the demands placed on them, navigating their career paths, and being in organizations that demanded large amounts of employees' time, focus, and energy (see Gouthro, 2005). Although males face challenges, it is apparent that females face more.

The demands of both educational and military organizations may be overwhelming for some women. Within the educational field, women are faced with the need to conduct research, teach, and publish articles in order to compete with their peers (Strong, E., DeCastro, R., Sambuco, D., Stewart, A., Ubel, P., Griffith, K. & Jagsi, R. 2013). Some universities place some requirements on teachers that had to be met in order for them to progress to the next level or receive tenure (Strong, et al.2013). In military organization, the demands came in the form of deployments, temporary military assignments away from home, extended daily work hours, and no predictability. Although the military made provisions for those military members with families, it did not tailor a work schedule to accommodate them. As a result, females have often had to choose between the military and their families (Strong, et al.2013).

Navigating a career path within the military and educational organizations is also a challenge for women. Within both academia and the military, women are faced with working in a male-dominated environment. Additionally, both of these organizations use comparable methods for promotion that discriminated against women (Harris, 2009). However, men's and

women's career paths have differed. Within the military, there are three occupational fields: professional, technical & support, and line units. The professional field consisted of the doctor, nurse, dentist, and other licensed personnel who enlisted in the military. The technical and support field consisted of public affairs, logistics, and other military school trained personnel. The line units were considered to be in the combat arms fields like infantry, field artillery, and other direct combat occupations. It was within the line units that women were limited. Unfortunately, for women, the majority of male military officers were promoted to general officers within these units. Since women are not permitted to command combat units, are passed over for promotion to general officer. If a female is allowed to command a combat units she will be as competitive as her male counterparts for promotions (Herrara, Duncan, Green, & Skaggs, 2012). Additionally, in the academic area, women face similar challenges

Waring (2003) interviewed African American female college presidents. More than half of them presided over junior and community colleges. Others led Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). One led a prestigious woman's college. The experiences of these college presidents mirrored those of leaders within the Army because they focused on both task and relationship aspects of leadership (2003). The task aspect pertained to the ability to accomplish any given requirement and the relationship pertained to how well they got along with their peers and superiors. This article was relevant because it provided insight into the challenges, some of which were based on gender and race that these individuals faced as college presidents. The challenges faced by female college presidents was similar to those of the military female officers.

Lastly, the inability to fulfill all of the requirements for the job placed another constraint on females in the military. Within the military, because of Combat Exclusion Laws, the military continues to be organized in a masculine and authoritative manner (Doll, 2007). As the Combat Exclusion Act goes away, women will be allowed to have a more active role in commanding combat units.

Gender Schema

Gender schema which was developed by Bem (1981) was based on the premise that people learned gender expectations and roles from society's perception of expected behavior for males and females. People learn their gender behavioral expectations from society and apply them to their behaviors (McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005). In others words, the behavioral expectations of society are displayed by the actions of people. (Campbell, Shirley, & Candy, 2004). For example, when a baby girl was born, she wore pink clothing and as she aged, she received dolls to play with. Additionally, she wore dresses or colorful pants. On the other hand, a baby boy was dressed in blue and as he aged, he received and played with trucks and action figures. He wore pants as his daily apparel. Some researchers believed that gender schema was considered sex typing or gender typing (Hardin & Greer, 2009), as a result both terms were used interchangeably. As a result of sex-typing, individuals were stereotyped. This stereotyping occurred as a result of society's expected behavior of people depending on their sex. For example, a female was expected to be nurturing and compassionate and a male was expected to be tough and strong. These expectations were also evident in how military female officers were stereotyped.

Gender schema is evident in the way that female military officers are stereotyped in the military. Females in the military wear the same uniform as their male counterparts and were expected to fulfill the same leadership positions as their peers. However, they were not treated

equally because of the possible stereotypes that came with their gender. Stereotypes are later discussed in this document. Need citations in this paragraph.

In a study conducted by Hill, Joseph, Roche, and Tenenbaum (2010), 115 children who were ages 3-8 were asked to draw images of males and females. This research was informative because it demonstrated how children sex type or stereotype gender by appearance at an early age. For example, when the children were shown a picture of a figure with hair and a pink dress, they assumed it was a female and when shown a figure wearing pants and short hair, they assumed it was a male. Even if the figure had long hair and was wearing pants it was assumed to be a male. This was simply based on the attire. In other words, the children had developed pre-conceived stereotypes about males versus females. This study was also beneficial because it highlighted the reasons why people developed stereotypes based on gender. It stemmed from our childhood. Again this study reflected why some people viewed women in the military in a negative way. Not only are women viewed negatively in the military but also in collegiate organizations (Harris, 2009).

According to a study by Jones and Greer (2010), 267 college students, of whom 78% were women, viewed pictures of male and female athletes in four different scenarios. The first and second group viewed pictures of a male and female athlete participating in a masculine sport, and the third and fourth groups viewed male and female athletes participating in a feminine sport (2010). The results showed that males and females viewed male and female athletes differently depending on their sport. Males believed that females should play more feminine sports and were not interested in seeing females participating in masculine sports. Surprisingly, females were more interested in the females who were participating in masculine sports than in feminine

sports. The results of this study show that gender schema is still alive and well. The opinions of the participants in this study reflect the views of how women in the military are viewed.

Role Congruity

Role congruity is defined as the cultural way that women are perceived in society. When females fulfilled a masculine role, it becomes incongruent (Eagley & Karau, 2002) to the way others perceived they should behave. For example, in the household women are viewed as being domestic and men are viewed as the bread-winner of the family. However when a female is the provider and the male is the home maker, this role reversal is sometimes viewed negatively by those in society.

According to a study conducted by Carbonell and Castro (2008), college students, both male and female are given a California Psychological Inventory (CPI) that measured their level of dominance, or the ability to dominate or control a situation. Female students who scored high on the dominance inventory are paired with males who had scored lower on this inventory. Each student is given a task where one had to be the leader and the other a follower. It is also shown that if the female had a female leader model, she dominated the situation; however, if she had a male leader model, she followed. The study results with more males in leadership positions than females.

According to a study by Bosak and Sczesny (2011), society has a perception that men as leaders are more acceptable than women as leaders. This study is unique in that it addresses how the role incongruity of women as leaders is slowly changing due to their career roles. The first experiment consisted 160 management students as participants. They completed questionnaires that addressed their perception of how many females were working in male dominated careers, how important leadership traits were, and how females and males in the past, present, and future. Surprisingly, the results of the study were that the perception of woman working in male

dominated careers was more positive for the present time and in the future. However, the male perception remained constant. This was an encouraging study for those who were concerned about the future perception of women in the workforce.

Gender Boundaries

Within the military, women work within gender boundaries. This is evident in the restrictions that prevent them from working in certain fields or occupations (Petterson, Persson, & Bergren, 2008). Although the military is not considered a corporate organization, the field grade ranks of the military officers are equal to those of chief executive officers (CEO). Within the corporate world, African American women are not represented as much as their white counterparts in senior management positions (Wise-Wright & Zajicek, 2006). Although the military provided more promotion success for women, than in the corporate world, from the ranks of Lieutenant through Major, it does decline as the ranks progressed (DEOMI, 2013). Some of the other organizations where women face challenges are in academia.

Negative View of Women

In a study by Wallen, Tamkins, Heilman, and Fuchs (2004), the authors sought to prove two hypotheses. This study's relevance is based on the fact that it addresses the various aspects of how females are negatively viewed in male dominated organizations. Since the military is considered one of these types of organizations, it is pertinent. The first aspect is that females in male-dominated professions are evaluated as less competent and less career focused than males, unless their success is obvious. Secondly, successful women are viewed as less amiable and more hostile to their coworkers than their male counterparts. The first study by Wallen et al (2004) consisted of 48 undergraduate students who evaluated the possibility of a woman's success as a Vice President of Sales, a male-dominant job, in an aircraft company. The second study consisted of 63 undergraduate students who evaluated a woman's success as a human

resource manager, a female-dominant profession, for the same corporation. The third study was somewhat different from the previous two. This study consisted of 131 participants, made up of 86 men and women who were employed by financial service companies and 45 graduate students who held full-time jobs. They were asked to review some employees evaluations among which some of the employees had been rated higher. Participants in the first study group were given packets that described the position that was being filled, which was a position as an Assistant Vice President of sales for an Aircraft corporation. It further described the aircraft parts that would be purchased as well as the list of candidates and their work history. This list consisted of 10 possible employees- of which 8 were males and 2 were females. The participants rated these employees as competent, likeable, achievers, and hostile. Every participant was informed that some of the females were successful while others' success was not mentioned. The results of this study show that women are viewed negatively unless they are initially identified as being successful (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004).

Study 2 addressed the same types of information of study one however the job being filled was the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources. Every possible employee was known as being on the top of the list. The females are evaluated in a more positive light since the job is more suited to a female. However, males are viewed negatively when applying for a female-dominated career. These results supported the hypothesis that individuals are viewed negatively if they work outside their expected positions. Study 3 differed from the previous two.

Study 3, involved 131 participants including 86 financial services employees and the remainder graduate students. They were tasked with reviewing packets of individuals who were viewed as likeable versus unlikeable. Although the individuals they reviewed were highly

respected and considered the best in the organization, women were viewed more negatively than

their male counterparts, when their overall rating of likeability was low

(Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). This study reflected the perception of women

working in male-dominant careers.   The result of these studies support the negative ways that

women were viewed in relation to their male counterparts.

Stereotypes of Female Leaders

Stereotypes are learned at an early age. According to Fitzpatrick and McPherson

(2010), these stereotypes evolve from children's exposure to coloring books. There were early

studies conducted of coloring books during the 1970s, where females were always depicted in

service roles (teacher, nurse, etc.) or in beauty roles (putting on makeup or models). On the

other hand, males were shown as police men, doctors, etc. As the years progressed, men are

depicted as active and working outdoors with the female being less active and performing

activities within the home. The results of this study are that there are more males depicted in

coloring books and the gender stereotypes were prevalent. The reason why this study is helpful

in explaining the development of stereotypes is that it supported the gender schema theory.   As a

child continued to see pictures of males in active roles and females in inactive or service roles, he

or she begins to view themselves as such. One interesting point that came out of this study was

that males are depicted as adults and girls are depicted a children. This convinces females that

they are to be childlike and vulnerable, which encourages them to be dependent on someone

(Fitzpatrick & McPherson, 2010). Parents need to be aware that coloring books, as well as other

books our children read, have an impact on how they view themselves as they mature.

