AN ANALYSIS OF PROACTIVE PERSONALITY IN U.S. AIR FORCE

ACADEMY CADETS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

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An Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed
Methods Study

Dissertation directed by Associate Professor Sylvia Martinez

This mixed methods study examined the proactive personalities of cadets at the
U.S. Air Force Academy. Survey responses from first- and third-year cadets were
analyzed to examine the influence of a cadet's proactive personality on several factors, to
include perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, affective
commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, and intention to quit. Findings indicated
that cadets' proactive personalities significantly predicted their levels of perceived
organizational support, the quality of their leader-member exchanges, their emotional
commitment to the Academy, their job satisfaction, and their job performance as
measured by their Military Performance Average. In addition, social desirability
moderated the relationship between the cadets' proactive personalities and their intention
to quit. Furthermore, experiences and perspectives of cadets were captured using open-
ended survey questions which addressed how cadets define proactivity, how cadets
engage in proactive behavior, how naturally proactive cadets are perceived, how being
proactive is important to leader development, and how being proactive benefitted the
cadets. The collective responses contributed to the overall essence of what it means to be
proactive at the Academy from the perspectives of cadets. Overall, findings supported the
notion that encouraging cadets to be proactive and helping them gain access to being
proactive may contribute to their leadership development. As such, the proactive

personality construct should be considered as part of the CCLD's (2011) Conceptual

Framework for Developing Leaders of Character, specifically within the area of cadets

owning their development, the first step in the deliberate process of leader development

at the Academy.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Dan, and our three sons, Connor, Nathaniel, and Noah, for their

unwavering support of my military career and educational endeavors.

To the faculty and staff at the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Center for Character and

Leadership Development for their dedication and commitment to developing leaders of

character.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Military service academies are charged with developing cadets into military officers and preparing them for a profession as military leaders. The process of developing young men and women into military leaders can be a deliberate, yet vague process. Although there are many factors that potentially contribute to the process, no standard checklist exists for developing military leaders. Within the United States Air Force, there are three accession sources for officers: Officer Training School, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the United States Air Force Academy (herein referred to as USAFA or the Academy); collectively, they are responsible for executing a commissioning education program, through which cadets are provided "the basic and essential knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to ensure success for all new Air Force officers upon entry to commissioned service" (USAF, 2012, p. 2). The purpose of officer commissioning education and training is to "develop and produce a leader of character with a warrior ethos and expeditionary mindset who is a culturally aware, motivated professional dedicated to serve the nation and prepared to lead in the 21st century" (USAF, 2012, p. 2). The USAFA Strategic Plan (2010) defines a *leader of character* as "one who has internalized the Air Force's Core Values, lives by a high moral code, treats others with mutual respect and demonstrates a strong sense of ethics" (p. 20).

Specifically, the USAFA mission is "to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force in

service to our Nation." (USAFA, 2010, p. 2). The Academy offers a myriad of academic, athletic, aviation, and military training and education programs; these programs contribute to the overall 4-year cadet experience, creating a unique environment (USAFA, 2014a). The 4-year cadet experience includes a challenging curriculum including rigorous academic, military, and physical requirements throughout the academic year and during summer periods. In an article describing the "essence" of the Academy, one of the key components, developing character and leadership, is explained:

> The Academy's unique opportunities allow cadets to practice leadership theory and learn from their experiences. Daily leadership challenges and opportunities abound to learn, apply and refine leadership principles. The intentional and integrative nature of this officer development catalyzed by the Center for Character and Leadership Development, but implemented throughout, is pervasive at USAFA and not available anywhere else. (USAFA, 2014a, p. 1)

Overall, the intensive 4-year experience at the Academy focuses on the character and leadership development of cadets as future Air Force leaders. Considering the unique environment at the Academy in which cadets are developed into future Air Force employees, having a *proactive personality* and engaging in proactive behavior may contribute in a positive manner to the overall leadership development of Academy cadets.

