

THE LINK BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND JOB SATISFACTION IN THE DON
CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

by

Richard Grimm

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

This study analyzed job satisfaction as it relates to employees within the Department of the Navy in an effort to better understand the role that supervisory leadership plays in improving or degrading employee job satisfaction. Multiple interviews were conducted with current and former employees in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of these employees. The results indicate that styles such as servant leadership and transformational are seen as having a more positive impact on employee job satisfaction than other styles including trait and transaction. The researcher developed numerous themes based on data analysis including reference to these styles of leadership, resources, development, and consistency of leadership.

Key words: Job satisfaction, servant-leadership, transformational leadership, Department of the Navy

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Dedication

Dedicated to ***Marian Butler Grimm***.....*loving mother, award-winning educator, dear friend to so many, an inspiration and guiding light for her family.*

You are missed beyond my simple ability to express. You left us entirely too soon. While we know this was God's will, we remain broken-hearted.

Your influence remains. You loved, nourished, cherished, set the example, worked tirelessly, and showed us all what could be accomplished with simple dedication and tenacity.

This work is dedicated in your name and in your memory. I wish nothing more than for you to be able to share the hooding with us, but know that you have been my guiding light.

We miss and love you, Mom.

Acknowledgments

Krista – My best friend and wife for almost 28 years. Thank you for the time, space, patience, and – most importantly – the support needed to complete this goal. I simply would not have made it through without your help. I know I've missed some time together and you have shouldered more than your share of our responsibilities. It has meant the world to me and I cannot express what it means. Thank you for always being there. I love you.

Ryan and Sam – Boys, I know I've missed some mountain biking, a few games, probably more than a couple of weekends. I am very sorry for that time lost, but there are lots of good times to come! We will definitely make up some of that time! I love you boys more than you will ever know.

Dr. Richard C. Grimm – Dad, thanks for the setting the doctoral example. I may not have realized it at the time, but seeing the time and effort you put in to that pursuit planted a seed that sprouted thirty years later. Thank you, Doctor.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Effective organizational and individual performance is important to leaders in any setting, but in particular within the federal agencies that operate under diminishing budgets, reduced ability to reward employees, generally lower salaries, and increased bureaucracy (Lavigna, 2014). These agencies function with significant expectations from the citizenry as well as elected leaders. White (2016) conducted a similar, though quantitative, study and recommended further research utilizing varying methods and designs. Given these perspectives, this study aims to identify those leadership traits, styles, or theories, which have the greatest possible impact on improving overall job satisfaction within the Department of the Navy (DON) civilian workforce, which has seen a five-year decrease in satisfaction (U.S. OPM, 2015).

Background of the Problem

The federal government has a large and diverse workforce, which provides essential goods and services for the citizens of the United States and international allies. The United States government employs approximately two million people whose top agency employers are the Veterans Administration, Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, and Homeland Security, among others (Partnership for Public Service, 2014). Within the Department of Defense, there are nearly 750,000 civilian employees and 1.3 million active duty personnel (US DOD, 2015). It is crucial this large workforce function effectively in order to make maximum use of taxpayer dollars and to ensure efficient and effective governance.

Job satisfaction is an important index of organizational success, thus, numerous organizations measure these attributes across the workforce. A Conference Board survey (Cheng, Kan, Levanon, & Ray, 2014) of 5,000 U.S. employees indicated 47% are satisfied with their positions, while a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM; 2015) report stated

39% are very satisfied. Further, SHRM (2015) evaluated trust in organizations at 33%. A similar study conducted with 100,000 federal workers (U.S. OPM, 2015) found while the overall percentages for satisfaction and trust were higher for federal employees, there is a documented downward trend of 5 to 6% between 2011 and 2015. As job satisfaction is linked to organizational performance, studying those aspects of leadership development and application that can increase job satisfaction, thus, indirectly improve overall organizational performance is an important concept and is worthy of study. Practitioners can apply the results of this study to business and/or organizations that desire to focus on job satisfaction as one element of overall organizational performance.

Problem Statement

The problem the researcher addressed is the downward trend of job satisfaction experienced by the Department of Navy (DON) civilian workforce between 2011 and 2015, with an examination of the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction. An annual survey of government employees (OPM, 2015) indicated in 2011, DON employees ranked their satisfaction working with the agency at 67%, while during 2015, the ranking demonstrated a 61% response for satisfaction. The same survey (OPM, 2015) showed a decrease of 3% in job satisfaction in the government between 2012 and 2015, which demonstrates government satisfaction is decreasing, and further reinforces the DON employee decrease is double the government average. A survey conducted of 600 private sector employees by the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM, 2015) showed overall employee satisfaction in the private sector rose by nearly 3% over the same time. Research has indicated job satisfaction contributes to an employee's performance and overall firm success (Bakotica, 2016; Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel, & LeBreton, 2012). The general business problem is established by

Lavigna (2014), U.S. OPM (2015), SHRM (2015), and Cheng et al. (2014), which all demonstrated low or declining job satisfaction and trust levels with U.S. employees. The specific problem addressed is the declining satisfaction within the DOD civilian work force. Specifically, the DON has seen a decrease of 6% in employee satisfaction between 2011 and 2015 (U.S. OPM, 2015).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the job satisfaction of a purposive sample of 12 DON employees who have worked for a minimum of five years and have experience with the leadership of their supervisors. The focus of the study was to explore the employees' perceptions of overall job satisfaction and leadership within the DON. The results of this study might contribute new insights for DON leaders as they seek to improve leadership competencies and by extension overall job satisfaction. DON employees fulfill an important mission on behalf of the United States Navy, yet during the years 2011 to 2015, researchers documented a decrease in job satisfaction (U.S. OPM, 2015).

Significant literature exists that has addressed leadership theories and their impact on organizations, yet application of leadership skills within an organization remains a complex environment in which context is critically important. Kouzes and Posner (2012) indicated leadership style, especially when effectively implemented, increases employee loyalty, organizational commitment, and willingness to work hard. For these reasons, it is important for an organization, especially the federal civil service, to gain a better understanding of leadership impacts. The researcher categorized leadership styles as servant leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, and trait leadership.

Nature of the Study

Context is important for the researcher; therefore, a qualitative study was selected in order to study individuals within their work setting to gain an understanding of the employees' perspective. Based on the importance of the individual (Joyner, Rouse, & Glatthorn, 2012) and a desire to gain personal interpretation (Stake, 2010), a qualitative method was considered the most appropriate and applicable to the problem being studied. A quantitative method was not appropriate for this research due to the positivist epistemology generally associated with this method (Creswell, 2014), as there was no intention to conduct experiments and express objective results in a numeric fashion. As a mixed methods approach would also not be appropriate for the study for similar reasons that a quantitative method was not applicable, namely the researcher was focusing on context and experience. Yin (2014) suggested a case study approach is appropriate when investigating a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context to explore, describe, and explain employee reactions. Given the nature of this research, there is an emphasis on the participants' view, the context in which the leadership is exhibited, and open-ended questions (Yin, 2014). Further, Stake (2010) indicated researchers should reach conclusions based upon assertions made by subjects. Yin (2014) suggested researchers should observe patterns in the data collected. The researcher utilized both of these approaches.

The researcher chose case study design over other qualitative designs based on several factors. Narrative design generally emphasizes a specific series of events and/or is conducted in a biographical manner (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The researcher is less concerned with a series of events or with the biography of the participants and more concerned with the specific experiences with leadership and the corresponding job satisfaction the employee experiences. Phenomenological design tends to analyze groups of people who experience the same

phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009). Within the context of this study, it is not anticipated the selected employees will experience the same phenomenon as each will likely have different leadership experiences and varied responses to that leadership. Grounded theory aims to generate a unified theory of distinct processes over time (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher does not intend to develop an overarching, unified theory but merely desires to document the experiences of the participants in the study. Lastly, ethnography generally addresses the culture of a group (Fetterman, 2010; Wolcott, 2008) and is therefore not appropriate for this study's population as DON employees are generally formed from a cross-cultural swath of the American population. The researcher determined the four previous designs are not appropriate for this research (Creswell, 2014). Case study design is applicable to this research given the emphasis on the employees' setting and experiences. It is important to gain an understanding of the employees' perspectives to better understand their views on leadership and the organizations in which they work.

Research Questions

RQ1: How would DON civilian employees describe job satisfaction within the DON civilian workforce?

RQ2: What is DON civilian employee perception of leadership within the DON civilian workforce?

RQ3: What is DON employees' perception of the relationship between their supervisor's leadership style and their own job satisfaction?

Conceptual Framework

This research was grounded in numerous leadership theories including trait, situational contingency, path-goal theory, and more, spanning much of the twentieth century. The literature

further speaks to the idea job satisfaction is important personally to employees and contributes to improvements in both employee and organizational performance (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011; Bakotica, 2016; Jacobson, 2011). U.S. OPM (2015) demonstrated the DON has seen a five-year decrease in job satisfaction; therefore, one can assume there has been a corresponding decrease in DON organizational performance. Further, the literature also suggested there is a strong relationship between effective leadership and employee job satisfaction (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Azanza, Moriano, & Molero, 2013; Dabke, 2016; Jacobson, 2011; Kellis & Ran, 2013).

A conceptual view of this research indicates that leadership is linked to job satisfaction, and job satisfaction serves as a contributor to overall organizational performance (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Azanza et al., 2013; Dabke, 2016; Jaconson, 2011; Kellis & Ran, 2013). The research focused on the application of leadership theory within the federal space, specifically the DON. The researcher evaluated applicable leadership theories via questionnaires with a goal of determining how employees perceive and interpret the leadership of their supervisors. The researcher noted that specific theories are found in multiple leadership analyses, studies, and texts.

Job satisfaction itself remains a complex concept in which employees experience many internal and external factors that can increase or decrease satisfaction (Bakotica, 2016; Dalal et al, 2016). In a general sense, job satisfaction relates to an employee's attitude towards the work he/she performs heightened aspects of pleasure or positive feelings the employee gains through achievements he/she achieves, and a sense of value associated with the actual results achieved (Davis, 2014; Gill, Sharma, Mathur, & Bhutani, 2012; Locke, 1976; Gully, 2012; Ross-Grant, 2016; Springer, 2011). Hackman and Oldham (1980) stressed job satisfaction is related to the employee experiencing meaningfulness of the work itself, the employee assumes responsibility

for the outcome, and the employee receives feedback on the results as well as his/her performance.

Key aspects include the idea job satisfaction contributes to organizational performance and effective leadership is a contributor to higher levels of job satisfaction (Kellis & Ran, 2013; Yi-Feng, 2016). While many leadership theories abound, one can argue that abilities associated with a follower-centered approach might contribute to improved job satisfaction. This is certainly not to suggest a country club approach would prove effective. This said, one could assume consistency in leadership, and especially in leadership that develops, rewards, shares power, and demonstrates commitment to the organization, will likely foster improved satisfaction among employees. As employees generally want to see their organizations succeed, supervisors should capitalize on this aspect in order to harness employee motivation for the good of the organization. The literature strongly suggests employees who are led more appropriately often breed employees who not only demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction, but also by extension demonstrate more initiative and overarching organizational drive (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011).

An important aspect of this study is the idea leadership matters and organizations are only as good as their employees. While one can envision days of the industrial revolution with rows of factory workers or blackened coal miners, simply executing the orders to a significant extent, at least in western society, those days are gone. This framework suggests in place of autocratic leadership (French & Raven, 1959), today's leaders need to harness the intrinsic motivation of their employees in order to maximize contributions to the organization.

Trait Leadership

The study of leadership emerged with an analysis of the traits or innate characteristics the leader is born with and whether those traits researchers can document and articulate those traits (Stogdill, 1948). Researchers have also referred to this as the Great Man theory, in that researchers attempted to document the traits of visible and successful leaders. Trait leadership stresses the specific knowledge and abilities of the supervisor and the impact those traits can have on accomplishing organizational goals. Stogdill (1974) identified a series of traits including responsibility, task completion, persistence, drive, self-confidence, influence, and more as associated with those in leadership positions. Mann (1959) demonstrated that personality traits can play a role in leadership development, and Bass (1990) stated possession of these types of traits clearly differentiated them from others who did not possess them. This view posited the leader alone is responsible for accomplishments and those who are successful meet the personality type, and the subordinate's role is not of importance (Bryman, 1992; Jago, 1982). A series of traits have been developed that can be generally associated with successful leaders including responsibility for task completion, vigor, risk-taking, self-confidence, and the ability to influence others (Stogdill, 1974; Bass, 1990). Many of these traits, if exhibited by the leader, can be associated with improved job satisfaction in the sense the leader may display increased competence and ability to oversee the functioning of a group. From a job satisfaction standpoint, this has the potential to reflect on subordinate opportunity for advancement, workload, and relationship with the supervisor.

Situational Leadership

This model suggests various situations require a different approach or style of leadership. Generally, the leader must balance between a directive style and a supportive approach,

depending on the characteristics of the subordinates (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Nelson, 1993). This approach can be considered practical for managers as they are able to determine more supporting and relationship-building role for subordinates that feel comfortable with the situation or a more directive role or task-oriented role if the employees need to be told what to do and how to do it (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; Reddin, 1967). Supervisors able to effectively understand and apply the differences between directive and supportive roles when dealing with specific employees are employees who are likely to recognize this as well and respond with higher levels of job satisfaction. The situational approach may affect aspects of job satisfaction including workload and stress, relationship with the supervisor, and levels of autonomy.

Contingency Leadership

Fiedler (1964, 1967) developed the contingency theory, which was expanded by Fiedler and Chemers (1974). This style of leadership focuses on how well the leader's style fits a given situation and is a result of studying many leaders in multiple different contexts. The Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) model measures relationship and task to determine the preferred style within a given context (Fiedler, 1967). Within this theory, the leader should match his/her style to the task and the developmental level of the employees. Often leaders that demonstrate a contingency approach match their style to the setting, including increased emphasis on task or relationship as the situation dictates. From a workforce motivation standpoint, this may prove powerful as employees who are competent and motivated likely will feel higher levels of autonomy and recognition, while employees still in development phases will gain the supervision needed to improve.

Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

Path-goal theory is focused on how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish designated goals, what motivates employees, and can be tied directly to the concept of job satisfaction. The theory was developed in the 1970s primarily by Evans (1970) and House (1971) and expanded by House and Dessler (1974) and House and Mitchell (1975). The focus is to enhance employee performance and satisfaction through motivation. Subordinates will be motivated when they think they are capable of the task assigned. This model suggests the leader should use the best approach to meet the employees' motivational and expectancy needs. House and Mitchell (1975) further clarify that leaders should define the goal, clarify the path (to reach the goal), remove obstacles, and provide support. Understanding how to motivate individual employees and what it takes to remove obstacles can be supportive to employees, thus likely improving aspects of job satisfaction including relationship, feeling of accomplishment, and flexibility.

Leader Member Exchange Theory / Transactional

Leader member exchange theory, (LMX) is centered on the interaction between the leader and follower. Leading theorists include Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), Graen and Cashman (1975), and Graen (1976). Additional contributions were submitted by Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell (1993) and Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Early studies focused on the vertical linkages between leader and follower and the relationship formed between them. Later studies address organizational effectiveness. The focus on LMX improves turnover, performance evaluations, promotions, commitment, and employee attitude (Liden et al., 1993). An emphasis on the interaction between leader and led is likely to improve an employee's motivation and satisfaction, however, the literature demonstrated that increases in empowerment were somewhat

inverse in the sense those employees who desired increased empowerment and autonomy were also less reliant on the quality of leader – employee exchange (Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009).

Transformational Leadership

Researchers consider transformational leadership a new leadership paradigm (Bass, 1990; Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and is a potentially powerful tool supervisors can use to motivate and inspire employees to support organizational goals. Transformational leadership was first postulated by Downton (1973) and Burns (1978) and further expanded on by Bryman (1992), Lowe and Gardner (2001), and Bass and Riggio (2006). Asencio and Mujkic (2016) found public sector leaders should exercise transformational and inspirational leadership, and further should develop trust with their subordinates. As a newer leadership paradigm, the emphasis with transformational leadership is often on the internal or intrinsic motivation and professional development of the follower. This approach can have the effect of improving employees, increasing organizational performance, and transforming people, all of which can be associated to higher levels of individual motivation.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is well documented in both spiritual and secular terms and provides a powerful method supervisors can use to develop their employees and maximize subordinates' performance. Servant leadership first appeared in the literature with Greenleaf (1970, 1972, 1977), with Greenleaf stating it starts with a feeling one wants to serve (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leadership emphasizes development of the individual employee. Supervisors utilizing this approach stress empathy, stewardship, and commitment to one's people. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) stated empowerment is a key aspect of servant leadership and Kellis and Ran

(2013) stressed the importance of distributed leadership. Spears (2002) expanded on this literature by providing a list of ten characteristics including listening, empathy, awareness, and stewardship. As noted by Greenleaf (1970; 1972; 1977), servant leadership is attentive to followers and tends to embrace empowerment, empathy, and developing employees to their full potential. Aspects of job satisfaction that can be related to these strengths of servant leadership might include opportunities for advancement (and pay), workload, supervisor relationship, and autonomy.