Stereotypes continue to impact women while in leadership roles since they are viewed as

unable to lead (Eagly, 2007). These stereotypes stem from a variety of beliefs, including the

masculine image of leadership and the ability to lead. Within the military organization, leaders in the past were viewed as men who commanded authority. Unfortunately, when women lead, using the same techniques as their male counterparts, they are viewed as ineffective leaders (Kimmel, 2004). As a result of this perception, women are hesitant about taking leadership positions (Gupta, Bhawe & Turban, 2008). This contributes to the lack of females progressing to the senior levels within the military officer ranks. If a female believes she will not be welcome in the higher ranks of the military she decides to retire or resign her commission (2008).

According to Kuhnle-Biagas (2007), female faculty members in a leadership position are treated negatively by their male peers. Although the treatment is not always overt, it is more painful when done subtly. Some of the ways that women are mistreated come in the form of isolating them or having lower expectations for them (2007). This treatment is based on the stereotype that women are not equal to their male counterparts and do not perform as well as their peers in a male dominant organization (2007).

The study that was conducted by Kuhnle-Biagas (2007) found that women who establish goals fare better than those who do not. Since many of the females mentioned the adversities that they face, they spoke of how problem solving skills, being cognizant of their surroundings, and continued persistence enabled them to succeed.

Stereotypes of African American Females as Military Leaders

Many employees, or soldiers, associate the term leadership with a male figure (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007), which results from childhood experiences with leaders in schools, churches and political scenarios. In order to understand why this occurs, Combs (2003) believed that researchers must focus on both race and gender of African American female leaders. This was a true statement in that women of color were not always viewed the same as other women.

It appeared that gender was the dominant reason why this occurred, however, being an African American added to the lack of equality. Additionally gender was critical since historically military culture had been considered masculine (Burke, 2004). Some African American female leaders are viewed as less qualified than their counterparts as a result of stereotyping (Dobbs, Thomas & Harrison, 2008). There are stereotypes that hindered the professional growth of black women. Some of those stereotypes are addressed in an article by Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, and Harrison (2008).

According to Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, and Harrison (2008), historical stereotypes lead to barriers for the success of women. Although this article does not specifically address African American females in the Army, it addresses the impact of these stereotypes in the workplace. These stereotypes are "Mammy," "Jezebel," "Sapphire," and "Superwoman."

Mammy is the matriarch. She is viewed as the nurturer who takes care of her coworkers and is normally older than her peers. Unfortunately, her emotional qualities outshine her competence (Reynolds-Dobbs, et al 2008). Within the Army, one sees this type of leader as the one who allows her non-commissioned officer (NCO) to control the mission, while she takes care of the soldiers. This does not work well, since the leader theoretically, knows the mission and allows the NCO to control and manage the soldiers.

The Jezebel stereotype is based on the Biblical character who married King Ahab and uses sex as a tool to get anything she desires(Bennett & Yarbrough, 2000). In the current workplace, this woman does anything within her power to gain power. Within the Army, this woman is not a team player; she tries to make her peers look bad so that she can shine. Unfortunately, many people assume that this officer progresses through the ranks by using her femininity instead of her experience and education.

Unlike Jezebel, Sapphire is more domineering. The Sapphire stereotype is viewed as a very negative, bossy, and talkative African American women who complains, yet wonders why others do not support her (Bell & Nikoma, 2001). Additionally, women like Sapphire are viewed as being tough and hard to get along with, characteristics that overpower their intelligence and professionalism (2001). As a military officer, this type of female is viewed as obnoxious and not to be trusted by her peers or subordinates.

Although most of these stereotypes seem negative, the Superwoman is not. The superwoman is also known as the overachiever. Even though it seems to be a negative stereotype, it actually is not. Many of these working women find themselves alone, since they appear to be friendly, easy to work with, and more intelligent than their peers (Dobbs et al., 2008). Unfortunately, they do not get the support from their employees because they are viewed as being able to do everything themselves (Dobbs, et al., 2008).

Knowing that these stereotypes existed was imperative for African American female leaders to know their jobs, maintain the standards, and to carry them in a professional manner at all times. After all, when some people met African American women, they usually had pre-existing expectations of each other they believed were true. It happened that, unbeknownst to themselves, he or she acted out a stereotypical behavior (Reynolds-Dobbs et al, 2008).

Leadership

Leadership was defined by Yukl (2006) as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives." Although there were different definitions for leadership, this study used the aforementioned definition that pertained to the female Army officer. Although applicable to both male and female leaders,

females were not viewed the same as males. Because female leaders were expected to display kind and sensitive traits, they were labeled negatively when they acted assertively (Eagly, 2007).

As a result of their being labeled negatively, females experienced prejudice (Eagly & Carli, 2004). Leadership was also based on the tasks at hand, culture, and the employees (Eagly, 2007) of the organization. According to an article by Eagly (2007) female leaders are viewed differently than their male counterparts. This article focuses on the advantages and disadvantages that female leader's faced. Unfortunately the former CEO of Hewlett Packer addresses how she was referred to more negatively than positively. For example, she was called a bimbo or a bitch; depending on how easy or hard she was while disciplining her employees (Fiorina, 2006). She experienced the same prejudice as other female leaders (Eagly, 2007).

To complicate matters it was found that women leaders working in male dominant organizations faced stereotypes that they did not have the skills, like rigidity and competitiveness, required to excel in the organization (Timberlake, 2005). To validate the negative perceptions of female leaders, Davidson and Burke (2000) conducted a mega analysis that found that men were preferred over females for masculine jobs. This explained why females in the Army worked twice as hard as their male counterpart to succeed. Leadership styles were also displayed differently by males and females (Lawson & Lips, 2014).

Physical limitations of women in leadership positions

The Army requires all military officers to take a physical fitness test twice a year. There are two different standards within the testing process. Males have a different requirement than females. For example, a female receives 100 points on the two mile run, when she completes it within 20 minutes and the male receives 100 points when he completes it within 18 minutes.

This difference contributes to the negative view of females since they have to achieve a lower standard on the run. These standards are based on gender and age.

Transformational Leadership

There are different leadership styles used for a particular situation. The kinds of leadership that are addressed are: transformational, transactional and servant. Transformational leadership encourage employees to trust, admire, be loyal and respect their leader (Yukl, 2006). This type of leadership results from the relationship that the supervisor has with his or her employees. The supervisor mentors and empowers the employees (Eagly, 2007). Females display this type of leadership because of their empathy and kindness they direct to their employees. Additionally, according to the results of a meta-analysis conducted by Hyde (2005) women fare better in situations where consideration and support of employees is involved. Another reason women are viewed as more transformational is due to their ability to respect the opinions of their employees (Kest, 2006). Additionally leaders who practice this type of leadership believe they could make a positive difference within their organization and respect their subordinate's individualism (Parker, 2005). Displaying this type of leadership is was extremely important in the military environment since caring for soldiers is important.

Jogulu & Wood (2006) address how the transformational leadership included both a male and female model. In this study, the model that closely resembled the female was one of team building and creating an environment of camaraderie, a model that was reflected by the female officer within the military. Although leaders are sometimes portrayed as heartless within the military environment, females were known to add a sensitive touch to the military culture.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leaders reward employees when they succeed and punish them when they fail. Unfortunately, these leaders are not proactive but reactive. They wait until a problem is

serious before they respond. This is not a good practice, especially in a military setting because it does not encourage camaraderie. Due to the constant change in this fluid environment, a leader must be proactive at all times. If he or she waits until the situation gets severe, a soldier could be killed. Males are known to display this style of leadership more than females (Eagly, 2007). On the other hand, transactional leaders motivate subordinates by offering gifts (Northouse, 2004).

Servant Leadership

Servant leaders believe in serving the employees. They encourage employees to get involved in the organization (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). This type of leadership was developed by Robert Greenleaf in 1970. He believed that serving and nurturing every employee was the key to a successful leader (Yukl, 2006). Females are successful when using this style since they were expected to be natural nurturers (Eagly, 2007).   Servant leaders place the needs of their employees and the mission above themselves (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).   This is extremely crucial in a military environment, since the mission and the soldiers are to be considered by leaders at all times.

One key article that addresses the inconsistencies between African American and White officers within the Army is written by a senior military officer who attended the United States Army War College (USAWC) (Butler, 1999). The USAWC is an educational institutional for senior field grade officers, including lieutenant colonels and colonels. Not only was the Army leadership shocked because the article was written by an officer who was viewed as successful, but also because it highlighted why African officers, both male and female, did not succeed in comparison to their white counterparts. The article defined "success" as achieving the rank of major and above.   Butler stated that the reasons why black officers failed were as follows: inadequate education, a lack of mentorship, and differing cultures.

Inadequacy of Education

In Butler's article, the inadequacies of military officers' education stemmed from the type of college from which the black officers received their commissions. The author surmised, for the reasons written below, that those officers coming from (HBCUs), as well as those receiving commissions through ROTC, were not as prepared to serve in the military as those officers coming from the United States Military Academy (West Point) or other traditional institutions. This unpreparedness originated with the lack of professional training on behalf of the instructors at the HBCUs, in addition to the lack of professional training, As Butler (1999) reported, many of the instructors at West Point eventually are selected to become battalion commanders; however, this was not always the case with ROTC instructors from the HBCUs. Additionally, those officers who were trained at West Point, or at a predominantly white institution, were used to communicating with people from various ethnicities. African American officers who graduated from West Point were used to interacting with people from various ethnic groups; on the contrary, students who attended an HBCU rarely communicated with students of other races.

Smith (2010) who expounded on the research conducted by Butler (1999) found that education was still lacking. According to Smith (2010), some of the current ROTC instructors in various locations were contractors. Although the contractors were retired soldiers or those in the Reserves, the African American students were not taught by the same type of officer as those at West point, West Point continued to use officers who were deemed successful in their career fields.

Lack of Mentorship

Mentorship is known as an important relationship between two employees where one of them assist the other to progress through the organization (Linehan & Scullion, 2008). Although

mentors could be the same rank, they are normally senior employees who direct the junior employee with information about the job, introduce them to people who could help them, and provide them with the exposure that could produce growth within the organization (Joseph-Obi, 2011).

According to the Army's regulation, DA Pam 600-3, mentorship is defined as a relationship between an experienced senior person and an inexperienced junior person, which was based on respect and trust (DA PAM 600-3, 2009). Organizations outside the military, view mentorship as a positive tool that is conducted within and outside of the organization (Beckett, 2010). Internally, the mentor assists with the career path while and external mentor assists with career moves outside of the current career.

Women are more apt to develop relationships with mentors than their male peers for two reasons. First, women like to resolve conflicts cooperatively with someone else as opposed to the male, who does not (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, and Chin, 2005). Secondly women face more challenges in the workplace than their male counterparts; as a result, mentorship is a necessity (Tharenou, 2005). Although mentors do not have to be the same ethnicity as the mentee, it is beneficial. This type of relationship is beneficial if both had more in common than just career. Since there are not many senior black male and female officers in the military, it is difficult for young black officers to find someone they emulate (Smith, 2010).