Over the past two decades, interest in exploring employee proactivity has blossomed. With regard to the influence proactive personality may have, Fuller and Marler (2009) shared, "A growing body of literature suggests that proactive personality is not only related to success at work, but also to success across one's working life" (p. 330). Having a proactive personality and engaging in proactive behavior has been

associated with several positive behaviors and outcomes, to include transformational leadership and charismatic leadership (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant & Bateman, 2000; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012).

Context

The context for this study includes an academic environment at a military service academy. Specifically, the Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is one of five federal military service academies. Academy cadets earn a Bachelor of Science degree and a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force upon graduation. The academic campus is only one small part of the entire Academy installation; the cadet area includes many of the same resources found at a civilian institution: dormitories, academic buildings, staff offices, a library, a dining facility, and medical facilities. There are approximately 1,000 cadets in each of the four year groups at the Academy for a total population of approximately 4,000 cadets. The cadet wing is organized into four cadets groups, with ten cadet squadrons in each cadet group, totaling forty cadet squadrons. Collectively, more than 25,000 military and civilian personnel work at the Academy in support of the cadets (USAFA, 2009).

Admission standards for the Academy are high; to be offered a position in the cadet wing, cadets have previously performed well academically. The average GPA for cadets admitted to the class of 2018 was 3.85 (out of 4.0), and their average SAT scores were 663 in math and 633 in verbal. In addition, many have served in leadership positions or been members of organizations such as the National Honor Society (69%), band or orchestra (21%), boy or girl scouts (23%), and athletics (82%). Ten percent of the class of 2018 served as their class president in high school and 11% were the

valedictorian or salutatorian for their high school class (USAFA, 2014b). The selection process is highly competitive – the class of 2018 had 9,082 applicants for 1,200 spots. In addition, there are international cadets from countries around the world; the class of 2018 includes 14 cadets from 12 different countries: Bulgaria, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Moldova, Pakistan, Romania, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

Furthermore, there is a blended academic and working context for Academy cadets. Cadets are considered members of the military while they attend the Academy; they are paid a monthly salary equivalent to junior enlisted members. Cadets fulfill requirements in addition to taking academic classes, such as aviation and athletic programs; they also attend training programs during the summer months. Cadets are evaluated in the areas of academic performance, military performance, and athletic performance. Traditional GPAs are used as a measure of academic performance, while military performance appraisals (MPA) reflect cadet performance for military training. The MPA is calculated using a combination of subjective and objective inputs from a cadet's permanent party and cadet chains-of-command, to include academic instructors, permanent party supervisors, and team coaches (USAFA, 2013).

As an induction into the military environment, first-year cadets have demands in addition to their academic load, to include military training and physical conditioning requirements. Prior to beginning their first semester of academic classes, new cadets attend a 6-week Basic Cadet Training program during the summer. In addition to attending academic classes during the week, all cadets attend mandatory breakfast and lunch formations and participate in mandatory athletic activities (i.e., intercollegiate or

intramural sports). Military duties are also performed during some weekends (i.e., attending training sessions, marching in parades, and performing inspections).

When cadets begin their third year at the Academy, they are considered "committed" to serving in the Air Force after graduation. If something were to happen that caused a cadet in his or her third or fourth year to leave the Academy, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the cadet would be required to pay the government back for the money invested in their education by either serving for a period of time as an enlisted member or by paying a monetary sum.

Graduates of the Academy have completed at least 131 credit hours in one of 27 academic majors (USAFA, 2014c). A complete list of academic majors available to cadets is listed in Figure 1. After graduation, new lieutenants are required to serve at least 5 years on active duty; however, pilots have to serve at least 10 years due to the total time and cost of a pilot's training. Traditionally, around half of each graduating class attends pilot training, while the other half are selected to serve in various support or operational career fields. Overall, the Academy offers cadets a unique 4-year experience that includes extensive academic, military, and physical requirements designed to prepare them for a career as military officers and leaders. A complete list of officer Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) is included in Table 1.

Aeronautical Engineering	Geospatial Science
Astronautical Engineering	History
Behavioral Sciences	Legal Studies
Biology	Management
Chemistry	Mathematics
Civil Engineering	Mechanical Engineering
Computer and Network Security	Meteorology
Computer Engineering	Military & Strategic Studies
Computer Science	Operations Research
Economics	Philosophy
Electrical Engineering	Physics
English	Political Science
Foreign Area Studies	Systems Engineering
General Studies	

Figure 1. USAFA's academic majors (USAFA, 2014c).