Definition of Terms

Employee Engagement: Enthusiasm for work tasks and roles, beyond simple contentment (Dalal et al., 2012).

Job Satisfaction: An employee's attitude towards the work performed, heightened aspects of pleasure the employee gains through achievements, and a sense of value associated with the actual results achieved (Davis, 2014; Gill et al., 2012; Locke, 1976; Phillips & Gully, 2012; Ross-Grant, 2016; Springer, 2011).

Public Service Motivation (PSM): "An individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Jacobson, 2011, pp. 214-215).

Trait Affect: People who are generally happy or unhappy, all other things being equal, will be happy or unhappy in their professional settings (Dalal et al., 2012).

Transformational Leadership: "The process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (Northouse, 2013, p. 186).

Trust: The central issue in human relationships without which one cannot lead. Leaders must be able to trust their subordinates and employees must be able to trust their leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Assumptions

The research is based on the theories behind accepted leadership styles. The researcher assumes aspects of these theories provide leaders the tools to improve employee job satisfaction (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011; Bakotica, 2016; Lavigna, 2014). The researcher further assumes that similarities exist between public and private sector job satisfaction; however, public service motivation (PSM) creates a unique aspect of governmental job satisfaction. The literature has demonstrated a possible link between leadership style and job satisfaction, thus it is assumed that supervisors that demonstrate supportive leadership will increase job satisfaction. The primary mitigation for all three identified assumptions primarily includes appropriate review of existing literature and data gathering and analysis during the empirical phase. The researcher focused on the phrasing of questions on the research instrument in a multi-dimensional manner and to attempt to capture many of the aspects and influencers of job satisfaction.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included a relatively small sample size. There was no intent to apply findings to a larger population because the findings were limited to the sample from which data were collected. While this is the norm for a qualitative case study, the sample size does limit broader applicability to governmental employees or the larger U.S. workforce. A further limitation applicable to the sample includes the idea the researcher is dependent on the honesty and memory of those who participated in interviews. Additionally, the study had a

restrictive time horizon for data pull, thus limiting the time period employees used to formulate their responses. The complexity of job satisfaction will further contribute to limitations of the study, as many factors both personal and professional will affect satisfaction, thus isolating leadership can be challenging (Bokotic, 2016). The psychological and leadership traits employees demonstrate will further influence performance, especially if an employee has a negative trait affect (Dalal et al., 2016).

Delimitations

The primary delimitations included the idea the study was bounded by federal employees within the DON. While this scope of employees was within the control of the researcher, this was a conscious decision to not broaden the scope in order to focus on the Department of the Navy. While the importance of job satisfaction across government cannot be overstated, the entire government workforce is outside the scope of this study (U.S. OPM, 2015).

Significance of the Study

Reduction of Gaps

The gap to be addressed was the link between job satisfaction and supervisory leadership abilities. Inspirational and engaging leadership (transformational, LMX, servant) styles can have a positive relationship with job satisfaction, can build employee trust (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016), can increase public service motivation (Jacobson, 2011), and can close gaps in public leadership development (Kellis & Ran, 2013). By focusing on engaging leadership theories, supervisors will likely be able to improve the satisfaction of employees, thus increase operational performance. Given the intense pressure U.S. Government agencies face and the corresponding pressures on governmental leaders, the focus on leadership competencies is critical (Lavigna, 2014).

Implications for Biblical Integration

The spiritual aspect of this study related to the idea leaders should oversee their responsibilities much the same way the Lord demonstrated in Psalm 23:1-6 (New King James Version) with an emphasis on God's leadership and providing those material needs for effective leadership. In the book of John, Jesus said to his disciples, "You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (15:14-15 New International Version). This quote speaks directly to the idea leaders should train and develop their followers in order to know the leader's roles and responsibilities and function should the leader no longer be available.

Researchers can apply many of the points stressed in Christian leadership literature and in Scripture to improving many aspects of job satisfaction including workload, stress, relationships, personal development, and opportunities for advancement. The simple act of leading in a Christian manner, seeking God's will, praying for guidance, and using the Bible as the source of wisdom, will often lead followers to recognize the purity of a leader and thus to increase respect and commitment. Blackaby and Blackaby (2001) stressed it is important for leaders to pray to accomplish God's will, to work hard in order to influence organizational culture, to utilize servant leadership, and to maintain positive attitudes. Jesus demonstrated many of these aspects as noted in Matthew (NKJV). When heading to Jerusalem, Jesus stressed to many they had missed key aspects of his leadership and should not be preoccupied with status, but instead should focus on service, thus putting others first (Matt 14: 1-14). A focus on service and putting others first, likely are key aspects of improving job satisfaction. Deborah in her interactions with Barak and battles with the leaders of Canaan demonstrated many similar aspects of leadership

including demonstrating competence, respect, exceeding the expectations of others, and developing people (Judges 4:1-16). As Scripture gives the reader many examples of strong servant leaders, these characteristics are also those likely to yield the most committed followers.

Relationship to Field of Study

This study was directly related to the leadership cognate/field of study as at least five major leadership theories were being evaluated in the context of supervisor performance and job satisfaction. Multiple authors have stressed the importance of effective leadership within any organizational setting, and specifically within federal agencies, in order to ensure maximum utilization of knowledge-based employees (Kellis & Ran, 2013; Jacobson, 2011; Van Velsor, Turregano, Adams, & Fleenor, 2016). The importance of effective leadership cannot be overstated in any organization, but is of greater importance within federal organizations which are dealing with, as Lavigna (2014) argued, reduced funding, increased criticism, and challenging expectations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The goal of this research was to analyze job satisfaction as a key aspect of both personal and organizational success, and further, to investigate the factors that can significantly influence job satisfaction. If one accepts job satisfaction is critical to personal and organizational success, then the next step is to identify those factors that can increase an employee's satisfaction with their job, position, mission, and organization. By extension of this thought process, this research focused on the importance of supervisory leadership skills in either improving or degrading job satisfaction for the employees within that supervisor's work unit. A significant amount of work has been published in the past 40 to 50 years concerning leadership, management, and the ability of leaders to both accomplish the mission while at the same time motivating their employees

(Northouse, 2013), and much of this work stressed the importance of character, coaching, and empowerment in building engaged, satisfied, and effective employees. Organizational leaders have responsibility to address planning, organizing staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (POSDCORB; Gulick & Urlick, 2004) and in doing so exercise varying types and degrees of power. French and Raven (1959) informed readers that power can be exercised as legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent, spanning a continuum of autocratic, joint, and delegated power. Leaders must also exercise these functions in ensuring successful organizational change. As employees are concerned for economic welfare, their own power, obsolescence, and failure, they are often resistant to change, and less than a quarter of organizational change initiatives are successful (Spector, 2013). In order to overcome resistance to change, organizational leaders must exercise appropriate leadership in order to develop teamwork, build talent, and ensure appropriate coaching. When exercising the functional responsibilities of an organization (POSDCORB) and utilizing the type of power that resides within the individual and his/her position, that leader must then choose a leadership style, which above all, is effective in order to attain organizational goals in both the short and long run. Leaders that remain unengaged will likely be unsuccessful in their primary functional responsibilities, in overseeing change, and in developing employees with the motivation and independence to ensure organizational success (Morris & Laipple, 2015). The literature suggested job satisfaction is important to organizations in government agencies as well as private sector companies. Scholars are expanding the role of public leadership research and the concept of public service motivation (Jacobson, 2011). The literature further suggested within the public sphere, organizations require a strong central leader willing to distribute his/her power, to build trust with subordinates, and to ensure his/her employees are developed to the fullest extent

possible (Mroczkowski, 2013). While research of this kind demonstrated the importance of public organizations within academic circles, Kellis and Ran (2013) documented there is a gap in public leadership theories and there are significant risks to the public good of shortcomings in this area.

This review of academic literature begins with a focus on the broad problem area of job satisfaction in general and within the DON, specifically with a follow on discussion of the importance of job satisfaction to the field of business and leadership. In order to set the stage for identified themes, this review first focused on the multiple relationships between studies and trends among studies. The identified themes provide focus on leadership styles (supported by underlying theories) and critical aspects of job satisfaction. The review then concludes with a discussion of the study, next steps, and transition.

The information gleaned from over 100 studies, articles, and commentaries on job satisfaction within government agencies and private companies reinforced this topic was worthy of study. Many of the articles and studies demonstrated interrelated topics and reinforced the importance of job satisfaction to organizational performance, and of leadership to job satisfaction. Gaps appear to be relatively minor. Trends are significant throughout the literature and account for the established framework. A number of the studies are of critical importance to practitioners, researchers in general, and in support of the framework for this study in particular. The relationships, gaps, trends, and important studies provide a critical overview of the literature reviewed.

Broad Problem Area

While the researcher is addressing the specific problem of declining job satisfaction of employees within the DON, the broad problem includes overall job satisfaction as noted by the

Conference Board's annual job satisfaction report (Cheng et al., 2014) which demonstrated overall U.S. job satisfaction is below 50%. Adkins (2015) noted a Gallup survey of over 80,000 U.S. workers found less than a third are engaged in their work and 17% are actively disengaged. Researchers have calculated the impact of low job satisfaction to cost the economy in excess of \$500 billion annually as disengaged workers negatively influence co-workers, miss workdays at higher rates, and drive away customers (Weir, 2013). Job satisfaction is critical to employee retention (Leider, Harper, Son, Sellers, & Castrucci, 2016) and serves as a critical theme of the turnover intention of federal employees in general (Pitts, Marvel, & Fernandez, 2011). The literature demonstrated that supervisors generally play a significant role in satisfaction, retention, and turnover, yet many managers come into their jobs without proper training to address organizational strategy, goals, values, and managerial skills. This lack of corporate development results in managers who are unenthusiastic about their responsibilities, thus creating a negative environment for employees (Morris & Laipple, 2015). The literature suggested this is an overall job satisfaction problem with U.S. workers and this satisfaction is directly related to organizational performance (Bakotica, 2016).

Importance to Field

Leadership and job satisfaction are critically important concepts to the fields of organizational behavior and psychology, to academics within business and executive development institutes, as well as practitioners in virtually any organizational setting. The initial review of the literature demonstrated job satisfaction and engagement are linked to improvements in perceived leadership and job satisfaction is further attributed to improved organizational performance (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011; Bakotica, 2016; Jacobson, 2011; Lavigna, 2014; Yi-Feng, 2016). These theories and concepts are of vital importance to supervisors within

the DON as well as all governmental agencies. Pitts et al. (2011) suggested job satisfaction is a dominant theme in turnover decisions for U.S. federal employees and in order to reduce turnover, federal managers should work to better understand their employees' concerns and motivations. Organizational leaders need to develop an understanding of how effective leadership can increase the satisfaction of employees and thus the effectiveness of their agencies. This is of utmost importance in an era when employee turnover is incredibly expensive for public or private organizations.

A number of leadership theories document the positive contribution to increased employee job satisfaction. Transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and inspirational leadership increase positive impact on job satisfaction within a wide variety of organizations and in particular governmental agencies (Dabke, 2016; Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Azanza et al., 2013). Moreover, governmental organizations maintain a higher risk of failure given the important services provided to the public. Morris and Laipple (2015) suggested those new to supervisory positions often feel unprepared and lack the appropriate professional development in key areas such as leadership, conflict management, and strategic planning. The authors indicated this can lead to supervisors that are less enthusiastic concerning their duties, resulting in unengaged leaders and employees with decreasing motivation. In contrast, Morris and Laipple (2015) noted organizations should promote leaders and ensure they receive professional development in areas addressed above and further include managing institutional finances and requests for resources. This focus on training can ensure managers' duties interfere less with their personal lives and do not decrease quality of life, professional enthusiasm, and performance. Kellis and Ran (2013) argued there is a gap in the development of public leadership theories and these managers should focus on distributed, transformational, and

authentic theories in order to improve morale, increase satisfaction, and retain highly skilled employees. They further suggested the risks are much higher within public organizations for inadequate leadership given many of these organizations provide services that are critical to national and local security, public service, and infrastructure. In a general sense, the traditional leadership theories including trait theory appear to be less impactful when discussing satisfaction employees feel on the job. The more worker-centered models of leadership, including transformational, LMX, and servant leadership, are important in addressing job satisfaction. However, Kellis and Ran (2013) also stressed overly strong leadership can also have a negative impact on satisfaction and performance. Since the goal is to retain skilled and motivated knowledge-based workers, Kellis and Ran (2013) stressed leaders should focus on effective leadership that retains these workers and increases organizational performance.

Synthesis

Relationship Among Studies

Job satisfaction is influenced by organizational support and involvement of the employee in important aspects of the business or agency (Leider et al., 2016), and manager involvement, both in the his/her own preparation as well as in the involvement, preparation, and empowerment of employees, is critical to job satisfaction and ultimately improved organizational performance (Morris & Laipple, 2015). The previous topics are crucial to organizations in general, yet these influences on job satisfaction are often the most important aspect in the turnover intentions of federal agency employees (Pitts et al., 2013).

More specifically, the researcher reviewed the role leadership plays in job satisfaction serves as a relationship throughout the studies. Managers' utilization of appropriate leadership skills serves as a solid predictor of job satisfaction, as noted by more than ten studies including

Rowold, Borgmann, and Bormann (2014), Dabke (2016), and Jacobson (2011). Other researchers noted the same trend within federal and public agencies, including Asencio and Mujkic (2016), Kellis and Ran (2013), Lavigna (2014), and Wright, Moynihan, and Pandey (2012). Still more authors noted in addition to appropriate leadership skills, a flexible approach to work-life balance was a positive contributor to job satisfaction. These latter authors included Azanza et al. (2013) and Jaoko (2012). Many of the articles and studies within the literature reviewed demonstrated significant relationships with each other in the areas of leadership, organizational performance, and the importance of management focus on job satisfaction.

Gaps

The topics addressed throughout the review are exhaustive and demonstrated that relationships among studies are effective in establishing the foundation and framework for further research. There are few gaps to be addressed in the research that are substantive. With this understanding, one area that stood out from the review was researchers paid little attention to the concept of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970, 1972, 1977). While landmark literature contains the work of numerous authors addressing transformational, situational, and contingency, theories (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Downton, 1973; Fiedler, 1964; Graen, 1976), there are few references to servant leadership. While Greenleaf (1970) established the concept in the early 1970s, there appears to be a small percentage of researchers conducting current studies in the area. Additionally, while improved leadership does appear to be a predictor of job satisfaction, there are limited studies addressing which style contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction. Lastly, a third area that does not seem to receive significant attention is the role a manager's own supervisor plays in the leadership style that a manager chooses. While researchers addressed

employee satisfaction in many studies, one should not forget the manager him/herself is also an employee with a supervisor who may also demonstrate positive or negative leadership traits.

Trends

Trends within the research generally support many of the relationships between studies. Situational leadership, transformational leadership, and authentic leadership all positively influence job satisfaction through an approach that embraces an inspirational and distributed model (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Azanza et al., 2013; Dabke, 2016; Kellis & Ran, 2013). Improvements in job satisfaction not only benefits employees, but also improves the overall performance of agencies and organizations, thus increasing the importance of focusing on satisfaction itself (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011; Bakotica, 2016; Jacobson, 2011; Lavigna, 2014). Trust, as an important aspect of leadership, improves job satisfaction, is directly linked to organizational performance, motivates employees, and increases employee commitment (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Mroczkowski, 2013; Hitch, 2012). Lastly, public sector leadership shares many of the same characteristics as the private sector, yet deserves a different leadership paradigm, as employees often need altered motivational methods (referred to as public sector motivation; Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Jacobson, 2011; Lavigna, 2014; Kellis & Ran, 2013; Rude, 2012; Van Velsor et al., 2016).

Importance of Certain Studies

While the trends and authors noted above are critical to the overall thematic framework of the study, there are specific studies that form an additional foundation for this research. To begin, the key statistics noted for research were found in the U.S. OPM Viewpoints Survey (2015), in which job satisfaction within the DON has seen a 5% drop over recent years. Further support for job satisfaction as a societal and leadership challenge is found in the Conference

Board report (Cheng et al., 2014), in which overall job satisfaction for U.S. workers was found to be below 50% for a number of years. Lastly, Adkins (2015) noted a Gallup survey of 80,000 employees, in which professional engagement is at such low levels it is likely costing the U.S. economy \$500 billion annually.