Diverse Cultures

Since the Army is portrayed as a male dominant organization, some black officers do not know how to adjust to the lifestyle, especially African American female officers. This adjustment is not always handled well by black newly commissioned officers. As Butler (1999) remarked, he witnessed this situation while he was entertaining his classmates in his home. He noticed that they looked for another person who resembled them so that they could feel more

comfortable. Additionally, an article by Smith (2010) which elaborated on Butler's article and added to research showed that from 1999 until 2010, the problem of failing black officers still persisted.

Smith's article focused on the importance of diversity training in the Army.

1. In order to improve diversity within the Army, Smith (2010) recommends the following to Army leadership: Integrate diversity training with the organizational strategic plan,

2. Senior leaders need to stress the importance of diversity training. After all, whatever was important to the boss was important to his subordinates.

3. Army leadership needs to create criteria that measured the amount of effort taken on behalf of the senior leader to support diversity. These criteria are incorporated into the performance evaluations of the senior leaders. For example, the senior leader was asked what he or she did to assist the junior black officer.

4. The Army needs to select the appropriate people to head the diversity team. Previously, the Army selected successful black officers to head up the team; however, the team was not successful because its members lacked organizational and change management skills. Smith recommends that professionals who were formally trained to understand people and organizations, i.e., psychologists, sociologists, head diversity teams should head up the team.

5. As in the civilian sector, the Army should create a talent management office that monitored and guided officers so they would receive the necessary tools for success.

6. The Army leadership needs to: hold the black senior leaders accountable by asking them how they contributed to mentoring junior black officers, get rid of those senior

officers who failed to mentor junior officers, and placed senior officers who were

mentoring junior officers in positions where they could make a larger impact on the

careers of junior officers (Smith, 2010, p 14).

7. Being aware of the military culture is critical in the academic environment. As was

stated by as female African American college president:

> I think it is more important for us to understand the culture because we already
>
> have the attention from those we work with and for. We have to ensure that we
>
> do not do or say anything that will bring more attention to us (Waring, 2003).

Both Butler (1999) and Smith (2010) focused on the reasons why black officers fail yet

never addressed solutions to overcome this failure. The Smith article justified the need for yet

further research that addressed solutions or keys to success. In addition to the problems that

contributed generally to the failure of black officers, it was important to understand how women

were prohibited from working in certain occupations within the Army.

Exclusion of Women in Specific Military Occupations

Since its inception, the Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 regulated the role of

women in the military. It placed limitations on the numbers of women who served in the Army,

specified the types of jobs they acquired, and controlled which ranks they achieved

(GAO, 1987). In an act of fairness, the services created their own guidelines and restrictions on

women. The Army was the only organization that developed a coding system, known as the

Direct Combat Probability Code system (1987). This coding system was developed to code every

military job that was subject to direct combat. The definition of direct combat is: Engaging an

enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high

probability of direct physical contact with the enemy, and a substantial risk of capture. It

occurred while closing with the enemy in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault

by fire, close combat, or counter attack (GAO, 1987, p. 8). The codes range from P1 through P7. The code P1 represented a job position with a high probability of direct combat (1987).

This exclusion act was relevant in the year that it was founded; however, it is not relevant to the recent Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Previously, wars were fought in a linear formation where support units were placed in the rear and combat units were in the front. In today's wars, the battlefield is nonlinear, which meant there was no front line or rear boundary. For example, when deployed to Iraq, soldiers traveling throughout the region and were constantly exposed to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Within the military, women are not given as fair a chance to succeed as their male counterparts (Wojack, 2002). Although females continue to excel in various fields within the military, they are excluded from infantry, armor, short-range air defense, cannon artillery, combat engineers, and Special Forces (Wojack, 2002). Although women perform their missions throughout the battlefield, they are still prohibited from working in the previously mentioned jobs.

The integration of women into the Infantry was tested first in Canada (Wojack, 2002). This article was relevant to this topic because it showed how women were viewed negatively by males when they entered a male career field. It is relevant because the Canadian Army was representative of the current US Army that still limited females from working in combat roles. Although this article pertained to women in the Canadian Army, it was pertinent since it addressed a current test that was being conducted in various US Army units. As of May 2012, female soldiers were placed in Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) **(**DA, Feb 2012**)**. The BCT had previously been an organization that was 100% male. This was attributable to the fact that the

BCT was the front line unit during combat. This program, although successful, had some challenges. The three challenges were:

a) The women trained with women and conducted physical training using the female standard, which was much lower than the males. As a result, the female entered the male training at a level below the males.

b) Once enrolled into the infantry, the women were separated, so that only two or three were in each class. The females were not viewed as teammates, but as strangers.

c) Due to a lack of volunteers, the Infantry had many females who did not or could not achieve the standards of an infantryman (Wojack, 2002). The current Army Regulation 600-13 entitled Army Policy for the Assignment of Female Soldiers: allowed women to serve in any officer or enlisted specialty or position, except in those specialties, positions, or units (Battalion size or smaller) which were assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocated routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission (DA, 1992, p.1).

Surprisingly, on January 24, 2013, the Department of Defense announced that the 1994 Direct Ground Combat definition and Direct Combat Exclusion rules were rescinded (DOD, 2013). The Secretary of Defense gave every military department (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines) a deadline of May 15, 2013 to give him their implementation plan. This plan included the occupational field that women were allowed to enter and a timeline of when it occurred (DA, 2013). As a result of female soldier deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, it was the consensus of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that women be allowed to serve in combat units at the battalion level (DOD, 2013).

This new development was beneficial for senior female officers since it provided an avenue for her to progress to the 4 star General officer level with her male counterparts.

Previously, females were stabilized at the two or three star general officer levels since they were unable to receive credit for combat experience or receive combat awards, if she did not conduct actual combat operations or command a combat arms unit (Reyes, 2006). Additionally, the combat arms field was the main route to receiving the highest rank in the Army-four star general.

African American Women in the Workplace

According to an article by Branch (2007) African American women are disadvantaged as a result of occupational segregation. Occupational segregation is a method of allocating certain jobs for certain races. People who enacted this type of segregation viewed those who were wealthier or smarter as better than those who in their opinion was not. Horton, Allen, Herring and Thomas (2000) address how the various races and genders were at one time or another placed in various economic classes. Although white and black males and white females spent time in the bottom of the working class, black females remained in this area for a much longer period (Horton, et al, 2000), Since it has been known that employers select employees based on their personal preference, these employees were placed in a labor queue (Kmec, 2003). The labor queue was used by employers to rank perspective employees. Within this queue, employers placed different standards on minorities that made certain jobs difficult to achieve. These jobs offered high pay and required people with high levels of skill and supervisory positions (Kaufman, 2002).

Military and Corporate Female Leaders

Although military females were the focus of this research project, women in the corporate sector cannot be overlooked. Since previous research viewed the military as a very inflexible and bureaucratic type organization, it appeared to be unique to organizations in the private sector (Jordan, 2007). Unlike the civilian sector, the military gives major responsibilities to its junior

leaders. Second lieutenants are responsible for the health, welfare, and morale of more than 100 soldiers and are expected to deploy their units to hostile countries for combat.

Within the civilian sector, namely the corporate sector, African American women are underrepresented (Rose & Bilby, 2010). According to an 2012 U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) report, of the 824, 942 personnel working in executive/senior level management positions, only 11, 696 or 1.4% were African American females (EEOC, 2012).

Within Federal agencies, women are slowly moving up the ranks. Martin (2010) examined the glass ceiling concept from the perspective of women who worked in federal agencies.   By using a case study that relied on statistical data, Martin (2010) made a comparison between the numbers of males versus females who were working in the general schedule (GS) grades and senior executive services (SES). Martin found that women were reaching the SES levels much slower than their male counterparts.

Within politics and education, African American women continue to lag behind their White counterparts, according to a report by the Center for American Women and Politics (2009). According to this report, of the 31 female governors who served, none were African Americans. Within education, 23% of college presidents, in 2006, were females compared to 79% of White males in presidential/chief executive positions (Jaschik, 2006). This was very discouraging to the African American seeking a career in these fields.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed literature review on the challenges of both women, in general, and specifically African American women in leadership positions as well as how they were perceived in the workplace. The theories of gender schema and role congruity were

relevant to this topic since they influenced the ways that women were viewed in society. Since the Department of Defense rescinded the previous combat exclusion rule, women will be allowed to command combat arms units. As a result, this may open up a new opportunity for these officers.

After reviewing the literature, it was evident that there was a need to study the success of African American female officers within the Army. There have been studies conducted in academia and government but little in the military, namely the Army.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology that will be used to gather the data for the research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The goal of this study was to learn more about the obstacles that African American female field grade Army officers face while achieving success. To explore my study topic, I conducted interviews with African American female Army field grade officers, whom I considered successful. I used their responses to identify and document the skills that enabled them to succeed in the field grade ranks. I hope that my findings serve as guidance for future African American female Army officers.

Research Design and the Rationale

Within the qualitative framework, researchers may use ethnographic, phenomenological, case study, narrative research, and ground theory approaches. These methods differ from one another in various ways:

Ethnography is the method that focused in researching a certain culture within their natural setting over an extended length of time (Creswell, 2007b, as cited in Creswell, 2009). They accomplished this by observing the customs and lifestyle of the selected group (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Ethnography was more applicable for a study that focused on understanding the culture of a population. This was not appropriate because the female officers were being researched solely based on their experiences.

Grounded theory resulted from the data collected from observations or interviews (Tummers & Karsten, 2012). In other words, as the research progressed, theories evolved. Grounded theory was more applicable to developing a theory from a phenomenon. This method was not selected for the study. In order to find out how African American female field grade officers succeeded in the military, their experiences were addressed, and as a result theories were developed.

Case studies were in depth studies of people, places or things (Creswell, 2009). These studies normally used open ended questions to gather information (Thomas, 2011). A case study was applicable to researching a subject with limited participants. This would not be applicable to this study because using one or two subjects would not prove to be accurate in identifying how female officers succeeded in the military. This placed limitations on the various experiences needed to explore by the researcher.

Narrative research was conducted by allowing participants to tell stories about their lives. According to Clandinin and Murphy (2009), stories were used by people to interpret experiences from their past (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009). This was applicable to this study however; the use of stories would not prove to be helpful in highlighting the current experiences of the female officers.

The phenomenological method identified the obstacles and explained the experiences required for success by field grade African American female officers. This method was selected since it allowed the participant to answer interview questions from their perspective. Brocki and Wearden (2006) mentioned how this method would allow the participants to interpret their experiences and translate them into responses applicable to the research.

The phenomenological method was used for this study. It is more applicable than the others because it allowed the participants to provide relevant feedback about their experiences. By giving the participants the ability to answer questions, I was able to elicit information from them that may never have disclosed previously. I believe that this approach was beneficial to the participants because it allowed them the freedom to respond to the particular questions according to their own personal experiences. As a result, in the future, these findings provide knowledge and insight to the officers who are striving to reach the ranks of field grade.