Table 1

Officer Air Force Specialty Codes

AFSC	Description	AFSC	Description
1XXX	**OPERATIONS**	**4XXX**	**MEDICAL**
11XX	Pilot	41AX	Health Services
12XX	Combat Systems (Navigator)	42XX	Biomedical Clinicians
13XX	Space, Nuclear and Missile,	43XX	Biomedical Specialists
	and Command & Control	44XX	Physician
14XX	Intelligence	45XX	Surgery
15XX	Weather	46XX	Nurse
16XX	Operations Support	47XX	Dental
17XX	Cyber Operations	48XX	Aerospace Medicine
18XX	Remotely Piloted Aircraft	**5XXX**	**PROFESSIONAL**
2XXX	**LOGISTICS**	51JX	Judge Advocate
21XX	Logistics (Aircraft	52XX	Chaplain
	Maintenance, Munitions	**6XXX**	**ACQUISITION &**
	& Missile Maintenance,		**FINANCIAL**
	Logistics Readiness)		**MANAGEMENT**
3XXX	**SUPPORT**	61XX	Scientific / Research
31PX	Security Forces	62XX	Developmental Engineering
32EX	Civil Engineer	63XX	Acquisition
35XX	Public Affairs	64PX	Contracting
38XX	Personnel / Force Support	65XX	Finance
		7XXX	**SPECIAL**
			INVESTIGATIONS
		71SX	Special Investigations

Note. Source: USAF, 2013.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to understand the influence of proactive personality in cadets and to describe the construct as it occurs for Academy cadets. A convergent parallel mixed methods design is used; it is a type of design in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, survey data will be analyzed to describe and explore cadets' proactive personalities and the influence of proactive personality on several quantitative variables related to cadets' Academy experiences (i.e., *perceived organizational support*, *leader-member exchange*, *affective commitment*, *job satisfaction*, *job performance*, and *intention to quit*). Qualitatively, this phenomenological study describes the common meaning of being proactive through the as-lived experiences of cadets and to document the universal essence of proactivity at the Academy (Creswell, 2013). Open-ended survey questions explored the phenomenon of proactivity as it occurs for first- and third-year cadets. Thus, the reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data is to converge the two forms of data to bring greater insight than would be obtained by either type of data separately (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Problem Statement

We know little about the proactive personality of military academy cadets. Additional insight into the proactive behavior or proactive disposition of cadets may help illuminate how a proactive personality influences their 4-year Academy experience and contributes to their overall leadership development. USAFA's mission is to develop men and women into leaders of character; encouraging and teaching proactive behavior may

be an important step in the leadership development process. Proactive disposition has not yet been measured in service academy cadets. Thus, this study helps to describe the construct of proactive personality within a sample of cadets and establish a baseline for proactive personality at USAFA.

Research Significance

This study will lay the foundation for exploring proactive personality within a specific context that has not yet been examined in the literature: the proactive personality of USAFA cadets. This study will create a baseline for examining proactivity in Academy cadets; describing how proactive behavior occurs for cadets and how having a proactive personality potentially influences a variety of variables (i.e., perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and intention to quit) will inform the Academy leadership and future decisions regarding the leadership development of the cadets. Results will inform USAFA senior leaders regarding how focusing on proactive personalities within the cadets could contribute to their leader development. Furthermore, results may inform additional military communities, such as other military academies, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, or Officer Training School, in which this focus may be useful.

Findings from this study will benefit USAFA in its continuing progress to enhance the leadership development of cadets. In addition, results will benefit USAFA cadets and faculty/staff as a whole, as findings may influence how the Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) considers proactive personality as a construct within their Conceptual Framework for Development Leaders of Character (CCLD, 2011).

Research Questions

This study will use the CCLD's Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character and proactive personality theory as theoretical lenses through which to view the results. Specifically, this study will address the following five research questions:

1. How does a cadet's proactive personality influence levels of perceived organizational support, the quality of the cadet's leader-member exchanges, and the cadet's affective commitment to the Academy?