In addition to documenting the problem, Jacobson (2011), in surveying two large federal agencies, noted job satisfaction and performance are inexorably linked and it is important for researchers to view public service motivation as its own research field. Kellis and Ran (2013), after reviewing data from 400,000 federal employees, noted researchers should develop modern leadership principles for public servants due to the consequences of failure within federal agencies and the need for transformational and distributed leadership. Lastly, Van Velsor et al. (2016), in surveying 16,000 federal employees, noted these employees rated leadership importance as the number one skill for managers (out of 16) yet rated managers' effectiveness with leadership skills at 15 out of 16. These authors demonstrated through extensive federal research the role job satisfaction plays and the importance managers have in influencing job satisfaction.

Identified Themes

Researchers generally consider organizational performance critical for all stakeholders, including the board of trustees, C-suite leadership, and employees. When addressing research of governmental agencies, the importance is significantly increased. Government agencies do the peoples' business and, especially at the federal level, often address critical security issues. Early themes that surfaced during the literature review supported the importance of this topic to organizational performance, given the concepts of employee satisfaction and performance impacting organizational success (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011; Dalal et al., 2012; Jacobson, 2011;

Kellis & Ran, 2013; Leider et al., 2016; Pitts et al., 2011; Yi-Feng, 2016). Additional themes were surfaced that fully supported research question development and tie together the conceptual framework of the research and addressed various leadership styles and their potential influence upon the satisfaction that employees feel (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Azanza et al., 2013; Dabke, 2016; Kellis & Ran, 2013; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Rowold et al., 2014; Yi-Feng, 2016). These themes logically connect the idea employers should attempt to influence and improve job satisfaction as satisfaction is directly related to employee and agency performance.

Further, the themes developed during data analysis are consistent and aligned to those that emerged while reviewing the literature. While the literature supported development of the business case and the importance of addressing job satisfaction for businesses and agencies, the research questions and supported data collection instruments focused on job satisfaction and leadership within the Department of the Navy. While the researcher discusses the specifics of each theme in greater detail in the Presentation of Findings, it should be noted at this point these themes support the concepts that surfaced during the literature review.

Themes developed during data collection and analysis supported the idea leadership itself will have an effect on employee desire to be employed by the company or agency and servant and transformational leadership are often more important in improving this perception (Kellis & Ran, 2013). The data further demonstrated these participants felt there was some level of inconsistency with the leadership abilities within the DON. While many provided examples of supportive and sound leadership, all participants had either experienced or witnessed the effects of poor leadership. The literature demonstrated that within federal agencies, team leadership was considered one of the most important aspects required of a supervisor yet also one of the areas in which agency leaders consistently fell short (Van Velsor et al., 2016). It was agreed by all

participants that leadership is critical to satisfaction levels of employees and leadership styles including transformational and servant leadership are more effective in improving job satisfaction. The participants noted many examples of sound leadership principles they had personally experienced, however, each interviewee also noted instances in which they either observed or experienced poor leadership traits. This contrast exemplifies the notion these participants generally see leadership as inconsistent. All participants felt skills development and professional growth are critical for employees. Across the respondents, a number received significant support in professional development, while others felt they were on their own to find opportunities. Information flow as it pertains to organization decision-making was also noted by interviewees as critical to job satisfaction as employees generally wish to remain engaged in the direction their team is going. Lastly, this group for DON employees demonstrated one of the most important aspects of working within DOD is regardless of perceived leadership or exhibited job satisfaction, dedication to the success of the Navy was paramount in their minds.

Leadership Style

Overview

As the conceptual framework includes a focus on many different leadership styles, the discussion of both transformational and transactional leadership is of utmost importance. Transformational and transactional leadership can and will build trust and be effective if executed properly, but Asencio and Mujkic (2016) stressed transformational leadership will build higher levels of trust in organizations, and trust builds motivation within employees, which results in increased individual and organizational performance. Increased leadership trust is demonstrated to motivate employees and improve performance. The article further addresses the idea transactional leadership is important from the aspect of ensuring tasks are completed, and

the authors recommended public sector leaders emphasize transformational and inspirational leadership for the good of the public and due to the generally constrained reward system within governmental organizations. Other authors stressed developing trust does not eliminate the need for formal leadership structure and leaders simply need to be willing and able to develop subordinates in order to increase the chances for organizational success (Mroczkowski, 2013). In preparing questionnaires in order to assess the leadership skills within the DON civilian leadership corps as well as the job satisfaction of the employees themselves, the author addressed the idea this approach can be challenging within an organization that is almost exclusively hierarchical (Azanza et al., 2013) and generally lacking in flexibility. Azanza et al. (2013) further stressed that leaders within these hierarchical organizations should work to ensure teams and work units utilize flexible workplace arrangements, as these are often predictors of increased job satisfaction. Work-life balance can also be a critical aspect of satisfaction, as authors have noted supervisor support of workplace flexibilities also contributes to job satisfaction (Jaoko, 2012). A lack of flexibility was shown to negatively affect employee ability to tend to important family matters and thus to increase stress. Organizational leaders should reengineer attitudes and approaches to workplace flexibilities.

Within the dissertation, there is a discussion of various leadership theories, of which transformational leadership is one. Dabke (2016) stated leadership styles which support employee development, engagement, coaching, and mentoring are more likely to produce higher levels of job satisfaction. Based on the risks and consequences associated with poor leadership in public organizations, public administrators must embrace leadership study and theory. Kellis and Ran (2013) found government leaders should focus on distributed, transformational, and authentic leadership theories in order to retain a highly skilled knowledge-based professional

workforce. The study found that shared knowledge improves morale and satisfaction, and increased satisfaction is linked to lower absenteeism and turnover. The tenets of this article apply directly to the development of leadership skills within the public sector and how those skills can improve job satisfaction for governmental agencies.

Transformational leadership is associated with higher levels of public service motivation and commitment to organizational purpose, both of which contribute to increased job satisfaction. Public service motivation as a theory indicates that government employees are more likely than their private sector counterparts to view the mission of the organization as aligned with their own values (Wright et al., 2012). The authors call this *valence* or *mission valence*, meaning employees are attracted to or associate themselves with the goals and mission of the agency or organization. The study focused on transformational leadership and determined those leaders that offer a vision, set the example, develop innovators, and foster pride increase the concept of public service motivation. While public service motivation does not equate to job satisfaction, the two concepts are interrelated, and effective leadership will have a positive effect on both.

Discussion

Rude (2012) demonstrated there are a series of competencies that leaders within the government civilian workforce need to be successful. These competencies include leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, building coalitions, and an enterprise-wide perspective. The competency model further provides focus at the (bottom up) self, team, organization, and institutional levels. The experience of federal government leaders combined with the noted leadership skills provides a solid foundation for analysis of the leadership competencies needed to generate effective job satisfaction among employees. In cross-

referencing various leadership theories with the competencies provided by Rude, the researcher noted a trend toward improved leadership and resulting improved job satisfaction. At the time of writing, Rude was serving as the Chief Learning Officer for the DOD and has since moved on to another large agency. Van Velsor et al. (2016) stressed it is a high priority for government leaders to improve leadership competencies and engage in participative leadership. A survey ranked leadership ability as one of the highest in importance for government leaders, yet is also ranked as one of the lowest in terms of effectiveness, and two of the most challenging leadership areas for government supervisors are interpersonal relationships and team leadership. The authors also stressed that government today functions in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) environment and to effectively confront this environment, leadership training needs to be highly focused and not generalized in nature. Other authors such as Hitch (2012) noted in order to be effective, especially in a VUCA environment, leaders should coach not simply manage, they should share decision making, and ensure leaders and employees have shared purpose in the success of the organization. As this research focused on the role leadership plays in job satisfaction, this resource is intended to address the type of leadership that is both needed to be effective in government and is perceived by the employees themselves. Many current authors addressing leadership issues in public and private sector organizations have contributed to the body of knowledge critical to improving job satisfaction and supervisory skills. While this is understood and important, the foundational aspects of leadership deserve additional discussion in terms of impact on job satisfaction and the role of supervisors.

One should further note there is a difference between executing a traditional leadership style (hierarchical, authoritarian) and an overly negative leadership approach. The former is a gradual transition from western industrial organizational theory or possibly from earlier military

approaches. Leaders and theorists have learned, studied, and applied, while at the same time employees have also increased their capacity for knowledge-based work. There is nothing necessarily negative associated with this traditional approach. Yet, researchers should note there does exist an approach that is definitively negative. When a leader utilizes a toxic approach, the effect on employees is not simply less than optimal, it can be downright detrimental.

Researchers describe toxic leadership as attacking self-esteem, social exclusion, inequity, abusiveness, lack of integrity, or an overly *laissez-faire* leadership approach (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013). The authors noted toxic leadership, not surprisingly, not only fails to get the best out of employees, but also can destroy trust and commitment, thus negatively affecting personal and organizational performance.

Trait Leadership. Trait leadership (Stogdill, 1948, 1974; Mann, 1959; Jago, 1982; Bass, 1990) deserves attention for a number of reasons. Trait theory had its true beginnings what has been referred to as the great man approach. The great man theory (Carlyle, 1841) postulated that a person possesses innate traits and characteristics that make him/her successful. The primary focus at this time was of successful military leaders. Trait theory is one of the earliest attempts, after the great man approach, to document leadership's importance to organizational success or failure. The goal of trait leadership is to determine a quantifiable number of characteristics that a manager, leader, or supervisor can have and that future leaders can simply emulate those characteristics. While attempting to define a series of traits can be beneficial, one should understand that within this theory, the leader is responsible and the role of subordinates is significantly lessened. Stogdill (1948) identified a series of over 100 traits leaders have demonstrated to possess over time including intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, sociability, and many more. Mann (1959) provided insight into the idea

there should be less of a focus on the situation that may impact a leader's ability and specific traits will distinguish the leader including intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, and extraversion. The trait approach can be seen in many long-standing organizations today including the Boy Scouts of America (The Scout Law: A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind.....) and military organizations (USMC Leadership Traits: Justice, Judgement, Decisiveness, Integrity.....). Stogdill (1974) conducted a review of his previous work and identified additional key attributes including the desire for responsibility, goal attainment, risk-taking, creativity, confidence, the ability to tolerate problems that occur in pursuing goals, and the ability to change peoples' actions to attain goals.

Though as far back as his original study, Stogdill (1948) argued it is difficult to isolate a specific group or traits in isolation from the situation in which a leader finds her or himself in. In addition, while Jago (1982) wrote that leadership will generally be restricted to those individuals that possess particular traits, he went on to state these traits can be learned. Further, Jones and Thissen (2007) demonstrated that personality tests during the early part of the twentieth century were not reliable, especially across studies, therefore, the identified traits may not necessarily be accurate. One should further consider, as addressed later in the past century, that emotional stability is equally important to leadership success as other identified traits (McCall & Lombardo, 1983). The trait theory itself can also be seen as taking on an updated concept when applied to the idea of vision and charismatic leadership, given a leader demonstrates key traits such as monitoring his/her own emotions, knowing strengths and weaknesses, and abilities (Bass, 1990). This approach can lead to successful engagement across stakeholders; he/she can use traits to lay out a vision and move the organization to the end state.

Trait theory was reviewed during the research; however, the specific utility is questionable as the premise reduces the role of the subordinate, thus job satisfaction as a factor in organizational performance will likely be of less importance.

Situational Leadership. Situational leadership as discussed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977) and Reddin (1967), took into account the specific organizational goals and leadership situation, as well as the characteristics of the subordinate employee, and as such likely has more applicability to importance of job satisfaction. Situational leadership theory posits the supervisor should balance his/her participation between a supporting and directing role, depending on employee ability and the assigned task. The theory of contingency leadership is related to situational leadership espoused by Fiedler (1964, 1967) and Fiedler and Chemers (1974). Within a contingency viewpoint, the leader's style must fit the situation in order to maximize employee ability and the goals of the organization. Situational leadership is well known and utilized for developing leaders and teams in many large and small companies in the United States as the theory generally easy to understand and place into practice (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). In this train of thought, no single leadership style is paramount, thus requiring the leader to adapt to the situation at hand. As groups progress through various stages, the leader should adjust his/her style to the stage of the group and varying degrees of professional maturity of individuals in the group (Carew, Parisi-Carew, & Blanchard, 1990). Situational leadership stresses the leader's flexibility and his/her ability to change leadership style as the requirements of the job evolves and further to better understand the needs and abilities of subordinates (Graeff, 1983). The supervisor can often find him/herself treating subordinates differently due to employee ability, thus it is the responsibility of the leader to ensure this approach is not viewed as some form of favoritism (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997).

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) identified four levels of commitment or maturity that supervisors should work to categorize employees into, in order to better match leadership style. The four levels are unwilling and unable, willing and unable, unwilling and able, and willing and able. With this approach, the supervisor must categorize employees based on their assignment to the aforementioned maturity levels and work to develop them appropriately. Using the approach proffered by Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi (2013), a supervisor identifies the balance between directive and supportive functions moving through his/her roles of coaching, delegating, and directing, thus matching the needs of the team, subordinate, and mission.

Situational and contingency approaches maintain an association with job satisfaction in that leaders must necessarily make a determination of the employee's motivation and ability, thus modify leadership behavior to match.

Path-Goal Leadership. Path-goal leadership theory has been developed and espoused by Evans (1970), House (1971), Mitchel (1974), and House and Dessler (1974). Path-goal theory suggests employees are motivated when they feel they are capable of successfully completing tasks and this motivation can be tied directly to job satisfaction. The leaders' role is to define the goal for capable employees, then to clear or clarify the path, remove obstacles, and provide necessary support in accomplishing those goals. In addition to clearing the path, organizational leaders should utilize coaching and direction vice an authoritarian approach, should make the work more intrinsically satisfying, and should find creative ways to increase the external rewards that subordinates receive in exchange for superior performance (House & Mitchell, 1975). Vroom (1964) noted employees tend to increase performance and dedication to the organization when they feel they are well equipped to succeed at their assigned duties, when they are committed to the outcome, and when there is some level of reward associated with the effort.

Leaders should ensure they are motivating employees to accomplish organizational goals by improving the performance of their direct-reports and also focusing on their motivation levels, thus increasing the likelihood that long-term performance will remain high (Evans, 1970). By matching their style to the needs of employees, supervisors are best able to augment potential shortcomings in other aspects of the work environment.

Path-goal theory maintains the leader is definitely directing the goal to be accomplished, but inserts him or herself in the manner that will most effectively ensure the appropriate goal is achieved through the appropriate employees. The leader should be directive, supportive, and participative in order to bring out the best in employees and focus on goal achievement (House & Mitchell, 1975).

Job satisfaction may effectively be tied with path-goal theory when one considers productive employees often need the direction of supervisors to ensure goals are supported through appropriate resource decisions and employees are empowered to take appropriate actions.

Leader-Member Exchange. Graen and Cashman (1975), Graen (1976), and Dansereau et al. (1975) developed and supported Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. The authors argued LMX demonstrated a link between the leader and follower and the relationship that forms between the two is critical in analyzing successful performance. This theory has also been referred to as the vertical dyad linkage theory (Dansereau et al., 1975), based upon the idea leaders' focus on the linkage between him or herself and other stakeholders, namely subordinate employees.

LMX researchers have also documented the phenomenon of the in and out group. The in-group tends have a better relationship with the supervisor as he/she shows more concern for

performance and welfare, provides increased levels of information, and demonstrates higher levels of confidence (Dansereau et al., 1975). In contrast, the out-group maintains a lower quality relationship with the supervisor as either their personal or professional personalities do not gel as efficiently, thus the employee often simply does the bare minimum in order to remain employed (Dansereau et al., 1975). Supervisors generally look for subordinates that exhibit dedication to the organization, who participate both in required activities and those activities that are not required, but contribute to team success and are open to free flowing engagement with the supervisor (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Ilies, 2009). Additionally, leaders generally expect subordinates to attempt to expand the roles they play in the organization in order to both improve their own positions as well as that of the organization, therefore, when employees do not take this approach, they often end up in the out-group (Graen & Cashman, 1975).

According to LMX theory, organizations should endeavor to create higher quality exchanges between the supervisor and his/her team or subordinates. Higher quality exchanges have been shown to improve retention, evaluations, advancement, and job satisfaction (Dansereau et al., 1975) as well as employee mental energy, commitment to the organization, and improved creativity in solving problems (Atwater & Carmel, 2009). As the concept of in or out-group is inherently unfair to employees (McClane, 1991), it is incumbent on the supervisor to ensure he/she is working to establish solid relationships and improved exchanges with all employees, ensuring he/she is making every employee a member of the in-group (Graen & Uhl Bien, 1991). This can be done through Graen and Uhl Bien's (1991) three phases of the exchange: stranger, acquaintance, and mature. By recognizing this transition, the leader can better manager the relationship with each employee.