The qualitative method is selected for this topic for a myriad of reasons: Qualitative research provided a flexible approach and provided more freedom to the participant to respond. Since the topic was seeking to address the experiences of African American female officers in the Army, it was better to ask open ended questions to find out. Quantitative research questions were closed and as a result did not provide this freedom to the participant (Creswell, 2009).

 Qualitative research allowed me to relate better with the participants since they both served in the Army. For example, since the researcher of this project was a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Army, she related to the participants experiences within the research. The quantitative method focused more on experiments and surveys not really taking into account the personal aspects of how the participant felt about her success (Creswell, 2009).

Research Questions

The focus of my interviews was on providing participants with an opportunity to explain how their experiences and obstacles impacted their career advancement in the Army environment. My primary research questions were, What is your definition of success in the Army? and How do African American female military officers succeed within the Army? In order to fully answer these questions, I also asked the following sub questions:

1. Where and how the skills were acquired, that led to your success?

2. What skills and experiences are necessary for African American women to advance in the field grade ranks within the U.S. Army?

3. What contributed to your success?

4. Please explain how networking impacted your promotions to field grade officer?

5. What major obstacles are faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers?   Base this response on your previous experience.

6. What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression?

7. How did you overcome the obstacles or barriers?

Role of Researcher

I spent extensive time interviewing the study participants. My research findings depend upon my interpretation of data that was collected. I was responsible for conducting the entire study, organizing all of the interviews, and selecting the participants. I created the interview protocol and questions, recruited, contacted and scheduled participants, provided consent information, answered any questions and/or concerns the participants had, and with assistance, transcribed all of the data. I identified what African American female officers believed contributed to their success in the Army.

As a retired lieutenant colonel who served for 25 years, I experienced many challenges yet completed a successful career within the Army. Although there were many restrictions in place due to the Combat Exclusion Law, I succeeded by achieving the rank of field grade officer in her occupational field of logistics. There were many restrictions placed on females during combat. However, since the battle field was vast and did not contain boundaries, I performed many logistical operations in the combat zone.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), researching an area that a researcher is associated with could be risky to the process. I strove to be fair while conducting this study. In order to avoid bias, I use a standardized script to ask questions. I also verified responses by having another person transcribe responses, which participants were subsequently able to review and verify. During the interviews all comments are recorded and afterwards transcribed by a third party. Forty eight hours after completion, the participants received an emailed copy of their responses for accurateness.   Upon receipt of the email, the participants were encouraged to make the necessary corrections or changes.

I analyzed all of the participants' interview responses. According to Pullen, Povey, and Grogan (2009), a researcher must interpret all of the responses or experiences provided by the participants into a more coherent explanation. The interview questions addressed the study's research question. Upon completion of the previously mentioned actions, I identified themes that resulted from the data collection. The themes are listed in the next chapter**.**

Methodology

Using the phenomenological methodology, I selected some strategies that were specific to the research design. These strategies included the selection, sampling, recruitment of participants, data collection, and data analysis. These strategies contributed to gathering the data that aided in understanding the success of African American female field grade officers in the Army.

Recruitment for Participants

I coordinated via email (Appendix A) with the National President of the ROCKs organization which is based out of Washington, D.C. and located members throughout the United States, Korea, and Germany who met the criteria required for the research. The criteria used to select the participants was (a) African American (b) female (c) field grade Army officers (d) had retired, currently serving on active duty, or resigned their commissions. The identity of the participants remained confidential. Upon receipt of approval from Walden University (#09-10-14-0114397), I emailed a recruitment letter that included information about the research study (see Appendix B). This letter included information about participant consent, details about the study, and the protocol the participant needed to follow if interested. The ROCKS leadership developed a distribution list that consists of officers who met the criteria for the study and forwarded the letter to them via email. Additionally, they placed the information in

their National newsletter, the ROCKET.   Female officers interested in the study called or emailed me.

The participants, who were selected, provided me with a better understanding of the research question (Creswell, 2003). Interviewing African American female field grade officers who were currently serving, retired, or resigned their commissions provided the appropriate responses for this study. To this end, this research study included 20 African American female Army officers ranging from the ranks of major to colonel. Unfortunately, no general officers accepted the requests. Using 20 personnel allowed use of a sample of those from the ranks of lieutenant through general officer. The reason why 20 participants were selected was based on the chance that data saturation could be reached if a larger number of participants were selected. According to an empirical study conducted by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), when the participants share common characteristics, as in this study that consisted of African American female field grade Army officers who succeeded within the military, data saturation was reached after a certain amount of interviews (2006).

The method used for this study was stratified sampling. By using this method, I received a more accurate match required for this study. Using a stratified sample enabled me to identify the different experiences of women in each rank and identify obstacles at different ranks during different time periods. The selection criteria used for stratified sampling of participants included (a) being an African American woman, (b) serving in the Army as an officer, (c) serving as a Field grade officer, and (d) serving on active duty, retired from the Army, or resigned her commission. I sought to use the experiences of female veterans to identify success and obstacles faced during career progression. The key requirement for all participants was that they served in leadership positions as field grade officers. Every prospective participant was screened.

Consent process

After email or telephonic confirmation from the participant was received, the participant completed an Informed Consent Form. The consent form was emailed to the participant and she was asked to email the phrase "I consent" with her name, per IRB approval, which meant that she concurred with and understood everything on the consent form. The signed consent form was signed and emailed to me. Upon receipt of the consent form, I coordinated a date and time to speak with the participant. The Informed Consent form covered the conditions of the study, their consent to being recorded, and the freedom to withdraw at any time, any risks, and the safeguards that were in place for their protection. Participation was voluntary for the study. The participant was free to withdraw at any time from this study. None of the participants refused to continue with the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through telephonic interviews with the use of a questionnaire. Creswell (2003) listed a variety of data collection types and the email or telephonic interview seems appropriate in this situation. The interview questions were designed for participants to explain how they achieved success and whether they faced obstacles in the Army. Upon completion of the interviews, the responses were transcribed in accordance with the interview protocol provided by Creswell (2003).

These telephonic interviews were recorded using a site called "Free conference.com". This site enabled me to provide an access code and telephone number to the participant so that they could schedule a date and time for the interview. I would input a code so that the interview would be recorded. In an effort to prevent distractions and ensure privacy, the interviews took place telephonically in areas where neither the participants nor I were distracted.

During and upon completion of the interviews, none of the participants mentioned any stress or personal concerns while recounting their military experiences. Throughout the interview, the participants were reminded that they could stop at any time. Upon completion of the interview response transcription, the participants were emailed a copy of the notes for their review. They all concurred with their interview responses comments.

The computer software used for my data analysis was NVivo 10. I input the transcribed interviews into NVivo which enabled her to organize the data. There were quite a few benefits with this program.   The data was organized, labeled and time and date stamped.

Three types of coding were used for this data analysis: open, axial, and selective. Each type played a critical part in analyzing the collected data that led to a grounded theory. The first type of coding was open. During this stage, every word or phrase was analyze and placed into groups.

Axial coding was the next stage. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the researcher connected the categories to its subcategories. During this phase, I focused on relationships between the various categories.

The Interview

While conducting the interview, I ensured that bias was avoided. As a retired military officer, I ensured that Husserl's concept of epoch was applied (Creswell, 2007). Since it was easy to show bias or have strong feelings about an area or topic, I was aware of those feelings and eradicated them. Epoche ensured that all personal feelings, opinions, and biases were realized and then eliminated (Moustakas, 1994)

The interviewed responses were recorded using the feature on the conference call site that was available. I was able to retrieve the recording up to 6 months after the interview.

According to Moustakas (1994) interviewing was the best method to select when gathering data while using the grounded theory method. Since there was extended conversation, the participant felt more compelled to share their past experiences with I. By interviewing African American female military officers, I gained a clearer perspective of their experiences. The interview questions (Appendix C) being used in this study were open-ended and informal, which allowed the participants to express their feelings freely and without restraint. After all, informal conversation created a more relaxed environment that encouraged free discussion (Patton, 2001). In sync with Hycner (1985), I ended the interview when data saturation occurred or when the information got redundant and no longer relevant to the study.

Validation of Data Collected

Qualitative data gathered during this study was used to find out how African American female field grade officers succeeded in the Army. All of the data collected was validated in a couple of ways. The two validation strategies that were utilized were member checking and clarifying the bias that was visible in the study. Member checking occurred when I allowed the participants to review the final document to verify the accuracy of the interview responses and any other data that was provided by the participant (Creswell, 2009). Upon completion of the interview and transcription of the notes, the participant was invited to review their documented responses within 48 hours after all of the data was transcribed. I forwarded the information to the participant via email. This strategy was highly preferred because it prevented me from publishing a document that was later challenged by the participants. Additionally, if the participant had comments about the information, she was free to provide them. Any inaccuracies were addressed and modifications will be made. Clarification of bias occurred when I let the readers of the research know how close or experienced with the topic of the study I was (Creswell, 2009). When I informed the participants about my background there was a better

understanding about the validity of the topic. This is more of a self-realization for the researcher (Creswell, 2009).

Upon receipt of the data, I validated the results by using NVivo 10, a software program that assisted with classifying, organizing, and identifying themes that were not obvious to me. The validation process used with NVivo 10 was open coding. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), open coding occurred when the data was examined and divided into smaller portions that were closely examined and used to develop concepts and themes (2008).

Protection of Human Participants

The APA Ethical principle of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, governed the ethical relationship between the researcher and participants (APA, 2002). Informed consent was completed prior to any interviews or research related activities. It addressed the purpose of the research, their expected role, their right to decline, their approval to have their voices recorded (APA, 2010). Also, no participant was harmed and they were debriefed upon completion of the interviews (APA, 2010).

Additionally, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University ensured that the ethical guidelines were met within the research project as well as the participant selection. The purpose of the IRB was to protect all human beings from being harmed as a result of research participation (Creswell, 2003). The approval to conduct this research is IRB #09-10-14-0114397 and it expired on September 9, 2015.

I took precautions to protect the participant's identities by giving them different names and preventing the release of any personal information about their identity in the study. The individual reviewing the codes completed a confidentiality statement prior to performing their duty. There were no comments or examples used that could disclose the identity of any participant without her consent. All of the data collected via word processing programs on

computers was protected with the use of passwords. Additionally, the transcribed interviews were safeguarded in a safe in my home office. All of this data will be maintained for a minimum of 5 years after completion of the research study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the success of African American female military officers within the Army through their lived experiences of how they succeeded in spite of obstacles. This chapter included the methodology that was used to conduct this study, protect the participants, and gather the data. Additionally, this chapter outlined the methods that were used to ensure that the research data was reliable and valid.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory research was to develop insight about the experiences of African American female field grade officers serving in the Army. Based on the criteria for thus study, these female officers have succeeded in their profession. Although some research was conducted on African American women in management and leadership positions (Byrd, 2009), some of the studies focused strictly on the obstacles that prevented equality and the lack of career progression for these women, as opposed to how they have succeeded in spite of the obstacles. By investigating the experiences and obstacles faced by African American female field grade officers in the Army, I hoped to address this gap in the literature.