2. How does a cadet's proactive personality influence job performance, job satisfaction, and the cadet's intention to quit the Air Force?

3. Is there a difference between the proactive personalities of first-year and third-year cadets?

4. How do cadets define being proactive? What does proactive behavior look like to cadets?

5. From the cadets' perspective, how does being proactive influence cadet performance and leadership development?

Answers will inform future programmatic decisions, as well as support and strengthen the theoretical foundation for the process of developing cadets into leaders of character for the U.S. Air Force. Specifically, results will help answer how the construct of proactive personality may fit into the CCLD's Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character. In addition, this study addresses the collective results that emerged when comparing the survey outcomes and the qualitative data.

Although the qualitative aspect of this study aims to capture information from cadets regarding their perceptions and experiences with proactive personality and

proactive behavior, the quantitative aspect of the study addresses the potential influence of proactive personality on several variables, to include perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and intention to quit. A conceptual map is presented in Figure 2.

RATIONALE: Develop Leaders of Character

OUTCOMES:

Job Performance (GPA/MPA)

Job Satisfaction

Affective Commitment

Intention to Quit

CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS:
- Military & Academic Environment
- Academic Demands
- Physical Demands
- Military Demands

Leader-Member Exchange

Proactive Personality

Perceived Organizational Support

What is Proactive Personality? "a dispositional construct that identifies differences among people in the extent to which they take action to influence their environments" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 103)

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986)

Proactive Personality Theory (Bateman & Crant, 1993)

USAFA Conceptual Framework: Developing Leaders of Character (CCLD, 2011)

Figure 2. Proposed conceptual model for the influence of proactive personality on perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, job performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and intention to quit in USAFA cadets.

Theoretical Framework

The construct of proactive personality is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), which states that "by arranging environmental contingencies, establishing specific goals, and producing consequences for their actions, people can be

taught to exercise control over their behavior" (Frayne & Latham, 1987, p. 387).

Proactive personality has been described as a stable disposition and defined as a person's

tendency to take action to influence his or her environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

This is consistent with the theme of interactionism in the fields of psychology and

organizational behavior, in which a person, his or her environment, and behavior

continuously interact and influence one another (Bandura, 1986).

In addition to Social Cognitive Theory and the proactive personality literature, the

CCLD's Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character (2011) provides

focus for this study. The overall vision of USAFA is to be the Air Force's premier

institution for developing leaders of character (CCLD, 2011). In support of this vision,

the CCLD published a conceptual framework for developing leaders of character in 2011.

Within that framework, a definition for what it means to be a leader of character, as well

as a conceptual map of how to develop a leader of character, was provided. Accordingly,

a "Leader of Character" is someone who "lives honorably by consistently practicing the

virtues embodied in the Air Force Core Values, lifts others to their best possible selves,

and elevates performance toward a common goal and noble purpose" (CCLD, 2011, p.

9). The construct of proactive personality may contribute to the overall development of

the cadets into leaders of character.

As depicted in Figure 3, the process of developing a cadet into a leader of

character comprises three parts: owning his or her development process toward a desired

identity (in this case, a leader of character), engaging in purposeful experiences, and

practicing habits of honorable thoughts and actions (CCLD, 2011). Engaging in proactive

behavior as a cadet may be beneficial in this overall leader development process.