LMX culminates in the leader-led relationship and can have implications for improved turnover statistics, evaluations, promotions, and organizational commitment. All of these areas are obviously associated to job satisfaction.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership was initially espoused by Downton (1973), Burns (1978), and Bryman (1992), and then expanded in further work by Bass and Riggio (2006) and Avolio and Gardner (2005). Burns (1978) distinguished transformational leadership from a more traditional transactional process. Adherents to transformational leadership focus on establishing relationships between leader and led that are characterized by trust, support, and motivation. Key elements within transformational leaders include the idea leaders work to encourage employees to maximize their own capabilities both for the good of the employee and the overall health of the organization. Transformational leadership emphasizes internal motivation and the full development of employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006), generally a charismatic style of leadership (Bryman, 1992), and a commitment to the collective good above self-interest (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Transformational leadership is important in the development of public sector employees in order to motivate and inspire, and to maintain linkage to the importance of public service (Asencio & Mujkic 2016). Public service motivation is likely a key aspect of job satisfaction within governmental agencies. Dabke (2016) found transformational leadership is a positive predictor of leadership behaviors and on job effectiveness. He argued transformational leadership plays a significant role in leadership effectiveness and the perception of leadership effectiveness on the part of employees. The concept of transformational leadership is one leadership theory discussed in the conceptual framework as potentially having a positive impact on the leader's effectiveness, the perception of that leader's work, and the overall job satisfaction

as expressed by the employee. Kellis and Ran (2013) further supported the ideas being developed for this dissertation by documenting that higher levels of employee job satisfaction are associated with transformational leadership, cited multiple studies, and included the multifactor leadership questionnaire created by Avolio and Bass (2004) which is an instrument recognized for assessing transformational and transactional styles.

When supervisors take a more transformational approach, research has indicated employees tend to demonstrate more commitment, energy, and job satisfaction (Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011) and these supervisors generally have their own strong moral core and are good at motivating the workforce on behalf of organizational goals (Kuhnert, 1994). Bass (1985) suggested supervisors can positively affect employees through recognizing the value of their work and encouraging employees to focus on issues larger than their own.

While this dissertation does not directly address emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), many aspects of remaining engaged with employee feelings and perceptions will be critically important. The areas of this article that were stressed included the emphasis on transformational leadership. Rowold et al. (2014) argued the leading construct predicting job satisfaction within non-profits is transformational leadership and leader-member exchange. According to these authors, transformational leadership has the greatest impact on personal commitment.

Servant Leadership. Servant leadership first appeared in literature with the writings of Greenleaf (1970, 1972, 1977) and was expanded on by numerous authors including Spears (2002) and Hale and Fields (2007). Spears (2002) offered a list of characteristics in order to effectively employ servant leadership including listening, empathy, awareness, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. When implementing servant

leadership, leaders should develop empathy for subordinates, exercise stewardship over employee development, and show commitment to the accomplishments and desires of those one leads. Leaders who focus on support to employees are likely to receive similar support in return from employees, thus creating a synergistic view of organizational goals. Servant leaders should place the good of employees above the needs of the supervisor, should exhibit moral behavior (Hale & Fields, 2007), should nurture employees, value community, improve trust, and focus on true interdependence (Greenleaf, 1970).

Servant leadership can also be the most closely associated to a biblical approach to leadership. As Blanchard wrote in Kouzes and Posner's (2004) *Christian Reflections on The Leadership Challenge*, leaders should demonstrate humility, live to serve others, and remain grounded in God. Blanchard stressed that leaders must develop and encourage their heart, asking themselves "am I a servant-leader or a self-serving leader?" (Kouzes & Posner, 2004, p. 105). Further, as Christians and scholars, we should recognize that servant leaders should always be available if they are needed, much the same as Jesus remains available for us when he is needed: "so Jesus was a performance coach" and "that's the last key method you need to be an effective servant leader" (Blanchard, Hybels, & Hodges, 1999, p. 157). Practitioners can find methods and examples through many scholarly sources, including all of the authors referenced in this section, but should also never forget the truest servant leader can be found through study of Scripture.

Servant leadership is not without its critics. There appears to be a lack of consensus on a theoretical framework or detailed definition, thus a larger body of research, knowledge, and findings is needed (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Further, employee receptivity is generally required in order to ensure the efforts of the supervisor result in improved subordinate

and organizational performance (Meuser, Liden, Wayne, & Henderson, 2011). Given these shortfalls however, servant leadership remains critical in providing a view of job satisfaction and in gaining an understanding of employee performance within a governmental agency.

Empowerment (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and distributed leadership (Kellis & Ran, 2013) are key aspects of servant leadership, and likely can contribute significantly to both job satisfaction and agency success.

Job Satisfaction

The study conducted by Pitts et al. (2011) documented there were potentially two crises in federal government human capital management during the 1980s and the early 2000s, which were brought about through efforts to downsize the government workforce, which resulted in shortages of skilled employees, especially within the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of State. Government agencies, by contrast, should have a goal of retaining highly skilled, knowledge-based, and professional employees since governmental agencies, and in particular the U.S. federal government, are routinely required to address profoundly complex problems on behalf of their constituency. Pitts et al. (2011) additionally noted job satisfaction generally affects the decision of employees to leave their agency and agencies with greater stability tend to perform at higher levels over time. In order to solve these complicated problems, U.S. federal employees must be able to function in an environment that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA; Van Velsor et al., 2016). Lavigna (2014) provided a powerful argument in the case of U.S. government workers there are contradicting pressures from the public, which include increased criticism and decreased funding, yet these same agencies are still required to solve complicated national problems. This creates a unique

problem for managers in which they are required to focus on morale, engagement, and leadership in order to be effective at a time when resources are becoming scarcer.

The literature demonstrated that public organizations, in particular federal agencies, benefit from improved employee engagement and satisfaction, and appropriate leadership competencies are related to higher levels of satisfaction. These concepts culminate in an important focus for this research. Job satisfaction, organizational performance, and leadership theory are critical aspects of improving performance of government agencies, in particular for the DON, which oversees worldwide operational requirements 365 days per year. It is clear public agencies are in need of paradigm-changing leadership styles that deviate from decades old hierarchical, top down models. Asencio and Mujkic (2016) stressed that federal agencies should emphasize transformational leadership in leadership development programs and maintain an understanding public sector leaders are essential when functioning with constrained ability to reward. The concept of public service motivation (PSM) deserves attention as well (Jacobson, 2011), given job satisfaction may deviate between public and private organizations. Jacobson's (2011) work was focused on interviews with two federal agencies and noted a significant relationship between federal employee job satisfaction and personal and agency performance. Jacobson (2011) further documented higher levels of PSM are directly related to leadership styles, thus increasing the importance of this study. Lavigna (2014) provided a powerful case for this study in documenting federal organizations are essentially triangulated between heightened criticism, decreasing budgets, and increasing expectations, thus furthering the need for leadership competencies, highly engaged employees, and improved work environments. Lavigna (2014) also cited the Merit System Protection Board, indicating high engagement and high satisfaction organizations recognize contributions and work to improve the professional environment

generally have more success in achieving their strategic goals and also maintain higher retention, suffer less loss time, and have fewer equal employment opportunity complaints.

For organizations in general, in particular within federal organizations, the literature demonstrated is a connection between satisfaction and performance, thus, this research aims to make recommendations in terms of leadership style and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction as a concept is only important if it is clear that improved morale for employees benefits the organizational mission. Multiple authors have documented there exists a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational performance (Bakotica, 2016; Alarcon, 2011). This relationship is of increased importance in terms of developing PSM (Jacobson, 2011). Employees with higher levels of commitment and satisfaction demonstrate improved energy, pride, and task focus (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011).

Multiple authors demonstrated there is a clear link between job satisfaction and organizational performance through multiple factors including financial indicators (Bakotica, 2016) and engagement indices. Researchers consider engagement as various groupings of involvement with workplace initiatives and decisions, commitment to organizational purpose, and satisfaction with the tasks being performed. While engagement and job satisfaction are separate concepts, they are related and the work of these authors on job satisfaction is relevant (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011). They further described engagement (p. 476) as involvement, commitment, and satisfaction with the professional environment and note that performance should be studied in conjunction with engagement and satisfaction. Bakotica (2016) observed job satisfaction determines organizational performance and supported this conclusion with financial indicators. These points from her article align directly with the thrust of this author's dissertation, as (based on review of the literature) it appears job satisfaction is a business

imperative supporting organizational performance. Lavigna (2014) suggested engagement and job satisfaction are not identical concepts, yet researchers have shown both improve the federal workplace. The author noted high-engagement organizations out-performed other organizations by 22%. The author found leadership competencies contributed significantly to the engagement and job satisfaction and thus organizational performance. One should also bear in mind organizational rules and their consistent enforcement are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (DeHart-Davis, Davis, & Mohr, 2014). These rules should be well designed, implemented properly, and appropriately formalized. When rules are poorly designed and inconsistently applied, this creates a negative impact for employees.

Several authors contributed to the importance of this concept, including Jacobson (2011), who discussed the idea PSM has evolved as a specific branch of research. This study analyzed two federal agencies and found higher levels of PSM can be attributed to leadership style, and there is a significant relationship between PSM and job satisfaction and organizational performance. She did note perceptions change over time and perceptions can vary depending on the agency and/or the position the employee holds. Finally, her article documented there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and employee/agency performance. Jacobson's writing applies directly to the idea this dissertation will focus on job satisfaction within a federal agency and what factors will negatively or positively affect that satisfaction.

Supporting Statistics

The Viewpoints Survey conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (U.S. OPM; 2015) provided the basis for this research. Job satisfaction within the DON and other DOD agencies has seen a decrease between 2011 and 2015. This statistic provided the impetus of the research. The researcher is interested in understanding why this has occurred and if

employee perception can associate this decline with the leadership skills of supervisors. Certainly, other factors may be negatively affecting job satisfaction including salary and expectation.

The Conference Board's Job Satisfaction survey (Cheng et al., 2014) annually measures this aspect of employee engagement. The survey showed less than half of overall U.S. workers are satisfied with their current positions and this trend has continued for eight years. The authors indicated the historical average for job satisfaction is 61%, while recent surveys have demonstrated an average of 47 – 47.7%. However, the researchers noted this shows an overall increase since 2010 of 42.6%. This survey is important to the current research. The basis for the research is an overall viewpoint survey conducted by the U.S. OPM (2015) to determine job satisfaction and many other aspects of employment and human capital for employees with the federal government. This survey demonstrated that satisfaction within the DON had decreased over a five-year period. The Conference Board Survey allows this author to place overall job satisfaction within the greater context of the U.S. market in general and to draw comparisons with the private sector. The Society for Human Resource Management (2015) survey assessed 43 aspects of employee job satisfaction and 37 aspects of employee engagement. The findings provide an analysis of the importance of various contributors to job satisfaction, a ranking of the top five contributors to job satisfaction, and additional analysis by demographics. This study is an important supplement to the background and research for this dissertation. The intended research is based on the results of an annual study conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (U.S. OPM). The U.S. OPM study surveyed thousands of federal employees in order to document job satisfaction and other key factors. The importance of the SHRM survey is

to assist in placing federal employee job satisfaction within the overall context of private sector satisfaction.

Other Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction

Dalal et al. (2012) found that employees' attitude toward engagement can be positively or negatively impacted by trait affect, which can further form a predictor of job satisfaction. Scheid (n.d.) took a similar approach in reviewing employee attitude within Christian business organizations, referring to trait theory as dispositional theory. Dalal et al. (2012) further found the best predictor of employee performance can be the trait negative affect. This indicates employees who are generally happy or unhappy (all other things being equal) will remain happy or unhappy in their professional positions (Hitch, 2012). The authors' perspectives are important to this research as it is becoming apparent that many factors contribute to leadership, performance, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. This article suggested the traits an individual brings to the work setting are equally important to the effects of outside influences such as supervisor performance.

In addition to traits noted above, the SHRM (2015) survey found employees felt more intrinsically positive views of work when there was meaningfulness behind their efforts, when good relationships were established with supervisors, and when the employees were treated respectfully by supervisors. Haile (2015) noted a number of factors were related to satisfaction, including age, gender, marriage status, education level, disability status, and compensation. DeHart-Davis et al. (2014) further added that fair application of rules also contributed to job satisfaction. The combination of these factors contributes to the idea job satisfaction is a complex concept and there are many factors contributing to and detracting from the satisfaction

and engagement an employee feels within his or her agency. These factors must all be taken into account or isolated in efforts to establish the influence of leadership skills on various employees.

Varying Points of View

While the effect of job satisfaction on employee motivation and performance is well established, there are varying interpretations of the causes of increases and decreases in employee job satisfaction. Bakotica (2016) demonstrated job satisfaction is complex and in any given situation a multitude of factors will contribute to an individual employee's satisfaction level. Further, her research demonstrated the intensity level of satisfaction and the influences on satisfaction need to be taken into account. Dalal et al. (2012) studied the impact of trait affect and argued that equally important to external factors are an employee's internal traits he/she brings to the employment situation. If an employee is generally content or not content with various other situations in his/her life, then he/she will generally be content or not content with the work situation as well. Haile (2015) studied job satisfaction in order to document statistically significant influences and noted the following as having higher links to job satisfaction: age (over 50); gender (female); working for a private company; maintaining a skill match to the position; lower levels of education; and working above 48 hours per week (indicating intrinsic motivation). Equally important, Haile (2012) noted lower levels were also associated with having dependents other than one's own children, having a disability, and probably unobserved differences (noted as unobserved heterogeneity). Leider et al. (2016) documented salary satisfaction, employee involvement, and organizational support were critical to satisfaction and further noted younger, more educated employees tend to have lower satisfaction rates and demonstrate a propensity to look elsewhere for employment. These authors further noted job satisfaction is critical to retaining a quality workforce. Lastly, SHRM (2015) noted U.S. job

satisfaction in general rests at 86%, which is in contrast to the Gallup poll (Adkins, 2015), the Conference Board survey (Cheng et al., 2014), as well as the U.S. OPM (2015) survey, which forms the basis for this research. However, digging a little deeper reveals specific questions regarding trust and respect ranked closer to the 30-40% range.

Critique Existing Literature

The existing literature provided a solid foundation to support the concepts job satisfaction is important to employee and agency performance and leaders within private organizations and government agencies should take seriously the steps needed to ensure job satisfaction is addressed. Failure to do so generally equates to reduced performance and increased turnover rates. According to much of the literature, public sector leaders should focus on some manner of inspirational leadership and linking performance to the greater good. It is critical for public sector leaders to build trust, to focus on employee job satisfaction, to understand what motivates employees, and to recognize public sector employees potentially are motivated differently than their counterparts in the private the sector. Many of the authors discussed focus on the idea public sector employees form a core of workers who are knowledge-based and should be retained and leaders should take advantage of these skills through distributed leadership in order to maximize the performance of both the employees and the organizations. Other studies have also linked job satisfaction with individual and agency performance within the federal government, providing a stepping-off point for the study this researcher will conduct.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review confirmed this is a body of knowledge that supports the ideas employee job satisfaction influences personal and organizational, and supervisory leadership style can negatively or positively impact job satisfaction. Numerous researchers have

documented various leadership styles are more or less effective in increasing job satisfaction of employees. A connection exists between claims made by landmark leadership theorists and current job satisfaction researchers.

The literature reviewed by the researcher provided key information supporting this research. To begin, multiple surveys document job satisfaction within both the federal government and across the private sector. In particular, the governmental survey provides the basis for the problem to study. Additionally, numerous studies have been reviewed which contribute to the literature in this field. These studies demonstrated the importance of job satisfaction to personal and organizational performance and further show that leadership forms a crucial aspect of satisfaction. Lastly, a number of practitioners have contributed to this review, based upon their expertise primarily in the field of governmental employment, training, and leadership.

The literature reviewed demonstrated the importance of appropriate leadership to job satisfaction, and by extension, the impact on organizational performance. The landmark leadership theorists of the last 50 years provide a solid foundation for understanding the role managers and supervisors play in influencing job satisfaction within their organizations. Current researchers have expanded upon these theorists in efforts to document and articulate the importance leadership and satisfaction play in today's organizations. Of utmost importance is the effective functioning of federal agencies and Department of Defense civilian staffs. By focusing on maximizing the performance of DOD and DON civilian employees, this research and others should contribute to the improved agency functionality.

Transition and Summary

In Section 1, the researcher provided a background to the problem of job satisfaction within the DON as well as a problem statement laying out what needs to be addressed. Next, the researcher noted the purpose of the research as well as the approved research questions to be addressed. The conceptual framework discussed a number of leadership theories influencing the research. Next, the researcher noted the significance of the study in reducing gaps in the application of leadership theory to DON leadership as well as biblical implications. Lastly, the researcher focused on the relationship of this research to the author's field of study in leadership as well as an exhaustive review of the professional and academic literature.

In moving to Section 2, the researcher capitalized on the lessons learned from the literature review, formed the theoretical framework, and developed appropriate survey questions, and to ensure research is conducted in a way that will maximize data collection and analysis. Section 2 presents the project, role of the researcher, study method and design, data collection, and data analysis. Section 3 provides a presentation of the results, the application to professional practice and implications for change, and recommendations for further study.