The participants responded to the following questions during the interviews, that I conducted. The main research question for this study was, What is your definition of success for African American female military officers in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were the following: How does gender impact success for African American field grade officers in the US Army? Where and how these skills are acquired that lead to success? What skills and experiences are necessary for African American women to advance to the field grade ranks within the US Army? What contributed to your career success? Please explain how networking impacted your promotions to field grade officer? The second research question was: How do African American female officers overcome obstacles in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were: What major obstacles are faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers? What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression? How did you overcome the obstacles?

The focus of this chapter is to discuss the data collection and analysis process as well as the results. Additionally, I will present findings for each research questions, focusing on the thematic categories that emerged during data analysis.

Demographic of Participants

Per my study criteria, my research participants ($N = 20$) were (a) African American, (b) served in the US Army as an officer, (c) serving as a field grade officer, (d) serving on active duty, retired from the Army, or resigned her commission. Cumulatively, participants had served between 11-34 years in the Army. In order to maintain confidentiality, every participant was given an alias. The participants listed in Table 1 will be referred to as Part MA, Part MB, Part MC, Part MD, Part ME, Part MF, Part MG, Part MH, Part MI, Part MJ, Part LA, Part LB, Part LC, Part LD, Par LE, Part LF, Part CA, Part CB, Part CC, and Part CD. Table 1 reflects the ranks, the military status, and the years of service of the military officers who participated.

The ranks are the military positions that the participants held at the time of this interview. The military status pertained to whether they were on active duty, had resigned their commission, or retired after 20 years of service at the time of the interviews. The years of service depicted the years of military active service at the time of the interviews. The military officer ranks begin at second lieutenant and progress to general officer. The time of service required for each rank is 10 years of service for majors, 16 years of service for lieutenant colonels, and 22 years of service for colonels.

Table 1.

Profile of Participants

Participant	Rank	Active/Retired	Years Served
Part MA	Major	Retired	17.6
Part MB	Major	Active	20
Part MC	Major	Active	15
Part MD	Major	Active	16
Part ME	Major	Active	11
Part MF	Major	Active	14.5
Part MG	Major	Active	13.5
Part MH	Major	Retired	20
Part MI	Major	Retired	20
Part MJ	Major	Active	15
Part LA	Lt. Colonel	Active	17
Part LB	Lt. Colonel	Retired	29
Part LC	Lt. Colonel	Active	19
Part LD	Lt. Colonel	Retired	21
Part LE	Lt. Colonel	Retired	34
Part LF	Lt Colonel	Active	19
Part CA	Colonel	Retired	28
Part CB	Colonel	Retired	31
Part CC	Colonel	Active	22
Part CD	Colonel	Active	22

Data Collection Process

After receiving Walden University IRB approval, #09-10-14-0114397 I began to recruit participants using an organization named the ROCKs. As mentioned previously, under operational definitions, ROCKs is not an acronym; it is an organization that was named after the first African American field artillery general officer (Wright, 2015). After agreeing to cooperate with me, the ROCKs disseminated a recruitment letter to approximately 70 African American female field grade members with my contact information. Approximately, 25 interested participants emailed or called me. To determine eligibility, I sent each participant a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) via email. This questionnaire asked the prospective participant to provide his or her age, race, gender, years of service, rank upon separation, and job position.

Upon completion of the questionnaire, I sent the participant a copy of the consent form. Per prior approval from the IRB, the participants were authorized to respond with an "I Consent" via email prior to signing and returning the consent form to me. Upon receipt of the consent form, I scheduled a date and time for the interview with each participant. Freeconferencecall.com was the medium used for all of the interviews. This medium was a free service that enabled the interviewer (researcher) to coordinate conference calls with the participants. When the participants provided their availability dates and times, the researcher provided them with an access code that they used to dial in for the telephonic interview.

These interviews were conducted telephonically via recorded conference calls. These interviews averaged from thirty minutes to one hour. Every participant was reassured that there was not right or wrong answer, they were encouraged to discuss anything that was relevant to the question asked, and they were comfortable saying they did not know something nor had

experienced something.   Upon completion of the recorded interviews the notes were transcribed with the assistance of a transcriptionist.   Additionally, a notebook was used to capture the interview responses

The first main research question for this study was: What is your definition of success for African American female military officers in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were: How does gender impact success for African American field grade officers in the US Army? Where and how these skills are acquired that lead to success? What skills and experiences are necessary for African American women to advance to the field grade ranks within the US Army? What contributed to your career success? Please explain how networking impacted your promotions to field grade officer? The second research question was: How do African American female officers overcome obstacles in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were: What major obstacles are faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers? What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression? How did you overcome the obstacles?

The participants called from various locations using freeconferencecall.com. During the interviews, notes were taken in case more follow-up questions were needed and to be used as back up if the recording was not successful (Creswell, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2002). Upon completion of the interviews, the participants would receive a copy of the transcript to verify for accuracy. Upon completion of the recorded interviews, they were transcribed by me with the assistance of a transcriptionist.

Upon the completion of transcription, they were reviewed for content and accuracy. The process used to verify accuracy of the content was conducted by both the transcriptionist and me. I recorded the interviews. Both individually reviewed and interpreted the recordings of the

interview responses. The transcriptionist provided quality control if there were any discrepancies between the recordings and the transcripts. The resulting data was subjected to open coding so that themes could emerge. The interviews were input into a word document and secured on a password protected external. This external drive was secured in a locked cabinet. The instrument used for data analysis was NVivo. All of the transcriptions of the recordings were uploaded into NVivo and analyzed.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I utilized three methods to prove trustworthiness of the data used in this research. The first evidence of trustworthiness consisted of a negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which was performed by comparing codes to the themes to ensure saturation of the themes.

Secondly, another tool used to ensure trustworthiness during data collection was the use of NVivo 10 that had a date/time stamp to verify input and updates, use of conference calls with recording capability, and transcriptions of the interview notes with a transcriptionist. After transcribing the interview results, they were entered into NVivo 10 which enabled the coding and organization of data to take place. After uploading these interviews and responses, I scrutinized every word and/or phrase to categorize them.   When using the NVivo 10 program, every theme and category was identified. By having all of my work documented within this system, an audit trail was maintained of my research process.   Upon completion of data collection, one final method of trustworthiness was implemented. The method of member checking took place.

During member checking, copies of the transcribed interview responses were emailed to the participants for their review. They had the opportunity to review their comments and make the necessary changes if needed. Upon completion of the transcription of the interviews, the participants were given a letter explaining the member checking process. They all agreed to

review their interviewed responses and return their comments, which they all did. Of the 20 interview responses sent to the participants, only two requested that minor grammatical changes be made.

Theme Development

Upon completion of the transcription, the interviews were input into NVivo 10 for coding. NVivo 10 was used to organize the data from the 20 interviews using open coding. Open coding and development of themes, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), consists of "taking a part of an observation, a sentence, a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea, or event, a name, something that stands for or represents a phenomenon" (p.63). As a result, every sentence in the interview responses was analyzed and given a name according to its content. I read every part of the response and placed it under codes. These codes derived from the participant's words. Based on the responses, I selected words that could best categorize them. I continued to add or modify codes when new meanings or categories evolved. This was the most tedious portion of the analysis since I went line by line coding each phrase. Once the codes were developed, every piece of the text was compared and assigned to a code. According to Charmaz (2006), coding is the critical point between collecting data and developing an explanation for the data. Upon completion of open coding there was a list of 91 codes (Appendix E) that were consolidated by their similarities. From this list of codes, the themes were identified.

This process was critical for this study because in order to identify the relevance of the data to the research questions, the data must be analyzed and developed into codes and then themes. Appendix E reflects how many of the codes mapped into specific themes and categories. Additionally, it shows how participants fit into the categories. Some of the codes

supported multiple themes. The initial themes, which will explained in the next section included: *Challenges, Mentorship, Networking, Support, Keys to Succeed, Successful career, Traits of leadership, and Overcoming challenges (*Appendix E*).* These themes were later consolidated into categories.

For example, all of the codes that pertained to the characteristics that contributed to a successful military career were placed under the category *Characteristics of a Successful military career.*   After the themes were established, I reevaluated all of the themes and consolidated and renamed them into categories. According to Hill, Knox, Thompson, Williams & Hess, (2005), once the themes have been developed, the category emerged, which described the common themes within the data.

Overview of the Main Categories:

After I coded the interview results and analyzed the results, I identified themes. By analyzing the frequency of certain phrases and words, I identified developing themes and categories (Johnson & Christensen (2004). Both themes and categories resulted from the coding process (Sussman, A.L, Williams, R.L., Leverence, R., Goyd, P.W., & Crabtree, B.F. (2006). Additionally, this method allowed me to scrutinize the data which resulted in identifying similar words and phrases that were used to develop codes (Creswell, 2009). Codes were the basis of words or phrases. After analyzing the themes, I noticed trends and consolidated the 9 themes into five categories.

The five categories (Appendix E) that emerged were (1) *Characteristics of Successful Career, (2) Support systems (which included mentorship and networking), (3) Keys to succeed as a leader (which included traits of leadership), (4) Obstacles faced (which included challenges), and, (5) Overcoming obstacles.* These categories were organized according to their relationship

with each other. Each category will be listed and defined as it pertained to the research.   After briefly describing the terms below, a more detailed explanation will follow. The categories are listed below.

The category, *Characteristics of Successful service*, defined how the participants explained which characteristics contributed to their success.

The category *Support systems* defined the type of support that enabled these participants to succeed in the Army. Within this category, I included mentorship and networking. The reason why is that many of the participants viewed these two items as very important parts of the professional support system.

The next category was *Keys to succeed as a leader.* These specific keys, which will be discussed later in this document, described the traits that the participants believed contributed to their success as leaders. This category consisted of a list that was developed by the participants that explained traits that led to their success.

The next category was *Obstacles faced*. These obstacles were challenges that were experienced by the participants during their military career.

The last category was *Overcoming obstacles.* Overcoming obstacles was a very encouraging portion of this research in that it depicted how the participants overcame their obstacles or challenges. I expounded on the categories and the participants responses as they pertained to the research questions.

Categories as They Pertained to Research Questions

Every participant responded to nine questions. These questions were designed to reveal the experiences that contributed to the success and identify the obstacles that were faced by 20 African American field grade officers who had achieved the field grade ranks of major through

colonel. In this section, the categories that developed from the interview responses will be discussed as they pertained to the research questions.