Collectively, proactive personality theory (Bateman & Crant, 1993), and the CCLD's (2011) Conceptual Framework for Development Leaders of Character provide the foundation and focus for this study.
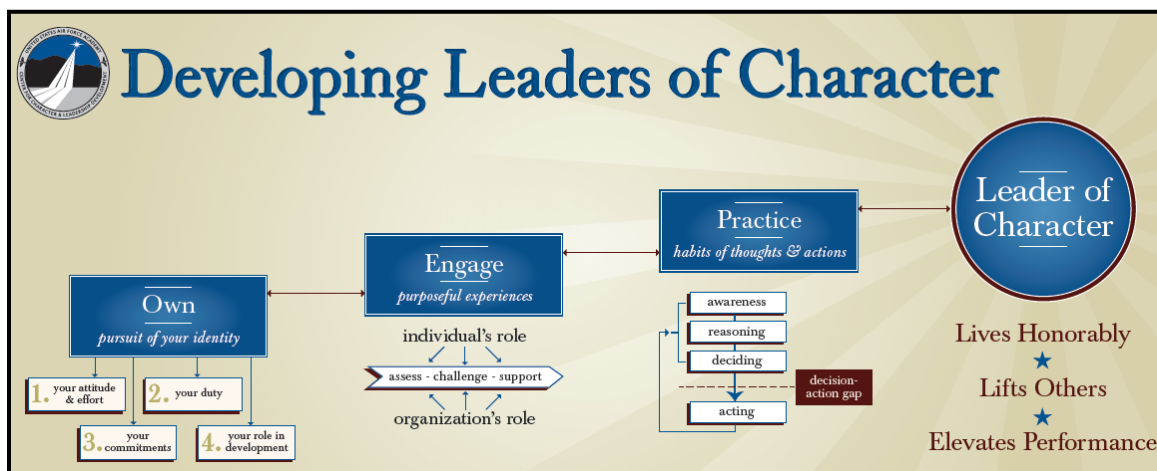
Figure 3. A conceptual framework for developing leaders of character at USAFA.

Definition of Terms

To answer the research questions, it is important to first define the terms included in the research questions and to distinguish between proactive personality and proactive behavior. The definitions from the literature are provided within the context of the Academy and the cadet environment.

Proactive Personality

In the literature, terms used to describe the tendency to be proactive include having a proactive personality or a proactive disposition. In 1993, Bateman and Crant described someone with a proactive personality as "the relatively stable tendency to effect environmental change" (p. 103). According to Bateman and Crant (1999),

Being proactive involves defining new problems, finding new solutions, and providing active leadership through an uncertain future. In its ultimate form,

proaction involves grand ambitions, breakthrough thinking, and the wherewithal to make even the impossible happen. It overhauls the past and makes the future. It creates new industries, changes the rules of competition, or changes the world. (p. 69)

In the context of this study, proactive personality indicates a cadet's tendency towards exhibiting proactive behaviors.

Proactive Behavior

A person with a proactive personality is likely to engage in proactive behavior, which includes specific actions that "directly alters environments" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 104). Proactive people engage in several proactive behaviors – they scan for change opportunities; set effective, change-oriented goals; anticipate and prevent problems; do different things, or do things differently; take action; persevere; and achieve results (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Academy cadets may or may not engage in proactive behavior, depending on the situations they experience.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

The concept of POS describes a person's "beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501). POS encompasses "employee's perceptions of the organization's attitude towards them" (Shore & Tetrick, 1991, p. 637). In the context of this study, POS is a measure of a cadet's perception regarding how supported he or she feels by the Academy as an organization.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

LMX is a form of sponsorship and reflects the quality of a relationship between a supervisor and subordinate (Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). Cadets interact with numerous individuals at the Academy who are senior to them, including other cadets and permanent party military members. The scope of the supervisor-subordinate relationship in this study will be limited to a cadet and his or her current Air Officer Commanding (AOC), the active duty military officer responsible for cadets within one cadet squadron.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment a person has to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984) or an employee's attitude toward the organization (Short & Tetrick, 1991). As described by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), "employees with a strong affective commitment remain with the organization because they want to" (p. 539). Within the context of this study, affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment a cadet has towards the Academy.

Job Performance

In the context of proactive personality, real estate agent job performance has been defined by the number of houses sold, number of listings obtained, and commissions earned (Crant, 1995). For this study, because of the blended student/employee context at the Academy for cadets, job performance is defined as a combination of academic and military performance, as reflected in the MPA and GPA.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents how happy or content a person is with his or her job. For this study, it refers to how satisfied cadets are with their jobs as cadets. Cadets will be

asked to consider their "job" to include all of the roles they hold as an Academy cadet, to include the role of student, military member, and athlete.