Section 2: The Project

This project focused on the job satisfaction of civilian employees within the Department of Navy (DON) and whether the leadership ability of their supervisors plays a role in either increasing or decreasing satisfaction. Within the Department of Defense, there are nearly 750,000 civilian employees and 1.3 million active duty personnel (US DOD, 2015). It is important this large workforce function to its maximum effectiveness in order to support the men and women in uniform. Based on a study conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (U.S. OPM, 2015) the DON civilian personnel have seen a 6% decrease in job satisfaction over a four-year period. Further research conducted across the private sector (Cheng et al., 2014; SHRM, 2015) held job satisfaction in the 40% range, demonstrating DON civilian workers on average maintain higher satisfaction, yet are facing a multi-year decrease.

The researcher designed the project in a qualitative manner in order to gain an understanding of the participants' views (Stake, 2010) within the context of the leadership that supervisors' exhibit. Further, the researcher selected a case study design in order to focus on setting and experiences (Yin, 2014). The researcher stressed the importance of the employee perspective of leadership and the organizations in which they work. The method and design ensured the results are useful to practitioners and will contribute both to the existing body of knowledge. Section 2 addresses the following aspects of the project:

- A purpose statement, intended to remind readers of the purpose of the study.
- The role of the researcher in the data collection.
- A discussion that addresses gaining access to and protecting the participants.
- Identification of the specific research method and design.
- The population and sampling method.

- Data collection and analysis.
- Reliability and validity.

The researcher examined the work relationships of the participants in an effort to identify a means in which to improve overall job satisfaction. White (2016) performed a similar study using quantitative method and design, and suggested a qualitative approach in her study. As agencies within the federal government are under public pressure to perform effectively (Lavigna, 2014), leadership and job satisfaction are seen as two keys to that effectiveness.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand job satisfaction of a purposive sample of 12 DON employees who have experience with the leadership of their supervisors. The focus of the study was to explore the employees' perceptions of overall job as it relates to leadership in the DON. The results of this study might contribute new insights for DON leaders as they seek to improve leadership competencies and by extension overall job satisfaction. DON employees fulfill an important mission on behalf of the United States Navy, yet during the years 2011 to 2015, researchers documented a decrease in job satisfaction (U.S. OPM, 2015).

Significant literature exists addressing leadership theories and their impact on organizations, yet application of leadership skills within an organization remains a complex environment in which context is critically important. Kouzes and Posner (2012) indicated leadership style, especially when effectively implemented, increases employee loyalty, organizational commitment, and willingness to work hard. For these reasons, it is important for an organization, especially the federal civil service, to gain a better understanding of leadership

impacts. At this stage in the research, leadership styles are categorized as servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, and trait leadership.

Role of the Researcher

Discussions with the Department of the Navy Human Research Protection Administrator have stated since this study was not being conducted on behalf of the Department of Defense, the researcher did not need review or approval from that office. The researcher followed all rules with regards to the protection of human subjects. The researcher maintained all information containing personally identifiable information on a single laptop, in a password-protected file, and was not forwarded via electronic means. The researcher conducted and recorded all interviews either in person or via electronic means such as Skype or phone. The researcher then coded the data in an effort to identify themes contributing to answering the research questions.

Participants

The researcher gained access through advertisements and social media. The researcher primarily utilized email communication in order to establish a working relationship with survey participants. The researcher established a positive and beneficial working relationship with the participants. As noted above, the researcher followed all ethical guidelines of the common rule and human protection requirements. This included safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects and the collected data through password-protected files. No participants who were part of vulnerable populations were considered. All participants signed the approved informed consent found in Appendix A (CITI Program, 2016).

Research Method and Design

Method

The researcher used a qualitative method for this research. This method provides for obtaining in-depth information from a small sample size, providing an opportunity to understand the experiences of the employees. Based on the importance of the individual (Joyner et al., 2012) and a desire to gain personal interpretation (Stake, 2010), a qualitative method is considered the most appropriate and applicable to the problem being studied. As qualitative information is not easily reduced to numbers, the researcher relied on the opinions and values of the participants as expressed during interviews. The researcher used the interview responses as the primary means of data collection supporting research. The employee interview guide (Appendix B) contains a series of open-ended questions in order to provide both comparison and employee experience. The researcher consolidated the interview responses with a focus on the experiences, opinions and feelings of the respondents (Stake, 2010).

The method chosen for this research was important to the researcher as the topic demonstrates a key aspect of support provided to the active-duty military conducting worldwide operations. The civilian component of the Navy and Marine Corps should be operating at its very best in order to ensure critical services are provided to the warfighter and taxpayer money is jealously guarded.

Research Design

Case study research design was applicable to this research given the emphasis on the employees' setting and experiences. It was important to gain an understating of the employees' perspectives in order to better understand their views on leadership and the organizations in which they work. Yin suggested a case study approach is appropriate when investigating "how"

or “why” questions (2014, p. 2), or describing and explaining employee reactions. Given the nature of this research, there is an emphasis on the participants’ view, the context in which the leadership exhibited, and open-ended questions (Yin, 2014). Further, Stake (2010) indicated conclusions should be reached based upon assertions made by subjects, and Yin (2014) suggested researchers should observe patterns in the data collected. The researcher used both of these approaches.

Population and Sampling

The population included current and former Department of the Navy civilian employees, and current or former active duty Navy and Marine Corps personnel that have been assigned to DON civilian supervisors. The total population was worldwide and fell within the DON’s 24 major commands or organization, and encompasses 200,000 civilian DON employees, almost 500,000 active duty Navy and Marine personnel (U.S. DoD, 2015). There are also an indeterminate number of people who were former active duty, civilian, or both. As this was not a census, the sampling frame included a broad cross-section of the population who lived and/or worked within the southeastern Atlantic states. As many of the DON organizations, or their representative headquarters, reside in the Virginia, Washington DC, and North Carolina areas, this sampling frame was large enough to ensure it was an accurate reflection of the entire DON population, while not necessarily being statistically representative. According to Yin (2014) a sampling logic that attempts statistical representation is not appropriate for case study design. As the researcher is interested in specific characteristics, he used purposive sampling to ensure candidates meet the requirements of the study (Wilmot, 2009; Yin, 2014). The sample size was 12 participants, which was appropriate for qualitative case study method and design and allowed for greater understanding of the in-depth experiences of the participants. Creswell (2014)

indicated researchers should stop collecting data when no new themes or categories are developed. This referred to the idea of saturation. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) indicated after 12 interviews, researchers would develop roughly 88-92% of themes. Larger sample sizes are not appropriate for qualitative research and would limit the depth of analysis (Wilmot, 2009; Yin, 2014). The researcher believes eligibility includes serving as a DON employee or having served on active duty and been assigned a civilian DON supervisor. A key characteristic and requirement of the selected sample was the individual must have interacted with his/her supervisor to such a degree the supervisor's leadership style was understood, as well as the impact of that style on the employee's perception of the job. As a contrary example, the DON also maintains a large workforce of manual laborers who potentially receive their daily tasks and then accomplish those tasks. If the interaction with supervisors was superficial not representative of leadership theory, then this was a disqualifying factor.

Data Collection

Creswell (2014) indicated interviews are a primary source of data collection within a qualitative study. Yin (2014) offered that in case study research, interviews are focused directly on the research topic, provide explanations, and are a good source for personal views of the participants. Interviews were conducted with a pre-determined set of open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014) followed by questions designed to dig deeper into particular themes and / or experiences. A limited number of supervisor interviews (Appendix C) added context to the employee answers during the initial interview stage. The limited sample size and semi-structured interviews created an opportunity for the researcher to gather richer data and descriptions of employee experiences.

Instruments

Employee interview guide. Yin (2014) indicated interviews are the most important form of case study data collection and provide the richest amount of information. Stake (2010) informed readers that interviews are important to obtain unique information or interpretation. The interview guide, as found in Appendix B, was provided in order to allow the researcher to dig deeply into the experiences of the employees with regard to their interaction with supervisory leadership skills and the potential effect on employee job satisfaction. There were a series of 28 open-ended questions. Questions 1 through 10 begin the interview with a focus on whether employees had the resources needed to perform their duties, were well informed concerning organizational decisions, and utilization of their personal skills and abilities. Specifically, the researcher dug into topics such as employee encouragement to come up with new and better ideas (question 1), supervisor commitment to leading employees (question 5), supervisors seeking suggestions from employees (question 8), and employee recognition (question 11) and reward (question 9). The questions then flowed in a logical manner in questions 13 to 17 to address supervisory leadership in a general sense as experienced by the employee. Specifically, the questions asked the interviewee if the quality of leadership affects their desire to be employed (question 13), ability to demonstrate initiative (question 14), and to do one's job well (question 15). The interview questions then focus on specific leadership traits and styles, asking questions concerning servant leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership (questions 18 – 24). The interview then finished with a short series of questions designed to put the previous questions in overall context of leadership and job satisfaction.

Supervisor interview guide. Lastly, a limited number of supervisor interviews added further richness and context to the data. The supervisor interview guide (Appendix C) addressed

questions concerning their perspective of job satisfaction and leadership within the DON, beginning with questions 1 through 3, asking the supervisor to describe job satisfaction, the supervisor's perception of job satisfaction within the DON, and how the supervisor sees the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership. Question 4 then focused suggestions for improving both job satisfaction and leadership. Lastly, the supervisor interview guided wraps up with specific questions concerning leadership styles such as servant, transformational, and situational. These three instruments allowed themes to emerge, until reaching saturation, from which the researcher intended to develop overarching concepts deriving meaning from the answers (via the coding process), addressing the research questions, and facilitating analysis.

The process needed to complete the instruments by participants included making him or herself available for a 60-minute interview via face-to-face, phone conversation, Skype/WebEx, or another form of virtual interaction. In reviewing the results, the researcher gained new insights and meaning from the experience of those taking the survey (Nigatu, 2009). Once collected, the raw data were stored by the researcher in password-protected files. The data were available for and accessible only by the researcher.

Data Collection Technique

The researcher collected the data utilizing an interview of each participant using pre-formatted, semi-structured, and open-ended questions designed to draw out deeper answers and build richer data. A limited number of interviews were conducted at the supervisory level in order to serve as a reference point for employee responses.

The researcher identified potential applicants via professional organizations, social media, and through network connections. The researcher then contacted them with an invitation letter found in Appendix D. The researcher used no coercion in efforts to convince potential

participants to take the survey. Those who agreed were provided the informed consent letter (Appendix A) and were asked to complete the interview.

The researcher conducted interviews with participants until saturation was achieved. Following participant interviews, the researcher conducted limited supervisor interviews. Interviews were conducted at an agreed upon location by the means most comfortable to the participant, including face-to-face, phone, and Skype. The interviews lasted no more than one hour and the researcher recorded them with a digital recorder. The researcher felt it was crucial to transcribe interviews into written text. The researcher used the service “TranscribeMe!” generating PDFs of interviews. Given the relatively small number of interviews, the researcher conducted data analysis and coding without the aid of data analysis software.

Data Organization Technique

Appropriate data storage, organization, and access are crucial to successful research. In order to maintain accountability of all data as well as themes and understandings as they emerge, the researcher utilized multiple methods (Stake, 2010). To begin, a file list was developed and maintained throughout the process in order to organize data and file locations. Data were secured on the researcher’s hard drive in password-protected files. Items stored on the researcher’s hard drive included digital recordings of interviews, electronic copies of transcribed interviews, and other applicable material. The researcher also kept printed copies of material in a locked file cabinet within his personal workspace. The researcher maintained vigilance concerning personally identifiable information and participant confidentiality, especially during the coding process (Creswell, 2014).

Data Analysis Technique

The researcher supported the overall data analysis with a detailed process intended to examine, categorize, and tabulate the data to produce “empirically based findings” (Yin, 2014, p. 132). In order to support the analysis process, the researcher used coding to classify and sort the data (Stake, 2010). Stake further informed readers that coding is designed to sort data sets according to topics and themes, and to become increasingly more focused as analysis continues (2010, p. 151). The researcher used a coding process that transitioned data into pre-selected and emerging codes, which then allowed the researcher to develop categories, and then relate the categories to themes and the research questions (Saldana, 2016). The researcher established pre-set codes based on the research questions and the conceptual framework, with the intention of adding additional emergent categories as the research reveals various pieces of information. As the interviews were transcribed and the analysis conducted, the researcher immersed himself in the data and the emerging concepts in order to fully understand the experience of the participants and how the experiences were related to aspects of the research questions, including job satisfaction and supervisory leadership skills. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher read and reread transcriptions in order to “play” with the data, looking for patterns and insights (Yin, 2014, p. 132). Further, Creswell (2014, p. 247) provided an intuitive guide to developing themes and interpreting meaning, including a flow from raw data to organization, coding, and interpretation. Creswell (2014) discussed the idea that triangulation is a solid analysis method. Yin (2014) stated triangulation could be used to ensure the integrity of the inferences a researcher draws. In developing themes using triangulation, the researcher drew from multiple sources, including the transcribed interviews from employees and researcher field notes. The researcher further used member-checking in an effort to ensure data collection was

accurate. Lastly, as the supervisor and employee interview questions all revolved around addressing the research questions involving DON employee job satisfaction, perception of leadership, and the intended coding, especially the preset categories were focused in these areas.

Reliability and Validity

According to Creswell (2014), reliability in qualitative studies indicates the researcher is verifying accuracy of the study through various strategies and validity in qualitative studies stresses the researcher's approach is consistent with those conducted by other researchers and different studies. Creswell (2014) also stated reliability and validity take on a different perspective within qualitative researcher, yet both Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) stressed it is crucial for a qualitative study to have credibility. For these reasons, the researcher developed the following approaches in order to successfully address both reliability and validity within the study.

Reliability

Yin provided a definition of reliability which indicates the study should demonstrate "consistency" and "repeatability" (2014, p. 240). Creswell (2014) discussed the idea reliability is generally more applicable to quantitative studies, but qualitative researchers should strive to ensure their approach is consistent with other researchers and with an emphasis on the results. Yin (2014) further informed readers as the research design links the data and conclusions back to the original research questions, the structure and implementation of the interview guide is crucial to this linkage and in maintaining reliability. It is additionally important to take all steps necessary to improve the reliability of the study such as documenting all steps and using a chain-of-custody mindset with respect to the information and process.

Yin (2014) and Creswell (2014) both stressed qualitative researchers should thoroughly document every aspect of their research, data collection, analysis, and communication. The goal of reliability in qualitative research is to demonstrate if another researcher were to conduct a comparable study, similar results would be found. Additional researchers cannot replicate a study if there are missing pieces of information about how the study was conducted or what steps were taken to analyze data and generate results. Similarly, the researcher accepted his background will produce some level of self-imposed bias and by documenting this potential bias, the researcher mediated its negative affect (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher feels it is important to ensure fellow researchers see this qualitative study as acceptable, reliable, and repeatable. As such, the researcher fully documented and stored all correspondence, letters of consent, field notes, results, and maintained a logbook of type and location. Additionally, in order to improve accuracy and reduce bias, the researcher utilized member checking in an effort to ensure he accurately captured the views of participants. In order to improve the reliability of the instruments, the researcher tied all instrument questions back to the research questions and drew questions from the types used in similar studies. The researcher also took into account, and documented in the study, any background that may have influenced his analysis (As a current DON employee, the researcher does maintain an opinion on leadership and governmental job satisfaction.)

Validity

As the goal of qualitative research is to understand participants' experiences in their own context (Stake, 2010), stressing validity is crucial in ensuring trustworthiness and credibility from the perspective of the researcher and the reader (Creswell, 2014). The researcher ensured the findings represented or linked back to the research questions. In order to ensure external

validity, researchers should be able to generalize the results of the study (Yin, 2014), though context of the study and repeatability will be important. From the perspective of internal validity, the researcher focused on the credibility of the findings. Lastly, the researcher made every effort to avoid reaching a predetermined result (Ali & Yusof, 2011).

In order to ensure validity of this study, the researcher viewed data collection and analysis within the study to constructs of the study including the literature review, research questions, and conceptual framework. The researcher also developed validity strategies (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) such as triangulation, developing rich descriptions, and pattern matching. Detailed descriptions of data sources can be important to contributions to credibility for external readers. Lastly, the researcher used pattern matching to compare predicted themes with those developed during analysis and coding.

Transition and Summary

The researcher used Section 2 to restate the purpose of the current study focused on DON leadership and job satisfaction. The researcher went on to discuss the role of the researcher conducting interviews and the DON employee participants. The researcher then used Section 2 to discuss the method and design chosen for this study, with an emphasis on qualitative case study and the reason for this selection. The researcher used additional portions of Section 2 to discuss in detail those issues related to data collection including the selected population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and data analysis. Further, the researcher discussed the importance of reliability and validity to ensure consistency and repeatability.