The categories were: *Characteristics of Successful Career , Support systems (which included mentorship and networking), and Keys to succeed as a leader* consisted of the interview responses for Research Question #1 and the sub questions.   These categories resulted from the responses of the following research questions:

1.   What is your definition of success for African American female military officers in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were: How does gender impact success for African American field grade officers in the US Army? Where and how these skills are acquired that lead to success? What skills and experiences are necessary for African American women to advance to the field grade ranks within the US Army? What contributed to your career success? Please explain how networking impacted your promotions to field grade officer?

2.   The categories: *Obstacles faced and Overcoming obstacles* consisted of the interview responses for Research Question #2 and its sub questions. These categories resulted from the responses of the following research questions: How do African American female officers overcome obstacles in the United States Army? The sub questions that supported this question were: What major obstacles are faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers? What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression? How did you overcome the obstacles?

Characteristics of a Successful Career

The characteristics of successful career were described in various ways. Many of the participants viewed success in the military as "attaining the rank aspired to". More than 70% of the participants viewed success as attaining the ranks of major through colonel. Additionally, completing 20 years of military service was a sign of success. Although the majority of the participants stated that everyone in the military had their own opinion about success, each one stated theirs. Part MC had a unique response when she stated that success varied "depending on each person and wasn't dependent on gender or race". Additionally, she responded that "leaving a mark and having a positive impact" was also success. Part LC was the only person who stated that a female 'who decided to have a family, could see this as her definition of success'. This was a very unique definition in comparison with the others. According to Lu and Sexton (2010) women in certain careers view success as gaining recognition for accomplishments, being respected by the employees and upper management and having the ideal work-family balance. This is similar to the military in that the average field grade senior officer is in their 40s and has completed at least nine to ten years of service. Unfortunately, in some organizations, having children indicates stability for men however for women it is viewed negatively (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). According to a study conducted by Correll, Benard, & Paik (2007), job applications with women were screened by undergraduate students. The women with children were rated lower and as being less competent than those without children.

Support systems

More than 50% of the participants stated that their belief in God and faith gave them the support they needed. Part LE stated that "God ordered her steps" while in the military. Part MA stated that "God was the key" to her success and support. According to Sheep (2006) workplace spirituality, occurs when leaders apply their religious beliefs to their workplace. These religious

beliefs are evident in how the leaders treat their employees by being fair to everyone, believing that they were called to serve in that job position, and being grateful to employees (Reave, 2005). Additionally, Pargament (1997) found that religion was a key element in helping African American women to cope with difficult situations. The remaining 50% stated that family provided the necessary support that they needed. Part MA also added that her "grandfather who served in the Air Force during difficult racial times encouraged her to become an officer in the military". According to the demand-control theory (Karasek, 1979), having social support can replace the negative effects of individuals who have many job responsibilities yet have minimal control. It was shown that African Americans relied on social relationships in order to overcome the effects of discrimination (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds & Cancelli, 2000). Additionally, it was shown that family support contributed to the satisfaction of the African American female, not as much for males (Linnabery, Stuhlmacher & Towler, 2014). According to a study by Carli (2010), all women need some of support to succeed. Within this category, networking and mentorship were included. In addition to family support, more than half of the participants believed that mentorship and networking provided them with additional support.

Networking

Part CD mentioned how networking positively impacted her career. She mentioned how "she met and spoke to someone in the gym and as a result received a by-name-request (BNR) for a job she wanted". This was a true example of networking. Part LD added that she attended a meeting and mentioned to someone her interest in a particular job. Surprisingly, a month later she was contacted by the person who informed her of a job opening. She eventually got the job. The networking that occurred in the military is the same that occurred in other occupations. It is a method used to

bring people together who share similarities to support one another (Wheatley, 2006).

Networking has been proven to enable people to receive jobs, perform better on the job, and

receive promotions (Brass, D., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H.R., & Wenpin, T., 2004). Although

women are progressing more due to networking, men continue to excel and receive promotions

much faster (Van Emmerik, 2006).

Mentorship

Part CB mentioned how the ROCKs organization enabled her to meet many mentors who

continued to support her throughout her career. These mentors introduced her to new job

opportunities. According to Durbin (2011) mentorship is a critical exchange of knowledge and

crucial information that contributes to career advancement opportunities. Opportunities that she

probably would have never been exposed to without a mentor were provided. Part LA mentioned

that a mentor does not have to be of the same race nor gender. She had a Caucasian female who

mentored her throughout her career and introduced her to the right people. Right people were those

who had the power to hire her for certain job positions. According to LaPierre & Zimmerman (2012)

females working in leadership positions in the medical community may have mentors but

unfortunately not the high ranking person to advocate for them. This can also prevent females from

advancing. Mentorship is also impacted by the family life of the female. Some males believe that it is

hard for them to mentor a female because she may not be reliable due to family situations. In other

words, he may be wasting his time on someone who is not totally focused on the job (Strong, De

Castro, Sambuco, Stewart, Ubel, Griffin & Jagsi (2013).

Keys to succeed as a leader

More than 50% of the participants stated that oral and written communication skills were

crucial in succeeding as a leader. For example, Part CB stated that "you need to get beyond race

and focus on becoming a good leader and communicator (both oral and written)". This seemed to be the main key to success for most of the participants. According to Morath, Leonard, & Zaccaro (2011) the current military environment and deployments rely heavily on communication, as opposed to the past. This is due to the decentralized way that the military operates in various locations. Women in fields outside of the military stated that communication was very important, especially the ability to listen (Salas-Lopez, Deitrick, Mahady, Gertner & Sabino, 2011). Additionally, Part LA stated that "females need to counter the stereotypes by displaying good oral skills". Apparently, it was her belief that females are stereotyped as not being as eloquent in speaking as males.

Parts LA, MF, and MH stated that being proactive is critical as opposed to being reactive. Part MF stated that in order to be successful, "females had to plan 3-5 years out and know the steps needed to accomplish the goal". Part MF stated that females, not males, had to make this plan in case they wanted to plan for a family. Additionally, unlike males, they normally have to learn about the jobs since the information was not always readily available.

Obstacles faced

The 70% of participants stated that many of the obstacles they faced were due to their gender. Part LB stated that 'as a senior officer in the Military Police Corps, a male dominated organization, she was second-guessed unlike the junior male officers'. She also gave an example of how she made a recommendation for a particular operation that was ignored by her male counterparts. However, when the senior officer heard about the idea, he thought it was great and implemented it.

When asked about obstacles she faced, Part LC responded that "We are not viewed as equals and must work 10 times harder". Part CD mentioned how females "used to be sized up by

'their' uniform in the past, however, it is not that way today". The previous Battle dress uniform (BDU) used to have the patches and badges of all schools and achievements. As a result, at a glance, someone knew the certifications you had earned. Unfortunately, the current Army Combat Uniform (ACU) does not allow the wearing of many badges and patches.   Additionally, Part CD states that "females don't have the same credibility as our male counterparts, unless someone vouches for us". She gave an example that at certain meetings her comments would be discounted unless others noticed that her superior would agree with or support her. More than half of the participants mentioned that they had to work harder than their peers.

Part CB responded differently than the other participants when speaking about obstacles. She responded that "regardless of gender, as long as you prove yourself, you will be viewed positively".

Overcoming obstacles

Many of the participants mentioned how they overcame obstacles. Part CB stated that "being a single parent was the toughest challenge I had and I knew nothing could challenge me more than that".   Therefore, she faced every obstacle head-on and never got discouraged. According to Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien (2013) females working in fields outside the military, who chose to have children while working, faced obstacles. They were viewed negatively in that male managers believed that they could not dedicate themselves to their families without sacrificing their performance on the job. Unfortunately, some of their supervisors viewed childbirth as a hindrance to the female's ability to perform. According to Cheung & Halpern (2010), many female leaders established their priorities and connected their work to their family life so that both were equal. For example, many of them would take their children with them on

business on trips and occasionally work from home. This enabled the women to feel as though their family was a benefit and not a hindrance (p.185).

Although being a single parent is not unique to the military, it is managed differently than in other organizations. In the military, a soldier must complete a family care plan that appoints a designated person to take care of his or her child in the case of a deployment, mobilization, or exercise that takes the soldier out of the area for more than a day. This plan guarantees that all children or family members are taken care of at all times, whether or not the soldier is present. Completing this form provides these women with the reassurance that their families will be safe and secure (McLeod, 2014) in their absence. Participants MF and LE both responded that they would develop their professional skills. Part LD stated that, "I didn't take no for an answer. I did not accept you are not the right person for the job. I was not shy and I was not going to be overlooked. I fought for everything."

Part CD had a very positive attitude and admitted that she was motivated by people who did not want her to succeed. This positive attitude stemmed from the belief that she could accomplish anything she worked towards. After witnessing the election of America's first African American president, Barack Obama, many African Americans believed that hard work could overcome any obstacle (Wellburn and Pittman, 2012). According to Reed and Louis (2009), instead of focusing on inequality in America, President Obama focused on the importance of hard work and resolve in achieving the American dream. I displayed this positive attitude throughout my career. As an enlisted soldier, I was determined to transition to become a military officer. At that time, in the early 1980's, the average soldier didn't have to have a high school diploma to enlist however; I had two years of college at the time. When the time drew near to submit a packet for ROTC, I was bombarded with comments that I would never become

an officer. These comments, which were used as motivation, contributed to my becoming an officer in a shorter amount of time.

Summary

Chapter 4 addressed the demographics, data collection, evidence of trustworthiness, data analysis, and the description of the main categories. This data resulted from the interview responses from 20 African American female field grade officers. These participants represented a total years of 405 years of military experience.   The interview question responses were categorized to better understand the experiences of African American female field grade officers that led to their success. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the findings, the limitations, recommendations, and the social change implications of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

I asked two main research questions and eight sub questions. I interviewed 20 African

American female field grade officers, transcribed their interview responses, and identified

themes and categories. At the time of their interviews, these 20 female field grade officers had a

collective 405 years of military experience. These years are important to show how their total

years of military service. In this final chapter, I will offer my interpretation of the findings,

discuss the limitations of my study, offer recommendations, and consider the social change

implications of this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings for this research were very helpful in understanding the experiences of the

participants. In Chapter 4, the categories were described as a consolidation of the research

questions. Following, the research questions and sub questions are addressed and the responses

from the participants are shown.