Intention to Quit

Based on the context of the cadet wing, intention to quit represents a cadet's propensity to leave the Air Force either while they are at the Academy or after their initial commitment is complete. This measure may be higher for first-year cadets based on the additional required training during a cadet's first year at the Academy and their lower tenure in the organization. The attrition rate for students between their first and second year at the Academy is 11%, which equates to losing approximately 100 cadets during the entire first year (US Department of Education, 2012). Attrition rates for subsequent classes are lower as cadets progress towards graduation.

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Dissertation Structure

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This introduction has presented the background and overall purpose for this study, as well as presented the research questions and defined key terms. The next chapter expands upon the construct of proactive personality and presents the history of research conducted since the introduction of the construct in 1993. In addition, chapter 2 identifies a gap in the research in the area of exploring proactive personality in a military context. Chapter 3 details the research design and methodology for this study. Results for the quantitative portion of the study are presented in chapter 4 and the qualitative results are presented in chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 discusses the implications of the findings, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The construct of proactive personality is relatively new and is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) and the concept of interactionism. This literature review provides an overview of this theory and includes a review of the proactive personality construct and several related concepts. Although a relatively new concept, the literature on proactive personality is broad in scope and has been addressed in many different fields of study. Proactive personality has been described as a personality trait, a disposition, and a process; it has been studied through the lens of several different theories, to include leadership, trait, and motivation theories. For the context of this study, the focus will remain primarily on proactive personality at the individual level.

The goal of this research is to examine how proactive personality influences a range of attitudes (i.e., perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit) and behavioral outcomes (i.e., job performance) for cadets attending a military service academy. Finally, a gap in the literature with regard to proactive personality being applied in a military context is identified. Specifically, there are no previous studies which have examined proactive personality in the context of a student population at a military service academy. Overall, a review of the relevant research supports the need for research on proactive personality as it potentially applies to leadership development in a military service academy context.

Social Cognitive Theory

The construct of proactive personality is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), which states "by arranging environmental contingencies, establishing specific goals, and producing consequences for their actions, people can be taught to exercise control over their behavior" (Frayne & Latham, 1987, p. 387). With regard to the definition of Social Cognitive Theory, "The social portion of the terminology acknowledges the social origins of much human thought and action; the cognitive portion recognizes the influential causal contribution of thorough processes to human motivation, affect, and action" (Bandura, 1986, p. xii). As a way to explain human behavior, Bandura (1986) stated: "In the social learning view, people are neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted by environmental stimuli. Rather, psychological functioning is explored in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction of person and environmental determinants" (pp. 11-12). Thus, behavior is a result of a person continually interacting with the environment.

Three processes within the interactionist approach are prominent: symbolic, vicarious, and self-regulatory. First, symbolic processes in the form of "images of a desirable future" allow a person to create courses of action designed toward reaching a goal (Bandura, 1986, p. 13). Second, vicarious processes allow learning to take place as a result of observing others' experiences; people can learn through observing the experience of others without having to experience the same situation firsthand. Observational learning occurs through modeling (Bandura, 1977, p. 23-24) and comprises four processes: attentional processes, retention processes, motor reproduction processes, and motivational processes. With regard to modeling, Bandura explained,

"Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p. 22). Third, and most relevant to this study, is the distinctive role that self-regulatory processes play in shaping a person's experiences. As such, "people are not simply reactors to external influences. They select, organize, and transform the stimuli that impinge upon them" (p. vii). Prior to Bandura (1977, 1986), Bowers (1973) explained that behaviors are dependent upon the person and the setting in which the person is in. Bowers (1973) summarized: "Interactionism argues that situations are as much a function of the person as the person's behavior is a function of the situation" (p. 327). The concept of proactive personality is consistent with interactionism.