The researcher used Section 2 to lay out all aspects of the project prior to moving to Section 3 and a discussion of the application to professional practice and implications for change. In Section 3, the researcher provides an overview of the conducted study followed by a

detailed presentation of the findings based upon the analysis of the data collected. Based on the themes that emerged from analysis, the researcher further used Section 3 to lay out the application to professional practice including leadership within the DON and improved business practice. The researcher then took time to discuss the recommendations for action based on the findings and provides steps for useful action. Lastly, the researcher provides recommendations for further study research and conclusions of the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 3, the researcher provided an overview of the study discussing how and why the study addressed effective business practice in terms of leadership within the DON. A key aspect of Section 3 included the presentation of findings in which the researcher addresses the themes, patterns, and relationship that emerged from data analysis. Next, the researcher discussed how and why the findings are relevant to improved business and leadership practice. In order to capitalize on the findings, the researcher then provided recommendations and steps for useful action that organizational leaders can capitalize upon. Lastly, the researcher provided recommendations for closer examination and future studies followed by a strong concluding statement, and the researcher's experience with the study and reflections.

Overview of Study

This study aimed to identify those leadership traits, styles, or theories, which have the greatest possible impact on improving overall job satisfaction within the DON civilian workforce, which has seen a five-year decrease in satisfaction (U.S. OPM, 2015). In conducting case study research and in order to understand the interviewees' lived experiences, the researcher conducted structured interviews with multiple DON employees after a recruitment period of network and purposeful sampling. Those interviewed employees have worked within the department in multiple states including North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, California, and Pennsylvania. They further worked in multiple settings including headquarters, assessments, research and development, installations, training, IT, and acquisitions. The participants were selected based on their experience within the department and ability to answer questions regarding the types of leadership they have witnessed within the department. Each participant answered approximately 28 interview questions addressing leadership style, how they

themselves have been treated as employees, positive and negative leadership influences, and offered an opportunity for the participant to provide suggestions. The objective of the interviews was to answer specific interview questions and to further address the specific research questions as discussed in Section 1.

Multiple themes emerged which support the research questions and contribute to the current scholarship on leadership and job satisfaction. The themes include the following:

1. Leadership impact on job satisfaction: Participants agreed the style of leadership exhibited has a significant impact on improving or impairing job satisfaction.
2. Servant and Transformational leadership: Both are considered important and effective to improved job satisfaction.
3. Inconsistency of leadership: While participants provided many examples of effective leadership, there was general agreement that across organizations and leaders, sound leadership is not consistently found.
4. Skills development and personal growth: Employees feel while their skills are appropriately used, they are not encouraged or supported in professional growth that can benefit both the employee and the organization.
5. Information flow and Resources: Employees desire solid information flow in order to better understand the organization and decision-making. This is important to employees, yet is inconsistent in application. Employees have the resources to perform their mission but often have the minimum needed, and further resources are associated with the changing emphasis of senior leadership. Employees are dedicated and find ways to accomplish the mission regardless of the resource situation.

6. Motivation to see organization succeed: Given the importance of the department's mission, employees are highly motivated to perform well and see the organization succeed. This dedication to the mission overrode the negative impact of leadership and the resulting decrease in job satisfaction.

To further summarize the results of the research, the author found participants felt leadership style was critical to improved or declining job satisfaction. A number of participants noted highly positive experiences with departmental supervisors, others' experiences were quite negative, and in some cases (as leadership changes) employees had both good and bad leadership. The key for all was the importance leadership played. Additionally, servant leadership and transformational leadership styles emerged as the most important while others, such as transactional and situational, had their place but did not necessarily inspire satisfaction. Opportunities for personal growth emerged as critically important, yet often not stressed by supervisors. The general sense is employees are on their own to find training rather than a holistic organizational approach. Lastly, a key take away was regardless of obstacles (e.g., resources, lack of training, poor leadership, lack of information) employees are highly interested in performing well since their efforts support Sailors and Marines stationed worldwide in this nation's defense.

Presentation of Findings

The researcher presented findings for this study as a series of themes that emerged from hours of interviews with multiple employees of the Navy Department who combined have well over 200 years of experience with DON supervisors. The themes also align with significant aspects of the literature reviewed in preparation for conducting data analysis and designing the

study. The conceptual framework developed the ideas for the study, and the resulting themes (in combination with the literature) have supported answering the research questions.

The conceptual framework for this study evolved through significant review of literature on both leadership theory and job satisfaction. Organizational leaders must focus on the success of the teams they lead, thus empowering these teams emerge as critical aspects of success (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Within this construct, follower-centered leadership techniques are important to both job satisfaction and organizational performance (Greenleaf, 1970; Bass & Riggio, 2006). This moves the discussion away from autocratic and leader-centered theories that emphasize power and control (French & Raven, 1959) as one might have expected to explore during the industrial revolution. With an emphasis on public organizations, one should note the importance of the missions performed and the leadership skills necessary to succeed including team leadership and public leadership theory (Kellis & Ran, 2013; Van Velsor et al., 2016).

The foundation for this study is the noted decrease in job satisfaction for the Department of the Navy over a five-year period documented in a yearly survey (U.S. OPM, 2015). The literature on both leadership and job satisfaction demonstrated supervisory skills are related to individual motivation, and by extension this motivation influences both employee and organizational performance. Multiple factors influence job satisfaction including meaningful work, sense of value, achievement, responsibility, and supervisor feedback. While numerous leadership theories were evaluated for this study, two emerged from both the literature and the data as having a consistent impact on employee motivation and desire to support the organization: servant and transformational leadership. To begin, the results of the interviews and the analysis of the data generated support that the ideal leadership is critical for employees to maintain high levels of job satisfaction. This was accentuated by two employees who

experienced a change in supervisor and a decrease in the quality of leadership. While these two remained committed to the organization, they experienced painful decreases in motivation and energy. Next, and consistent with the literature, the respondents noted leadership skills associated with transformational or servant leadership work better to motivate employees. The participants also expressed concern regarding the availability of resources, information, and personal skill development. All agreed these were critical in enabling effective performance and contributed to improved job satisfaction, though there was inconsistency with regards to level of access to these areas based on the lived experiences of these employees. Lastly, and critical for an analysis of an organization that supports deployed forces, is the idea these employees, no matter the level of leadership or resources they receive, strongly desired to see the DON succeed in every mission undertaken. This was an important aspect of the collected data as it demonstrated, at least with a small sample size, employees are willing to overlook lapses in accepted leadership techniques in order to ensure the Fleet is supported. This was truly an inspiring aspect of data collection.

The findings were not unexpected as they aligned with the literature as well as the researcher's experience. The literature suggested that employees rely on supervisors for quality leadership in order to remain motivated to perform quality work. For those employees who are potentially not engaged in work that is intrinsically satisfying or the leadership level they receive from their supervisor is lacking, then many other factors will contribute to satisfaction including education level, environment, and skills match (Haile, 2015). Yet, while the participants in this study stated numerous areas where improved satisfaction would benefit the organization (e.g., leadership style, skills development, resources, and information flow), they also were adamant the overarching mission remained at the forefront of their mind, even in the face of degraded

satisfaction. There were a few unexpected findings, though not documented as trends or themes. One participant noted it can often be difficult for the supervisor's supervisor (i.e., two levels up from the employee) to accurately view the leadership skills of his/her subordinate supervisor. In the lived experience of this participant, if the subordinate supervisor was relying on his employees to get the job done properly, then the next level supervisor would not necessarily know or understand how effective his/her leadership style truly was. In addition, if the employees focus on their organizational tasks, as noted by all participants, then the second line supervisor will not necessarily be aware. Another was one participant indicated he noticed servant-style leadership from executive leadership, but this style did not trickle down to the mid-level managers. One may assume if high quality leadership is present at the top, then it would be effective throughout the organization, which may not be a safe assumption. These two unexpected observations may also be related.

Themes

Six themes were derived from data analysis in conjunction with those developed during the review of the literature:

1. Leadership impact on job satisfaction.
2. Servant and Transformational leadership.
3. Inconsistency of leadership.
4. Skills development and personal growth.
5. Information flow and resource sufficiency.
6. Motivation to see organization succeed.

Theme 1: Leadership Impact on Job Satisfaction

The first theme to emerge is the impact leadership has on job satisfaction of employees. Employees should receive organizational support from their supervisors (Leider et al., 2016), job satisfaction is significantly promoted by effective leadership (Yi-Feng, 2016), and leaders play a critical role in improving job satisfaction of their employees (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016). Conversely, unengaged leaders have a negative ripple effect that impacts much of the organization (Morris & Laipple, 2015), toxic leadership can be disastrous to job satisfaction (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013), and governmental supervisors often have a problem with demonstrating effective team leadership (Van Velsor et al., 2016). Leadership in governmental organizations is critical to maximizing employee engagement, satisfaction, and, by extension, performance. Jacobson (2011) stated the idea higher levels of public service motivation and effective leadership can increase governmental job satisfaction, yet there also appears to be a gap in the development of public leadership theories (Kellis & Ran, 2013). The first theme discussed within this work identifies the idea the literature suggested the importance of leadership in developing and improving employee job satisfaction, and this aspect of leadership is even more important in the public sector given the role agency employees play. Participant responses also support the idea documented in literature, namely that leadership, good or bad, is a significant contributor to job satisfaction.

Questions 5, 10, 13-17, and 27 of the interview guide focused on supervisor leadership skills, how the quality of leadership positively or negatively affects the employees' ability to do his/her job well, and the intersection of leadership and job satisfaction. Regardless of whether their experiences were positive or negative, all participants stressed the quality of leadership was critical to employees feeling they were able to do their job well, they were motivated on the job,

and their job satisfaction levels remained high. Two participants related unique (but separate) experiences in which they initially worked for very engaged supervisors who took personal interaction very seriously, but then each of these supervisors moved to other organizations, followed by a leader who was much more concerned with personal success. One of these participants stressed when the new leader demonstrated concern only for his personal agenda more than the functioning of employees and the other stressed because to really get one's point across with the new leader, the employee needed to be willing to spend significant off-time socializing. One participant stated this about an effective supervisor he interacted with:

Of the many ways the early [supervisor] expressed and demonstrated appreciation and commitment to me as an employee, the most important was making sure that my experience mattered—and that they told me so. I was treated like a professional whose experience was essential to the success of the organization.

Two other employees appeared to have had superior leadership experiences with their DON supervisors for about a decade or so. These two employees related examples of coaching, mentorship, and personal development. The consensus, however, across all participants was the importance of quality leadership. As noted above, numerous participants discussed the importance of mentorship and coaching, additional actions that demonstrated supportive supervisory skills included making good use of skills and encouraging initiative and creative thinking. Another interview stated this about an early set of supervisors:

So I had several supervisors during that time....I had two really awesome supervisors that set me up with a foundation for leadership that, to this day, I am forever grateful for and most definitely provided that focus on not only doing my

job but a [sic] leadership and how to make sure that, as a team, we were successful.

To summarize Theme 1, the conceptual framework of this work stressed the criticality of leadership to job satisfaction citing numerous authors including Asencio and Mujkic (2106), Azanza et al. (2013), Dabke (2016), Jacobson (2011), and Kellis and Ran (2013). Additional authors also stressed the importance of leadership, organizational support, and further placed leadership and job satisfaction in the context of public agencies. After analyzing the data collected from DON employees for this study, the experiences of these employees support the literature in that leadership, for these employees, stands out as one of the most important aspects of maintaining or improving their desire to work for the Department of the Navy.

Theme 2: Servant and Transformational Leadership

In addition to stressing that quality leadership is critical to improved job satisfaction, the second emerging theme was identified as the type of leadership that fully supported employees' needs in the work place. Prior to data collection, the literature suggested servant leadership and/or transformational leadership provided the best avenue for improved employee performance and relations. Transformational leadership has been a predictor of higher levels of job satisfaction and the greatest impact to employee commitment (Rowold et al., 2014), demonstrated a positive role of the leader in his/her effectiveness and the perception of that effectiveness (Dabke, 2016), and further found transformational leaders are generally viewed as strong and willing to share power (Mroczkowski, 2013). Bass and Riggio (2006) stressed the importance of transformational leadership to organizational success. Within the public sphere, servant and transformational leadership increased trust, motivation, and performance (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016), developed higher levels of public service motivation (Wright et al., 2012), and

were the most impactful styles of leadership with respect to job satisfaction and government supervisors (Kellis & Ran, 2013). The literature made a compelling case for the strength of these leadership styles in building trust with employees and capitalizing on intrinsic motivation to maximize employee and team performance, thus providing a mutually beneficial atmosphere.

Participants in this study provided responses to interview questions that reinforced the perspective as noted by the literature. Within the data collection instrument, questions 7, 8, 11, 18, and 19 dealt with aspects of servant and transformational leadership, including the last two questions, which specifically asked about those two theories. The aspects of servant and transformational leadership resonated with the respondents during interviews. Two participants stressed they had been blessed during at least ten years as DON employees with supervisors that emulated many aspects of servant and transformational leadership. These two employees noted their supervisors worked hard to develop them as leaders, often pushing their boundaries in order to ensure the employee challenges his/her own self-imposed limitations. Another participant, also noting the effectiveness of servant and transformational leadership, indicated he had witnessed this style more from senior leadership (e.g., in motivating a large organization), but the concept was diluted to some degree as strategic direction trickled down to operational employment. This participant noted:

For the server [sic] leadership part, I think multiple supervisors that I had there, there were some that did this very, very well. And I think it almost also came from a -- not something that was studied, but something that was just a unique and inherent part of that individual leadership style and who they were as an individual. And then I think I also observed people that struggled with that, with servant leadership to where ... I think some people had different aspects of these,

like servant leaderships, or transaction leadership. The highest levels of leadership were very supportive. But I think in the middle management layer ... I think that's where that-- it was a conflict there between the status quo at the middle management layer wanting to maintain that just to kind of ensure basic levels of effectiveness were maintained. But at the highest level, there was this desire to do new and different things.

Even given this last point, the same employee stressed styles connected with servant and transformational leadership were, to him, very effective in motivating employees to focus on the Navy's mission. As discussed in Theme 1, two employees experienced a change in leadership within separate organizations. When discussing servant and transformational leadership, each focused passionately on the idea their first supervisors were very much in the servant/transformational mode, these leaders focused on organizational results, but recognized to be truly effective, they needed to fully engage and develop their talented employee base. As an example of one of the employee's earlier supervisor, the following quote is provided "The first supervisor—excellent. I still think of him as a servant leader. I had complete freedom. In the beginning, I was encouraged to build a graduate level...course, which was the best of its kind. Unfortunately, that freedom was short lived." Yet, each of these employees experienced a change in leadership in which the servant leader moved on to a new organization and the new supervisor exhibited more transactional aspects of leadership. One employee even used the term toxic to describe the leadership under the second supervisor.

In summary of Theme 2, the literature is convincing that servant and transformational leadership styles are effective in maintaining and improving many aspects of job satisfaction for employees across multiple organizations. This is even more important for employees of

government agencies that often experience decreasing resources and heightened visibility of agency mission (Lavigna, 2014). The conceptual framework of this work stressed public sector organizations should maximize use of transformational leadership in order to improve trust, commitment, motivation, and performance (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Dabke, 2016; Kellis & Ran, 2013; Wright et al., 2012). The findings of this study support these aspects of the literature. Without exception, the respondents noted the importance of servant and transformational styles of leadership. Each had witnessed these styles, or leaders who did not exhibit these styles or both as supervisors are rotated. The collective experience of the participants supported the importance of servant and transformational leadership.

Theme 3: Inconsistency of Leadership

The literature suggested many organizations struggle with implementing more engaging leadership styles. The difficulty can be attributed to the culture of most organizations, which have a traditional structure (Azanza et al., 2013). Van Velsor et al. (2016) stated many government supervisors have trouble with team leadership and interpersonal skills. Further, Kellis and Ran (2013) found governmental agencies must embrace the type of leadership development that supports transformational leadership. In fact, Pitts et al. (2011) observed there have been multiple human resource and leadership crises in the federal government during the 1980s and the 2000s, leading researchers to believe multiple tactics must be used to develop the required leadership skills and instill improved motivation and satisfaction. Adkins (2015) demonstrated that many U.S. employees remain unengaged and unmotivated. Morris and Laipple (2015) stressed many new leaders feel their supervisory duties interfere with how they would prefer to do their jobs, thus they remain unengaged with subordinates leading a less motivated workforce. The literature noted while successful organizations often make maximum

use of leadership theories such as servant and transformational, it is also common for hierarchical organizations and inflexible leaders to put these practices to good use. This inconsistency reflects a struggle many organizations and supervisors share, and was also reflected during interviews for this work.