Research Question #1: What was your definition of success for African American female

military officers in the United States Army? Over 50% of the participants appeared to share the

same opinions about success. Participants stated that completing a 20 plus year career was

considered success. Additionally, the same percentage stated that success was defined as

achieving the rank of LTC or above. As a retired military officer, I understood why they

responded this way. Throughout the U.S. military, soldiers transfer to another location at least

once every 3-4 years, sometimes more frequently. With every new assignment comes more

responsibility. According to Foynes, Harrington & Shiperd (2013) African American and

nonwhite females have to work harder in order to combat discrimination and gain status within

the military. Part MD stated that "Reaching the grade of field grade officer which can result in completing a 20 year career is success. 20 years in the military includes making personal sacrifices." Within other careers, female leaders defined success as having support from family and friends (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). This enabled them to focus on achieving their goals. Additionally, like the military, many women believed that having longevity, depending on the particular job requirement, and having the freedom to control her calendar were signs of success.

   The answers to the sub questions were as follows:

(a) How did gender impact success for African American field grade officers in the US Army? The responses under this question were consolidated under the facing obstacles category. More than half of the participants believed that gender was a major issue in the Army. Part CA stated that when it came to obstacles..."Gender was the only issue. Women regardless of rank" faced this challenge. This participant was a Colonel who had served over 25 years in the Army.

According to Heilman and Okimoto (2007) females in leadership positions are viewed negatively because they work in male dominated fields. The reason for this is that they go against the prescriptive gender stereotype that states that females are expected to act in accordance to societal beliefs about female gender (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Additionally, some of participants believed that good communication skills are necessary. In addition to having communication skills, many of the participants said that they are proactive, technically competent, have a strong work ethic, and care about others, all of which they viewed as helping them in being successful

The strongest comment about gender impact came from Part LB who served in a Military Police organization. While performing as a military police officer, Part LB faced challenges every day and fought to achieve the key positions that every officer must achieve for

progression. However, she was not sure whether she faced challenges because of her gender or because they already had someone projected to fill certain job positions. When asked about the impact of gender, Part MG, stated:

"Gender impacts success at all levels, but seemed to be amplified at the senior rank levels. My thoughts are that there are not enough African American (AA) female seniorexecutive leaders who are particularly sensitive to bringing up more AA women."

The point that Part MG made here was interesting in that she addressed how gender viewed differently as a female, the higher one progressed through the ranks. According to a study conducted by Powell, Butterfield & Parent (2002) college students still continue to hold negative stereotypes about gender. When asked to describe the characteristics of leadership, the participants responded with terms related to aggressiveness and forcefulness and which are associated with masculinity and not femininity. Participants viewed a trait such as caring about people, which is associated with femininity, as neither pertaining to nor supporting leadership (2002). Women are faced with the difficult choice of showing the proper trait and the proper time. If they show masculine traits of assertiveness, they are viewed negatively. However, if some women show emotional traits that are evident of the participative style of leadership, they are viewed as being too feminine (Herrara, Duncan, Green & Skaggs, 2012). Fortunately, the participants used various leadership styles, although most admitted to using the participatory one.

Per the participants, the low numbers of higher ranking available females to mentor junior officers contributes to the lack of women at higher levels of management. There are different views about the mentorship of successful women. McGrath, Wadhwa & Mitchell (2010) found that female entrepreneurs, unlike their male counterparts, did not have problems with locating mentors. However, Mcquire, Bergen & Polan (2004) found that women who work

in science and educational fields face many barriers to being successful. One of them is the lack

of mentors.

(b)   Where and how were these acquired that lead to success? What skills and

experiences were necessary for African American women to advance to the field grade ranks

within the US Army? What contributed to your career success? Please explain how networking

impacted your promotions to field grade officer? The responses from these questions were

consolidated under characteristics of success. Based on the responses from the participants, the

skills that led to, were necessary for, and contributed to the characteristics of success were

interchangeable. For example, many of the participants stated that having good oral and written

communication skills enabled them to succeed. This response was the same for all of the

questions. As a result, it was evident that communication was required to succeed in the Army

as an officer. Additionally, some of the participants mentioned how networking and mentorship

contributed to their success.

When asked about networking, many participants discussed the importance of

mentorship. As a result, one of the major findings in this study was how the words mentorship

and networking were used interchangeably. It was evident that the majority of the participants

succeeded with the assistance of a mentor who enabled them to network. This differed in other

areas outside of the military. According to research, women who worked in the scientific and

medical fields mentioned that that the lack of mentorship did not prevent them from succeeding

(Blood et al. 2012). After reviewing the first research question, the second will now follow.

Research Question #2: *How do African American female officers overcome obstacles in
the United States Army?* The methods used by the participants to overcome obstacles were very

positive. Although many of these officers experienced a variety of obstacles, they were resilient.

Part LD mentioned many inspirational methods that she used to overcome obstacles:

> She stated: I overcame by getting a mentor, networking, and taking on challenging
> positions. I didn't take no for an answer. I did not accept you are not the right person for
> the job. I fought for everything. …I was not going to be overlooked. I had to prove
> myself. I did this by setting goals, being prepared, being on time, and being the
> smartest person in the room. I became an asset to my leadership and it opened doors for
> me.

The sub questions that supported this question were:

(a) *What major obstacles were faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers?* These responses focused on the transition from company grade to field grade officers. More than half of the participants stated that a company grade officer was given many opportunities to make mistakes, however as a field grade there was not much forgiveness.

(b) *What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression?* Surprisingly, only 5 out of 20 participants mentioned race as an obstacle. The majority of the women mentioned that gender was never an issue for them. Part CA believed that all females regardless of race faced challenges while in the military. Part MA mentioned that since the Army was considered a male dominant society, females were viewed as less capable than their male counterparts. Additionally, she stated that "gender was an obstacle for a human resources (HR) officer working in a combat unit. The superiors were not used to working with females". In her opinion, this had nothing to do with race.

Women outside the military also faced obstacles. According to Hoss, Bobrowski, McDonagh, & Paris (2011) the numbers of female managers working in the hospital remains low

in comparison to males. This is largely due to the belief that the number of women being promoted to leadership positions has not changed over the past years and is not expected to increase much in the future (Athey, 2014). According to a study conducted by Dannels, McLaughlin, Gleason, McDade, Richman & Morahan (2009) documented that it was evident that women in the medical academic fields were treated unequally by the ways they were belittled by their male counterparts and the visible low numbers of women in leadership positions.

According to an article by Haslanger (2000), females are judged unfairly because of how they were historically portrayed as being submissive to males. Unfortunately, some people still share the belief than females should not be in the Army. As was previously stated in reviewed lit by Wallen, Tamkins, Heilman, and Fuchs (2004), successful women were evaluated negatively by male undergraduate students while working in a male dominant career. Part CC stated that gender didn't make an impact unless being a female was used as an excuse to avoid responsibility. Additionally, she wanted everyone to know that "she focused on being the best officer, not the best female". This seemed to be the universal viewpoint of many of the participants. Although, many of the participants viewed gender as an obstacle over race, 5 participants viewed race as an obstacle.

These five women spoke negatively about the impact of race as it affected their careers. Part MJ stated that her barrier was color first and then gender. She also mentioned that "blatant racism still existed in the military". It seemed like Part MJ experienced quite a few negative encounters in her career. Part LD also mentioned that "Regardless of how much the Army talks about equal opportunity, all things are not equal for minority women".

According to Harris (2009), women were viewed negatively by their employers due to their familial relationships and being unable to meet all of the demands of the jobs (Gouthro, 2005). Additionally, women in the educational and military occupations faced obstacles when trying to accommodate their children and spouses. They were viewed as not having time for both a job and their family. Women had always faced these types of challenges within the military (Peterson, Persson & Bergren, 2008). One of the obstacles faced by women in the military was the need to balance the mission with family life.

African American female leaders were stereotyped as leaders by their supervisors (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). One of the stereotypes was that African American female leaders were not as qualified as their counterparts (Dobbs, Thomas & Harrison, 2008). Following were some comparisons from the interview results with the research articles.

When comparing female educators with female military personnel, Harris (2009) mentioned that females in both of these fields believe that having a family negatively impacted the way they were viewed on the job. Out of the 20 interviews that were conducted, only two females mentioned having a family. Part LC stated that her definition of success was becoming a general officer however; this could change if she opted to have a family. Additionally, Part CA, an officer who served over 28 years reminisced that in the past it was a challenge to discuss family when planning a career. Research has shown that women who delayed having a child for a career, experienced infertility (U.S.Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Fortunately, this challenge was not prevalent, in her opinion. In addition to discussing family, the issue of not feeling welcome was mentioned. Unfortunately, research has found that balancing a family was difficult for women seeking a career in the academic field (Trepal &

Stinchfield, 2012). This difficulty was due to their inability to meet the requirements for tenure (Philpsen, 2010).

According to the study by Gupta, Bhawe & Turban (2008), there was a perception that women were hesitant about taking a leadership position. This contributed to the lack of females progressing to the senior levels within the military officer. If a female believed she would not be welcomed in the higher ranks of the military she retired or resigned her commission. Part MI, who retired after 20 years of service, mentioned that "the constant drive" to excel and compete with males was exhausting. She "believed that was one of the reasons why so many African American females don't make it to retirement". This participant had a very negative experience where she did not feel as welcomed as some as her peers, when working for and with males. Although stereotypes were addressed in the research articles, it did not seem to be a hindrance for the participants.

According to an article by Titunik (2008) gender was critical since historically military culture was considered masculine. This was evident during the Gulf War. When females deployed in support of the Gulf War, it was the first time that the American public saw them, since it was being televised. Although women had served in the military for many years prior to that event, they had been ignored (2008).   Additionally, some African American female leaders were viewed as less qualified than their counterparts (Dobbs, Thomas & Harrison, 2008).   Only Part MC used the term stereotype when she stated that "people stereotype me based on my appearance; some people may not take me seriously since I look young".

Servant leaders placed the needs of their employees and the mission above themselves (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).   This was extremely crucial in a military environment, since the mission and the soldiers were to be considered at all times. This was evident by two of the

participant's comments. Part CC stated that "it is critical that you take care of others". Although

she was a Colonel, she still believed that it was imperative that leaders never stop caring about

their subordinates. Part CB, another Colonel, stated when addressing key skills of leaders that

"…the military wants...caring and genuine leaders".   The majority of the participants mentioned

the importance of taking care of people. They mentioned that it was crucial for all officers to

display the traits of servant leadership.

According to Spears (2010) the 10 characteristics that describe servant leaders are:

(1)they are good listener, (2) they show empathy, (3) they want to heal others, (4), they are aware

of others and themselves, (5) they are persuasive, (6) they are visionaries, (7) they have

foresight, (8) they serve others, (9) they are committed to growing their employees, and (10) they

build communities (pg. 27-29). These traits were evident in the responses that were provided by

the participants.

Limitation of the Study

There were several limitations to this study, which included the sample composition since

there were no general officers in the participant pool. Having general officers who had reached

the highest officer ranks could have provided a different perspective in addition to those who

were interviewed.