In conducting interviews, questions 1, 3, 23, and 24 stressed areas of employee engagement as well as increases and decreases of employee job satisfaction. Taken in total, the responses to interview questions demonstrated while there were numerous examples of stellar leadership, often emulating servant and transformational aspects, virtually all respondents noted personal experience with leadership that detracts from individual and organizational job satisfaction. The researcher previously discussed the clearest examples from interview responses. Two interviewees each had a change in leadership, which demonstrated a stark difference in styles and reflected a significant inconsistency in DON leadership. Each participant noted the organizational and personal commitment of the first supervisor, which contributed to a feeling of pride and commitment, and the employees' skills were being used to the maximum benefit of the organization. Once those first supervisors were rotated to new assignments, the second supervisors maintained a strikingly different focus. The second set of supervisors seemed to be in line with the results of the study conducted by Van Velsor et al. (2016) which documented that government supervisors struggled with interpersonal skills and team leadership. One of the participants who had the change of leadership explained the new supervisor in the following way when asked about the positive or negative affect of leadership:

Toward the end, I found it difficult to find the energy and faith required to invest myself in efforts designed to offer the kind of "above and beyond the call of duty" performance for which I had been accustomed to and known for. The later

leadership seemed out of touch with what I understood to be basic requirements of the essential functions of my area of expertise, while the leader seemed to either disagree with my input, or not care about it at all.

Another respondent, who at times indicated many positive supervisory interactions, also stated that in reality it can be very difficult to determine, from the outside, whether a supervisor is performing well. This is true because if the supervisor is supported by hard working and dedicated subordinates, then the work will generally get done and often done well, therefore (given enough separation in the hierarchy) the second line supervisor will not be aware of the reality. This inconsistency is also apparent in one respondent's comments that a servant leadership mindset is evident further up the chain, but does not necessarily trickle down to the mid-level managers. Multiple respondents who have generally had good luck with supervisors, have also witnessed unengaged or toxic leadership in other DON leaders, and were able to witness its negative effects from the outside.

All respondents to the interview questions noted the importance of engaged leadership, as supported by nearly all the literature and discussed in the conceptual framework. Further, while respondents' personal experiences with leadership differed, all had experienced positive and engaged leadership, and all had also either personally experienced or personally witnessed the negative aspects of poor leadership execution and engagement by DON supervisors. For example, one respondent observed a senior leader from afar who:

... always talked about, "I," for anything. Anyone in the extended organization was doing. "Well I need to figure this out, and I'm going to tackle this next." And it always struck me, it's not, "We" it's as if he alone had carried the world on his shoulders. So I

haven't experienced that at first hand, luckily, but I have observed it and sometimes not terribly far away.

Theme 4: Skills Development and Personal Growth

The literature suggested skill development and employee personal growth is important both to the employee and to the success of the organization. Lack of leader development and the corresponding negative impact on employee motivation was documented by Morris and Laipple (2015) when they studied university professors who were promoted into administrative positions for which they were not prepared. Leaders should be willing and able to develop their employees (Mroczkowski, 2013) and this is especially true in the public sector (Rude, 2012). Organizations should focus on leadership development programs and in distributing leadership responsibilities. In so doing, organizational leaders will better develop trust, skills, and decision-making (Gill et al., 2012). The literature demonstrated that developing employees is of critical importance, and that a key aspect of development is demonstrating the trust in employees to empower them with responsibility. Empowerment, training, and growth are demonstrated to be key elements that keep employees engaged and motivated in the workforce. The results of this study offer similar results, as respondents have stressed the importance of skill development they have received.

The theme documented across all participants was the importance of personal and professional development, and the support of these programs from leadership. A number of employees were part of a holistic approach to training and development in which their supervisors groomed them for greater responsibilities, while at the same time provided opportunities for these employees to attend training and education to expand their skill set. These participants stressed how the supervisor encouragement and support had driven them to be

better, both for themselves and for the organization. An example includes a participant in this category discussed how she had been hired as a new DON employee and during her three years at one location, her supervisory continually and gradually increased the responsibility he gave her. She credits this early mentorship with giving her the confidence to take her DON career much further. Another group of interviewees had participated in training opportunities offered by the DON in order to improve themselves (and their organizations), and while their supervisors approved of this training, the employees did not receive wholehearted support. An example of this group of participants includes an employee who has taken full advantage of educational opportunities within the DON (even to the point of completing a doctorate), but he has done all of this on his own with no mentorship from leadership or any holistic plan to train the workforce as a whole or to take advantage of newly acquired skills. One participant phrased his view in the manner:

My supervisor encourages personal and professional development, whether it's improving technical acumen through education or certification or by advising career choices to meet personal goals or by encouraging mentoring (as a mentor or as a mentee), for example. These sorts of development are essential to successfully performing in the technical positions here; a less supportive supervisor would significantly impact his employees negatively.

Lastly, a group of participants who stressed the importance of training, found it very difficult to take advantage of personal and professional development given the tempo of their organizations and the seemingly uninterested approach their supervisors took. Within this category, an employee desperately wanted to both maintain currency in his field and to conduct trips to operational areas in order to see firsthand how skills are being implemented. According to his

interview, this employee had every request denied due to time and funding constraints. Each participant in the interviews stressed the importance of this aspect of leadership and development, though each had a personal story, which placed the experience in their own context.

Within the conceptual framework, this paper discussed employee development from the perspective of Kouzes and Posner (2012) idea that leaders should enable others to act. The importance of training, as evidenced by the literature and the interviews, is a crucial aspect of leadership and by extension of job satisfaction for these DON employees. Even much of the foundational literature on leadership including Vroom (1964) and House and Mitchell (1975) stressed ideas employees are more motivated if they feel they are capable of performing and if they are well coached. The combination of the literature and the experiences of these employees stressed the importance of developing employees in maintaining their motivation and satisfaction.

Theme 5: Information Flow and Resource Allocation

This theme speaks to the ability of employees to perform their tasks with the tools and information available. The literature suggested good information flow is critical to employee contentment and building trust between leader and led (Mroczkowski, 2013; Harris et al., 2009). Additionally, as indicated in previous themes, empowerment and shared decision-making can also be important to improved meaningfulness at work, which by extension requires high quality information flow (Hitch, 2012). In addition to information, employees also require the appropriate resources to done one's job. If these resources are lacking then it is likely frustration can build, especially if the employee remains motivated to perform well. Within the public sphere, many governmental agencies operate under constrained resources due to constant

pressure on the tax base that supports their funding (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016). The requirement to operate in this environment places increased responsibilities on the part of supervisors to ensure that employees maintain a high internal work motivation and quality. Additional pressures are placed on managers and by extension on employees when governmental agencies are routinely directed to reduce manpower or stop hiring to replace employees. This has the potential to negatively impact the internal motivation employees feel. In fact, this type of hiring freeze was implemented during 2017 within the Department of Defense (US DOD, 2017). Further U.S. OPM (2015) found only 47% of federal employees surveyed reported having sufficient resources to perform well. Yet, as many of these agencies face personnel pressures from political and fiscal realities, these governmental team leaders and supervisors are still asked to solve complicated and important problems (Lavigna, 2014).

Several concepts emerged from interview participants when discussing communication and resources from two questions focused on these topics. First and foremost, there was consensus among interviews, aligned with the literature, of the importance of communication flow, both from a change management stand point as well as ensuring that employees fully understand strategic direction. Several participants discussed their experiences with organizational restructures that were communicated poorly leading to confusion among employees and a negative impact to their personal work motivation. Many of the interviews noted a lack of strategic guidance with the DON, stressing senior leaders need to develop these documents at the highest levels, then communicate to sub-executive leader with clearly understood goals and objectives, and, once articulated, these strategic and operational objectives need to be resourced. Resourcing emerged as an equally important sub-topic, though with higher levels of nuance. The consensus across interviews is resourcing is important in order to perform

well and to remain engaged and content with the work. Further, there was also consensus at a basic level, where each participant had the resources to perform their jobs. While basic requirements are met, one participant discussed the idea more resources could be available, but the governmental bureaucracy seemed to slow down his ability to maximize funding and capabilities considered available. Another participant noted resources are in place for task completion, but not to be truly innovative or transformational in his approach to supporting agency needs. One interviewee discussed the idea that given finite financial resources, support to projects often depends on the appetite and strategic direction of agency executive, specifically stating:

And the amount of resourcing you need is dependent on the appetite of that executive to exercise those authorities. So when their attention is not on my area, and we're just kind of keeping the fire from going out... When they decide they want to use us to solve world hunger, we are not resourced adequately. So part of the challenge is to clearly define our capabilities, the capabilities they want to build, and what is feasible to achieve with the resources we have.

Lastly, one employee made a comment that seemed to resonate through the data, that within the DON, resources such as manpower, funding, and equipment are always a challenge, but given motivation and intrinsic dedication to the mission, employees will always find a way.

Within the literature and employee responses, resourcing and information flow are intertwined and critical to mission as well as maintaining workforce motivation. Keeping employees informed of changes and strategic direction are areas that DON employees see a need for improvement. Resourcing is also seen as important, but it is understood there will always be financial and manpower constraints, especially within a large bureaucracy.

Theme 6: Motivation for Organizational Success

The last theme discussed focuses on the desire of employees to see their organizations succeed. Haile (2015) reported within the British public sector, motivation levels are much higher in all areas of job satisfaction (except pay) and is linked to the missions that are performed. Within the U.S. federal workforce, U.S. OPM (2015) noted over 90% of those surveyed found the work of their organization is important and should be supported. Lavigna (2014) noted most federal employees have a critical connection to the work and mission of their agencies. When agencies work towards a strong sense of shared purpose (Hitch, 2012) and employees' values are aligned with the organization (Wright et al., 2012) there is generally increased motivation for the organization to perform well at its core missions. Organizational leaders can negatively affect to organizational commitment (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013) by focusing on shared values between the organizational leaders and employee coworkers (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

The unambiguous consensus among interviewees is a strong desire for their agency within the DON to perform well based on the importance of supporting military forces worldwide. All respondents stressed regardless of leadership, resources, or personal training, they all maintained intrinsic motivation to see the agency perform well. Multiple participants noted a connection between their work and the support to Navy and Marine operating forces and others specifically stressed the criticality of the missions performed. For example, one interviewee stated, "I think the Department of Navy has such a noble mission and being able to tap into that, from an inspiration perspective as a leader, is really, really the way to start to motivate folks." One employee stressed regardless of other factors affecting job satisfaction, a DON employee should bring the motivation with him/her in order to support getting ships to sea.

Numerous participants stressed the idea, regardless if they or others have received poor leadership from supervisors, that dedication to the DON mission can overcome lack of servant or transformational leadership or other poor leadership techniques.

The literature suggested organizations in general can benefit from linking employee motivation and values to that of the company and its leaders. The literature further indicated public agencies generally have a workforce that sees the mission as important and noble, and is motivated to see the organization succeed at its mission. This factor addresses other shortcomings that often affect satisfaction and workplace commitment, such as resource shortfalls, pay, and lack of communication. The respondents to this study are aligned with the idea while there are many areas of improvement available for agency leaders in overseeing teams of employees and in improving overall satisfaction of its members, it is the core mission being conducted that brings these employees back day in and day out.

Conclusions that Address Research Questions

The thematic approach developed during data analysis provided a list of themes that address the specific questions asked in order to execute this study. The themes relate back to DON employees' personal perspective on job satisfaction and what makes them satisfied in their positions. The themes also relate to these employees' view of leadership capability within the agency. Lastly, the approach documented the views these employees hold with respect to organizational leadership and work satisfaction across the agency. The interview questions, responses, and analysis supported answering the research questions.

How Would DON Employees Describe Job Satisfaction

The most important aspect of job satisfaction to emerge during data analysis and from the themes is the motivation to see the organization succeed, addressed in Theme 6. While these

employees noted numerous areas in which organizational shortcomings potentially or actually negatively impact job satisfaction, each was adamant this overarching dedication to the mission kept job satisfaction and personal motivation at high levels. While dedication to the organization is certainly key, participants did also discuss (as noted in Theme 5) that resources and information flow are challenges in the DON that do negatively affect job satisfaction. Many expressed frustration with a lack of strategic objectives tied to operational goals for subordinate leaders, thus enabling concrete action and a clear path forward. Others noted this lack of agency direction and by extension the lack of resources supporting goal achievement certainly did cause challenges in performance. Lastly, each employee stressed the importance of professional development (Theme 4), yet results were mixed in terms of support organizational leaders demonstrated for workforce training and skill development. In summation, the employees interviewed stressed while Themes 4 and 5 (training and resources) create challenges and can make it difficult at times to remain motivated. The overarching mission and dedication to the service allows these shortcomings to be set aside.

DON Employee Perception of Leadership

Theme 1 stresses the participants' feel leadership skills have a direct impact on job satisfaction within the DON. While a number of interviewees had overall positive experiences with leadership, they did view negative traits within other work units. Two employees had similar experiences: they had very positive leaders, for a period of time, who maintained high morale and improved workforce motivation. Yet, these leaders were replaced and the incoming supervisors maintained more toxic environment that negatively affected the employees' experiences. Taken as a whole, the group of participants agreed servant leadership and transformational leadership (Theme 2) had significantly positive impacts on overall satisfaction

levels for employees. While leaders definitely need to display certain traits and transactions are a requirement of any manager, those who are able to utilize employee-centered strategies appear to be the most effective. These respondents displayed breadth in their perceptions of leadership, which is logical given the years of service and sub-agencies the participants represent. Yet, all have had positive experiences represented in their view of servant and transformational leadership and all have had negative experiences (at least witnessed negative experiences) contributing to Theme 2, an inconsistency in DON leadership in general.

The Relationship Between Leadership and Job Satisfaction

While the overriding idea expressed by participants was DON employees should have intrinsic motivation based on the importance of the mission (Theme 6), it is clear, at least according to this sample, that leadership style and effectiveness is critical to improving or impairing job satisfaction. Many positive examples of this discussed by participants included personal involvement with skills development and training, linking employee skill to the accomplishment of important missions, and use of transformational leadership to truly accomplish significant goals. Yet, negative examples also surfaced damaging job satisfaction in which employees experienced toxic and self-centered leaders, obstruction in finding training, or unclear goals leading to organizational confusion.

Summary of Presentation of Findings

The themes developed while reviewing literature and once data analysis was complete, support answering the research questions and documenting the experiences of this set of DON employees. Based on their lived experiences, these employees feel leadership is critical to DON employee satisfaction and the best way to improve workplace motivation is through an employee-centered approach such as servant or transformational leadership.

While there were no themes or trends which did not directly relate to the research questions, several interviewees showed perspectives that were interesting. As an example, one respondent offered he felt for a short period of time his professional skills were recognized and his input was valued, “in hindsight, I would have to be employed at a civilian pay grade which carries enough weight ... to influence the trajectory of discussions.” Another respondent discussed the idea he had the resources to perform basic functions, although the resources were not available to be truly innovative and have a more lasting impact on the organization. Both of these comments stressed to the researcher that, at least in specific cases, individuals felt some level of increased resources, whether it was position, funding, or possibly a technical solution that would assist them in not simply accomplishing their job requirements, but to be truly transformational.

The majority of the viewpoints noted during data collection as well as the codes and themes developed during data analysis were in line with the concepts brought forward during a thorough review of the literature. Individuals discussed varied leadership experiences they themselves had over their careers with the DON, yet all agreed on the importance of effective leadership and the idea transformational or servant-styled leadership can be the most effective (Kellis & Ran, 2013). The specific experiences and skills noted by supervisors of these employees aligned well with the concepts suggested by the literature (e.g., namely in order to enjoy one’s job, their supervisor should support quality communication, support personal growth, and value the employee contribution). There were no themes generated that disagreed with the literature, however, one respondent discussed the idea if a senior leader demonstrates transformational or servant-style leadership, then it is probably important for the leader’s second-

in-line to have a more transactional approach to ensure basic administrative requirements are being met (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Jacobson, 2011).

The themes developed during data analysis included the significance of leadership on job satisfaction, the importance of transformational or servant leadership, the observed inconsistency of DON civilian leadership, the importance of skills development, resources and information, and individuals' motivation to see their organization succeed. These themes supported key concepts developed from the literature and demonstrate important aspects of serving with a governmental agency, especially one that supports men and women in harm's way. However, given common experiences with DON leadership, these employees have witnessed not all supervisors employ the most effective leadership techniques. All considered professional development and resources to be important both to performing effectively and maintaining motivation, yet not all employees felt these areas were consistently strengths. Lastly, regardless of leadership, resources, or training, these employees felt it was important to maintain dedication to the mission based on the importance of supporting the men and women of the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps.

Application to Professional Practice

As discussed in Section 1, this study focused on the downward trend of job satisfaction for DON civilians between 2011 and 2015 saw a decrease from 67% to 61% (U.S. OPM, 2015). In attempting to address this downward trend and to identify potential remedies, the researcher focused on the role of leadership theory on satisfaction and how a sample of employees would view their personal experiences both with DON leadership and job satisfaction. The specific research questions addressed how DON employees describe job satisfaction, their perception of

leadership, and DON employees' perception of the relationship between their supervisors' leadership style and their own job satisfaction.

The literature strongly suggested that improved job satisfaction is a predictor of employee retention and organizational performance (Pitts et al., 2011; Leider et al., 2016; Yi-Feng, 2016; Bakotica, 2016). Further, numerous authors also noted improved leadership skills, especially those skills associated with transformational or servant leadership, generally improved employee satisfaction with both the supervisor, the organization, and the work itself (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Dabke, 2016; Jacobson, 2011; Kellis & Ran, 2013). The literature on both leadership theory and job satisfaction relates these concepts in ways directly applicable to organizational practitioners.

The results of this study and the developed themes are clearly relevant to improved business and leadership practice within any governmental agency. As noted by Kellis and Ran (2013), public agencies perform important work on behalf of the citizenry, therefore, improving both the job satisfaction, and by extension, the employee and agency performance is an organizational imperative. Organizational leadership should ensure they understand the styles that best motivate their employees and integrate those theories into both training regimes and daily performance. Because one of the developed themes of this work includes the idea leadership in the DON is inconsistent, should be troubling to DON leaders and coupled with Van Velsor et al. (2016), should take note that inconsistent team leadership is an important trend. DON leaders at any level have the ability to ensure training and resources are available and their leadership style develops a highly engaged and professional team. Practitioners within the DON should find all themes developed in this study are directly applicable to their ability to effectively lead and in support of improved satisfaction and performance of their employees and by

extension their overall departments and larger organizations. DON leaders should recognize at the outset that DON employees, in general, are motivated to see the organization succeed and will have a tendency to work through friction points including leadership concerns, skills development, and resource challenges. However, DON leaders should take note of all noted themes and not fall back on an over reliance on intrinsic factors for they will undoubtedly fail to find the very best in their employees.

While the study did not ask biblically based questions, though one participant clearly relied on his faith to endure poor leadership, many of the responses can be categorized in Biblical terms or associated with the Biblical Integration section. To begin, this author often turns to the story of Nehemiah (Neh, NKJV) for leadership discussions. In addressing the task of rebuilding Jerusalem's wall, Nehemiah was very much an effective and transformational leader. He prayed first to find God's will, he engaged all stakeholders and concerned citizens, and he organized properly for the task. The task was of critical importance to the citizens. He ensured his teams were informed and had the right resources for the job. In short, Nehemiah exhibited virtually all the important traits noted by the participants in his study and was able to rebuild the wall in record time.

Yet, Nehemiah is not the most important servant leader in the Bible. Jesus noted in Matthew (NKJV) that on his way to Jerusalem many had missed important aspects of his teachings and should not be preoccupied with status and should put others first. On the night of the Crucifixion, Jesus said in John (13: 12-15 NKJV), "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for I am. For I have given you an example,

that ye should do as I have done to you. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”

While Romans (13 1-2 NKJV) indicates leaders are put in place by God, we should not forget Christians also will be called to attest for their actions. Therefore, as much as the participants of this study have articulated, one should be obedient to his/her supervisor, but also be willing to address the areas that need improvement in support of the overall organization and the objectives.

Recommendations for Action

In order to address the downward trend of job satisfaction within the DON civilian workforce, the researcher focused on the role of leadership theory on satisfaction and how a sample of employees would view their personal experiences with DON leadership and job satisfaction. The meaning of the findings and their application to professional practice supports the ability of government supervisors to appropriately develop their agency’s leadership skills in order to take full advantage of what appears to be a motivated and professional workforce. Leadership styles that go beyond simple transactions or focus on one’s own genetic traits are more likely to improve job satisfaction. The results of this study, and others like it, can be directly useful to and significantly impact current and future DON civilian supervisors in their efforts to both lead departments and agencies and to maintain job satisfaction at the highest level possible. The following initiatives are relevant:

1. Leadership Development Programs: Within the DOD and DON, multiple leadership development programs exist, however, none of them appears to emphasize transformational leadership. The primary focus areas include leading change, leading people, results-driven, business acumen, building coalitions, and enterprise-wide

perspective (US DCPAS, 2017). It is noted that under the leading people category, developing others and leading people are sub-categories. These categories of training are certainly appropriate, especially given that Van Velsor et al. (2016) found government supervisors had problems with team leadership. However, given the observations of this study's participants, especially if other studies have similar results, the DON could benefit from expanding the leader training offerings. It should be noted most of these programs are voluntary and selective, meaning the majority of supervisors do not attend.

- a. Action Step: While leadership development programs exist within numerous applicable agencies including OPM, the DON, and the DOD, a critical action step that can result from this study would include interacting directly with an organization such as the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (US DCPAS, 2017). DCPAS provides personnel policies and human resource solutions for the DOD, including an emphasis on recruitment and retention, and education, training and leadership development. By engaging DCPAS with a formal recommendation to include a greater emphasis on job satisfaction within leader development programs, DOD may be in a better position to address the downward trend within the DON.
2. The DON should consider broader use of 360 degree or multi source assessments (MSA). While these are used within certain senior leadership development programs or while attending specific service level schools, their use is not broad. Any method that would provide supervisors the ability to better understand servant or transformational leadership, the role resources and information play, and the dedication level of their subordinates would contribute significantly to addressing the leadership – job satisfaction

nexus. Ensuring supervisors better understand their leadership style is a crucial first step to affecting job satisfaction in a general sense. While supervisors may feel they convey a certain style, an MSA might allow the supervisor to realize the view of his/her own style is inaccurate or at least misconceived. This aspect was noted by one interview participant who indicated many supervisors who are more senior do not fully understand the performance of their subordinate supervisors due to the separation of workspace and responsibilities. An MSA would then allow the supervisor to see this perspective from both peers and subordinates.

- a. Action Step: DCPAS, the same DOD organization that oversees leadership development, is also in the process of instituting an updated employee evaluation system (US DCPAS, 2017). As of this writing, it is likely too late to formally submit a suggestion to include MSA, a key action step is to draft articles and letters suggesting an MSA approach for the DON.

These recommendations are potentially useful in improving both the leadership capabilities of DON supervisors as well as the motivation and dedication of DON employees. These recommendations would likely influence both the supervisors and the employees, and just as importantly, the departments, divisions and branches these civilian employees support. By improving leadership and by extension improving job satisfaction, agencies struggling with funding and personnel cuts may see improvements in performance. The results of this study can be shared with the DON Personnel Command. This study, combined with the results of the yearly U.S. OPM study and other studies, can contribute to overall agency performance and support provided to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Recommendations for Further Study

The primary limitations of this study were sample size, limited number of DON departments represented, and short timeframe for data collection. The primary strength was the ability of the researcher to truly understand the participants' views and experiences. The following recommendations are provided for future researchers:

1. Conduct a qualitative narrative study over a longer period to fully understand the experiences of a smaller number of DON employees as they traverse professional experiences, training, and other on the job challenges.
2. One question that was not addressed during this study was military veteran status. Given a comparison of job satisfaction and leadership development with that of the DON civilian workforce, would veteran DON employees rate DON leadership in a better light or more harshly?
3. Lastly, researchers should review the link between engagement and job satisfaction within the federal workforce. Lavigna (2104) indicated a high engagement workforce is one wherein the employees have a connection to the work, organization, and mission and that high engagement agencies outperform others by 22%. Given the DON interviews conducted for this study, it appears the participants are very connected to their organization.

This study aimed to identify linkages between leadership and job satisfaction, in hopes future studies can capitalize on the results and recommendations.

Reflections

This study was personally rewarding for a number of reasons. To begin, this author has been an active duty member in a forward deployed location receiving direct support from DON

civilians (often in the form of expedited logistics and supply management). Secondly, the researcher is currently a DON civilian supervisor. As a DON civilian employee, the researcher notices many of the same observations the participants commented on. Third, this researcher has been a life-long student of leadership (e.g., Boy Scouts, student council, and teaching at the college level) and found the keen observation and passion demonstrated by the participants to be both inspiring and impressive.

Given this author's background, there is certainly a potential for research bias, though with no intention of influencing the results. In order to avoid experimenter bias, the researcher ensured the conceptual framework drew upon a significant number of studies from broad range of sources. In addition, the researcher drew participants from a broad range of departments and geographic locations within the DON. (There was no overlap in departments and participants were drawn from four different states and roughly eight cities.) Lastly, the interview questionnaire was developed strictly from concepts in literature and the researcher only asked questions from approved script.

While the work was frustratingly challenging, the author learned a significant amount concerning academic research, leadership, and the functioning of government agencies. The researcher also found he learned a great deal from the interview participants concerning various roles within the DON and was also inspired by their steadfast dedication to supporting today's Navy. The researcher further reinforced his biblical understanding of servant leadership and the importance of understanding God's will when taking on complicated, yet important tasks. Nehemiah's story is a strong example both in his efforts to understand God's will and in generating support for what probably seemed an overwhelming task. Blackaby and Blackaby (2001) informed readers that leaders should pray before beginning a project because prayer is an

essential leadership activity, it assists the leader in understanding God's wisdom and power, and it reduces stress on the leader, which all leaders and authors can benefit from. There is no doubt this researcher has benefited academically, professionally, and spiritually from the experience.

Summary and Study Conclusions

This study focused on the downward trend of job satisfaction for the Department of the Navy noted in a 2015 U.S. OPM study with an eye towards the nexus between leadership skills and job satisfaction. The researcher conducted a series of interviews, and during data analysis developed several themes to support the findings. The findings suggest leadership is critical to employees maintaining high job satisfaction, and transformational and servant leadership styles are more effective than transactional styles. The participants also noted workforce attributes such as information flow, resources, and skills development are also factors in employees of the DON maintaining high levels of motivation. That said, a key aspect of the study found each of these employees was dedicated to the DON mission regardless of their supervisor's leadership skills or other extrinsic factors. They might struggle with day-to-day motivation, but each participant indicated they kept their focus on the mission.

The study was conducted using participants from a broad swath of DON departments, all of whom had numerous years of experience with DON civilian supervisors. Interviews were structured based on concepts developed from the literature on job satisfaction and leadership theory. Interviews were semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed for the purposes of data analysis and coding.

The leadership literature suggested, especially for government employees, transformational-type leadership would serve DON employees better than a traditional trait or transactional approach. The results indicated participants strongly felt leadership was critical to

their personal motivation on the job and while many had experiences with high quality DON leaders, all had either experienced or witnessed lower quality leaders. This led to the theme there is likely a high level of inconsistency between DON supervisors. Further, while these participants seemed motivated to overcome challenges with resources, training, and information, they did indicate at times these extrinsic factors can influence motivation. Therefore, leadership inconsistency and external factors may be contributors to the DON decline in job satisfaction. In order to address the gap between the literature and application of leadership skills with DON supervisors, and further address the declining job satisfaction, DON leaders should embrace more all-encompassing leadership styles and ensure these styles are reflected in formal training program.

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Appendix A: Approved Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/7/2017 to 6/7/2018 Protocol # 2888.060717

CONSENT FORM

The Impact of Leadership on Job Satisfaction within the Department of the Navy

Liberty University

School of Business

You are invited to participate in a research study addressing the impact of leadership on job satisfaction within the Department of the Navy (DoN). You were selected as a possible participant because you are a DoN civilian supervisor, or you are a current or former DoN civilian employee, or an active duty member, and you experienced the supervisory leadership of DoN civilian leaders. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Richard Grimm, a doctoral candidate in the School of Business at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of the research is to study job satisfaction experienced by the Department of Navy civilian workforce with an examination of the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. You will be asked to answer questions as part of a preliminary survey. I think this will take you 5-10 minutes.
2. You will also be asked to participate in a recorded interview, which will take no more than 60 minutes.

3. If you were or are currently a DON supervisor, you will only be asked to participate in a recorded interview, which will take no more than 20 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Participation: The study involves no more than minimal risk as this study will be used for educational purposes. The only identifiable risk is a compromise of personally identifiable information. This risk is mitigated through an emphasis on confidentiality, secure storage of interview transcripts, and physical control of the data by the researcher.

It is reasonable to expect that agency supervisors will benefit from improved understanding of leadership and job satisfaction. However, I can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information I find in this study. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant and will use pseudonyms in order to discuss results. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

1. All responses submitted in the pre-survey instrument will remain confidential..
2. All data collected during this study will be maintained in a password-protected file controlled by the researcher and destroyed after the federally required three-year retention period.
3. Interviews will be done in a confidential location.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. If, during the interview, you wish to withdraw please simply inform the researcher and the interview will be concluded immediately.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Richard Grimm. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 207-479-5537 or rrgrimm@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Edward Moore, Liberty University School of Business, at (434) 592-4812 or at emmoore3@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu. Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Investigator Date

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. Were / are you encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things?
2. Did / do you have the tools and resources to do your job well?
3. Did / does your organization keep employees informed about matters affecting employees?
4. Did / does your job make good use of your skills and abilities?
5. Please explain how your supervisor demonstrates / demonstrated a commitment to leadership and employee welfare.
6. Please explain your involvement in decisions that affect your work?
7. Please describe your experience with personal growth such as updating skills and learning different jobs.
8. Please describe examples of when management looked to you for suggestions and leadership.
9. Please describe the level of reward you received for the quality of your efforts.
10. Please describe how valued you feel / felt by your supervisor.
11. Do you feel employees are / were recognized as individuals?
12. How motivated are / were you to see your organization succeed?
13. How does the quality of leadership positively or negatively affect your desire to be employed by this organization?
14. How does the quality of leadership positively or negatively affect your ability to demonstrate initiative?
15. How does the quality of leadership positively or negatively affect your ability to do your job well?

16. How does the quality of leadership positively or negatively affect your personal and professional development?
17. How does the quality of leadership positively or negatively affect employee recognition?
18. Please describe your supervisor's ability to use "Servant Leadership."
19. Please describe your supervisor's ability to use "Transformational Leadership."
20. Please describe your supervisor's ability to use "Situational Leadership."
21. Please describe your supervisor's ability to use "Transactional Leadership."
22. Please describe your supervisor's ability to use "Trait Leadership."
23. Describe those traits you have witnessed in a supervisor that have improved specific job satisfaction indices listed above or your overall job satisfaction.
24. Describe those traits you have witnessed in a supervisor that have negatively affected specific job satisfaction indices listed above or your overall job satisfaction.
25. How would you describe job satisfaction as a member of the DON workforce?
26. What is your perception of leadership within the DON civilian workforce?
27. How do you see the relationship between supervisor leadership and employee job satisfaction?
28. What suggestions do you have for improving DON leadership and / or job satisfaction (Smith, 2013)?

Appendix C: Supervisor Interview Guide

1. How would you describe job satisfaction as a supervisor within the DON workforce?
2. What is your perception of leadership as a supervisor within the DON civilian workforce?
3. How do you see the relationship between supervisor leadership and employee job satisfaction?
4. What suggestions do you have for improving DON leadership and / or job satisfaction?
5. Discuss your opinions regarding leadership style:
 - a. Servant Leadership
 - b. Transformational Leadership
 - c. Situational Leadership
 - d. Transactional Leadership
 - e. Trait Leadership

Appendix D: Recruitment Materials

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

The Impact of Leadership on Job Satisfaction within the Department of the Navy
Liberty University
School of Business

Letter

Dear Mr. / Mrs _____:

My name is Richard Grimm and I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University where I am studying Business Administration with a focus on Leadership Theory.

I am sending this letter to explain why I would like you to participate in my doctoral research study. I believe you fall into a category of employees who have worked with civilian supervisors within the Department of the Navy. As such, you would be in a position to comment on the impact of leadership skills on job satisfaction.

With your permission, I will ask you to participate in an interview that will last about 1 hour. We can conduct the interview via any means your are comfortable with. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and is not associated with the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy, and will not affect you or your rights in any way. You may quit this study at any time.

There are minimal risks involved; this study will be used for educational purposes only, as I seek to gain a better understanding of DON leadership and job satisfaction.

To protect your confidentiality, your name will not appear on the interview, I will only use data without including your name. The results will not be shared with anyone other than myself and my Professor Dr. Moore of Liberty University. If you have any questions or if you would like to receive a final copy of this research study after completion, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]

If you have any questions about this research, please call me or Dr. Moore, my research supervisor for this project or the School of Business at [REDACTED]

Sincerely
Richard Grimm

Appendix D: Recruitment Materials

Flyer

JOB SATISFACTION STUDY

You are invited to participate in a study evaluating the effects of leadership style on job satisfaction, conducted by Richard Grimm (Doctoral Candidate) at Liberty University School of Business. The study involves one online survey and a follow 60-minute interview. If you are a current or former Department of the Navy (DoN) civilian employee OR have been an active duty service member and been assigned a DoN civilian supervisor and would like more information about participating, contact Richard Grimm at [REDACTED]