Another limitation was that company grade female officers were not used in this study.

Additionally, it may have also been beneficial to include female company grade officers who

held the ranks of lieutenant through captain. By including junior officers, I could have identified

how junior officer's experiences differed from the field grade experiences.

Another limitation was that all of the participants were members of the ROCKs organization. Although this is an organization that is considered to be internationally located, there are others that could have been used as participant pools.

Final limitation was that all of the participants were in the Army. It would have been beneficial to conduct research in the other military services like the Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, and Air Force. This research could disclose more information that was not evident within this study. The military services differ from one another in the missions that they perform. The Marines mission is to send small elements into an area to provide manpower and support to the Navy and conduct sea and shore operations. They differ from the other services in that they are not self-sustaining. They must depend on other services for their support ("Our Purpose," 2015) The Air Force mission is to protect all air, space and cyberspace ("Our mission", 2015). The mission of the Army is to fight the big land wars. They are self-sustaining since they have all of the specialties needed to support themselves for an indeterminate period of time ("About the Army", 2015). Lastly, the Navy's mission is to gain maritime supremacy ("About the Navy", 2015).

Recommendation for Future Studies

There needs to be more research conducted within the Army as well as the other services that pertained to the African American military officer. As current as April 14, 2015, a news article in USA Today was published that was entitled "Black Army Officers Struggle to Climb Ranks". It stated that:

> The Army's 2016 class of commanders for 31 of its top combat
>
> units has one black officer, a trend that the service is seeking to
>
> reverse with limited success. The 2016 list of commanders for

Army infantry, artillery and armor combat brigades and battalions

shows black officers continue to struggle to gain a foothold in the

units that serve as the primary training ground for senior leaders

(Brook, USA Today, 2015).Although not a peer reviewed journal, USA Today

pledges to do the following: "do our best to maintain the highest standards of customer

service. We will always be there to respond to your concerns, whether about service,

content or guarding your trust"

(USA Today, August 10, 2015).

Although USA Today made the previous claims of legitimacy, it is not considered a

trusted source of information. However, it was addressing the perceptions of those serving in the

military. Therefore the article should be acknowledged as relevant to the current military

leadership. This article was indicative of a current concern that was being examined by the

leadership of the United States Army.

Additionally, another recommendation from the participants was that in spite of the

advances in the military from the previous years, the Army should implement different programs

aimed at highlighting gender awareness. One of the programs developed could consist of

distributing a survey that could be anonymously completed that would speak about gender

relations. Per the participants' comments, the military currently was good with conducting race

relation training; however focusing more on gender issues could be a new focus.

I recommended that a study like this be conducted with African American company

grade officers. It would be beneficial to understand how the junior officers perceived their

success within the Army after serving one to seven years respectively.

Social Change Implications

The social change impact of this research could lower and eventually eliminate barriers faced by African American female military officers. Not only would this create a positive change in the military but also in any work place where females can work in a leadership position. It would also be beneficial to those leaders who have female subordinates.

The results of this study will contribute to creating a positive social change for a few reasons: (1) By identifying and addressing the possible challenges, the future female officers would be prepared to overcome them, (2) the experiences relayed by these field grade officer through interviews would enable future African American females in other occupations besides the military to succeed, and the (3) outcome of this study would create an awareness in the Army as well as society about fair treatment for every human being.

Conclusion

This phenomenological qualitative research study resulted in themes and categories that emerged from interviews with twenty African American female field grade Army officers. The characteristics that led to success per the participants' comments were being technically proficient, having a strong work ethic, caring about the soldiers (servant leadership) and mentorship.   This differed from the leadership trait theory in that the trait theory stated that there were physical and personality characteristics that leaders possessed however they did not guarantee success (1991). These twenty field grade Army officers ranged from the ranks of major to colonel. Although general officers were invited to participate, none accepted. Throughout this study, the participants provided different definitions of success however, the characteristics of success and their views on gender were similar.

Surprisingly, many of the participants mentioned challenges that were based on their gender, not race. This was encouraging since the military has incorporated many programs that

were based on race relations.   For the twenty five years that I served in the Army, race relation

and equal opportunity training had been an annual requirement.

Additionally, another recommendation from the participants was that in spite of the

advances in the military from the previous years, the Army has to continue to seek improvement

by implementing different programs aimed at improving gender awareness. One of the programs

could consist of distributing a survey that could be anonymously completed that would speak

about gender relations. Per the participants' comments, the military currently offers good equal

opportunity; however focusing more on gender issues could be a new focus.

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Appendix A: Email Confirmation of Permission to Use ROCKS for Participant Pool

Dorene Hurt Hi Sharene, BG Simms has approved sending the study participation info to selected ROCKS members per LTC Thompson's request as I outlined in the 4 Feb email below. Please coordinate directly with LTC Thompson
To 'National Board of the ROCKS, Inc.'Me
Feb 5 at 4:50 PM

Hi Sharene,

BG Simms has approved sending the study participation info to selected ROCKS members per LTC Thompson's request as I outlined in the 4 Feb email below.

Please coordinate directly with LTC Thompson on this & be sure that materials are sent by you directly to the specific female officers as she requests.

Thx,

Dorene

From: Earl Simms [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 10:07 AM
To: Dorene Hurt
Subject: RE: Request for ROCKS permission to contact potential Study Participants for Doctoral Thesis

Yes, I approve. ESimms

From: Dorene Hurt [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 7:16 PM
To: Earl Simms
Subject: RE: Request for ROCKS permission to contact potential Study Participants for Doctoral Thesis

Does that mean you approve it?

From: Dorene Hurt [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 12:49 PM
To: 'sandra thompson'; Earl Simms
Cc:; 'National Board of the ROCKS, Inc.'
Subject: RE: Request for ROCKS permission to contact potential Study Participants for Doctoral Thesis

BG Simms,

Recommend approval. We have supported others who were working on their doctorate and needed volunteers to participate in a study.

Sharene can pull the names & addresses of female field grade officers & send them the info. Those who are willing to participate in the study can then contact LTC Thompson directly. We can also publicize it in the ROCKET.

Doing it this way, we are not releasing anyones contact info. I am certain that she will get sufficient feedback to support her dissertation & this will certainly offer us another opportunity to document what African American women in uniform have gone through & contributed to our nation.

VR,

Dorene

From: sandra thompson [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 7:24 PM
To: Subject: Request for ROCKS permission

Hello Ma'am:

Hope all is going well for you. I have attached a copy of the information letter that addresses the research study that I had previously mentioned. This is not the recruitment letter that will be used to advertise the study and request volunteers. Please let me know if more details are required prior to receiving approval from your chairman.

Thanks so much for your assistance.

Sandra M. Thompson LTC (Ret)

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear Fellow Military Officers:

I am currently a doctoral student in the Department of Organizational Psychology at Walden University. I am preparing to conduct a study for my dissertation that pertains to the successes of African American field grade Army Officers. Throughout the years there has been an increase in the numbers of African American female officers within the Army, however, it is not publicized as much as military males. During this study you will be asked to take a brief demographic interview which will let me know whether you have the qualifications to volunteer as a participant. After the preliminary information has been collected we will coordinate a time when we can get together to have an interview session via telephone. This session will last approximately 1.0 hours.

The information collected during this interview will be my sole purpose of gathering the necessary information for this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary. You information will be secured and your anonymity will be guaranteed.

Upon completion of the interview all of the information will be secured.

Please forward an email to me at or feel free to call. .

Thanks

Sandra M. Thompson

Lieutenant Colonel, Retired

Appendix C: Interview Questions

What is your definition of success for a female African American field grade officer in the United States Army?

How does gender impact success for African American field grade officers in the US Army?

Where and how the skills were acquired, that led to your success?

What skills and experiences are necessary for African American women to advance in the field grade ranks within the US Army?

What contributed to your success?

Please explain how networking impacted your promotions to field grade officer?

What major obstacles are faced by company grade versus field grade female African American officers?   Base this response on your previous experience.

What barriers or obstacles have you encountered in your career progression?

How did you overcome the obstacles or barriers?

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questions:

1. Age (years):

2. Gender: Female

3. Ethnicity: Black/African American

4. Current rank or rank upon separation: _____

5. Military Status:
   a. Active Duty:_____ years
   b. Retired: Yes_____ No _____#Years Served:_____

   c. Resigned Commission: Yes_____ No_____

6. If separated, Job Title upon Separation: _____

7. Education level: a. Doctoral Degree _____b. Master's Degree _____

        c. Bachelor's Degree_____

Appendix E: Codes, Themes and Categories

Table A1

Codes, Themes and Categories

Codes	Themes	Categories	Participants
Achieve at every level Attain rank aspired to Complete 20 year career Not dependent on race or gender Gender greatly impacts Professionalism Being proactive Empathetic Competence Team player Must be even-tempered Maintain high state of physical fitness Must be resilient	Successful career	Characteristics of Success	MC, LC, CA, CB, CC, CD, LA, LB,LD, LE,LF,MA, MB
Must prove myself Treated differently Good Old Boy System Faced Barriers Family life viewed negatively Different cultures Lack of Support Treated unfairly Must work harder than peers Sexual discrimination	Challenges	Obstacles Faced	LB,LC,CD,CB, CA,MG,MA, CC, MJ, LD MI,LA, LE, LF,MA, MB
Professionalism Good communication Good work ethic Received skills from family Developed from serving in military Learned by observing great leaders	Traits of Leadership	Keys to Succeed	CC, CB, LA,CD, LB, LC, LD, LE, LF, MA, MB, MC, MD

Table A1 Continued

Codes		Themes	Categories	Participants
Honesty Prevent mistakes Provide Guidance Not based on race or gender Lifesaver to career Developed skills Leads to success African American female gets less		Mentorship	Support Systems	LE, MA,CB,LA, CA, CC, CD, LC, LD, MC,MB, MJ
Provided support Create connections Provide new opportunities Provided guidance Meet people Joined the ROCKS Must be learned Did not influence promotions Faith in God Family relationships Surrounded with people I trust Surrounded with strong supporters		Networking	Support Systems	CD, LD, MD, MC, MB, ME, MF, MG,
Motivated to do best Leadership qualities Self-improvement fairly Professionalism career Honesty aspired to Genuine Great work ethic than peers Support of friends Opportunities Support of family Humility Assertiveness Prior service helped about success Faith in God success	Positive attitude Goal Oriented Treat everyone Complete 20 year Attain rank Personal Must be better Training Open to learning Ability to achieve Supportive family Many opinions Gender impact	Keys to Succeed	Keys to Succeed	CB, LA,MF,MH,MD, CC, CA, MA
Determination Maintain focus Faith in God Persistence Family Support Belief in abilities Confront issues Received through networking Self-reflection Positive attitude		Overcoming Challenges	Overcoming Obstacles	CB,MF, LE, LD,CD,MA, ME,