Proactive Personality

In 1993, Bateman and Crant introduced the concept of proactive personality "as a dispositional construct that identifies differences among people in the extent to which they take action to influence their environments" (p. 103). Since then, the amount of research on the construct of proactive personality and how it influences individual behavior at work has grown (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Bateman and Crant (1993) approached proactivity as a relatively stable behavioral tendency to engage in proactive behavior. This is consistent with the theme of interactionism in the fields of psychology and organizational behavior, in which a person, his or her environment, and behavior continuously interact and influence one another (Bandura, 1986). Bateman & Crant (1999) summarized the concept of proactive personality:

Being proactive involves defining new problems, finding new solutions, and

providing active leadership through an uncertain future. In its ultimate form,

proaction involves grand ambitions, breakthrough thinking, and the wherewithal

to make even the impossible happen. It overhauls the past and makes the future. It

creates new industries, changes the rules of competition, or changes the world.

(p. 69)

Early on, Bateman and Crant demonstrated that having a proactive personality

was positively associated with "extracurricular and civic activities aimed at bringing

about constructive change, personal achievements that effected such change, and

transformational leadership" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 114). By 1999, several

empirical studies had been completed with a range of different samples: bankers,

professional salespeople, and MBA students (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Proactivity was

examined through the contexts of achievement, leadership, performance, and career

outcomes; results indicated positive outcomes for individuals and organizations (Bateman

& Crant, 1999). Before moving on to describe the proactive personality research, it is

important to provide additional context to the construct.

Personality Trait

From a definitive perspective, proactive personality has been described as a

specific type of personality trait (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Trait Theory includes three

categories of personality traits: cognitive, affective, and instrumental (Buss & Finn,

1987). According to Buss and Finn (1987),

Instrumental refers to behavior that has an impact on the environment; affective

refers to behavior that has a strong emotional component; and cognitive refers to

behavior that has a large component of thought, imagination, information

processing, or any of the other processes usually called cognitive. (p. 434)

Thus, proactive personality is considered an instrumental trait, meaning the behavior

associated with proactivity has an impact on the environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

Furthermore, several studies have established a relationship between proactive

personality and factors within the Big Five model of personality (Bateman & Crant,

1993; Crant, 1995; Crant & Bateman, 2000; Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006). In their

seminal article which introduced the construct of proactive personality, Bateman and

Crant (1993) found that proactive personality was positively related to extraversion and

conscientiousness, but not to neuroticism, agreeableness, or openness. Crant (1995) and

Crant and Bateman (2000) found similar results for the correlations between proactive

personality, extraversion, and conscientiousness. Two additional studies demonstrated a

positive correlation between proactive personality and openness to experience and a

negative correlation between proactive personality and neuroticism (Crant & Bateman,

2000; Major et al., 2006). Furthermore, two meta-analytic literature reviews showed

support for proactive personality being related to four of the Big Five: extraversion,

openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Fuller & Marler, 2009;

Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). Although proactive personality has been

shown to be related to the Big Five, it has also been established as an independent

construct (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 1995; Crant & Bateman, 2000).

Proactive Behavior

Having a proactive personality translates into a person's behavior. Grant and

Ashford (2008) define proactive behavior as "anticipatory action that employees take to

impact themselves and/or their environments" (p. 8). Bateman and Crant (1999) added a behavioral context to the construct of proactive personality with the following description of how proactivity occurs in individuals:

> Two people in the same position may tackle the job in very different ways. One takes charge, launches new initiatives, generates constructive change, and leads in a proactive fashion. The other tries to maintain, get along, conform, keep his head above water, and be a good custodian of the status quo. The first tackles issues head-on and works for constructive reform. The second 'goes with the flow; and passively conducts business as usual. The first person is proactive. The second is not. (p. 63)

There are many behaviors associated with having a proactive personality or disposition. Proactive behavior includes a specific action which "directly alters environments" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 104). Specifically, proactive people scan for change opportunities; set effective, change-oriented goals; anticipate and prevent problems; do things differently; take action; persevere; and achieve results (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Proactive people are change agents as opposed to "custodial, maintenance managers who are married to the status quo" (Bateman & Crant, 1999, p.66). There are two distinctive characteristics of proactive behavior. First, acting in advance; proactive behavior is future focused (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Frese & Fay, 2001). The second distinctive characteristic is intended impact. Simply stated, "To be proactive is to change things, in an intended direction, for the better" (Bateman & Crant, 1999, p. 63).

In addition, it is helpful to distinguish behaviors that are not considered proactive: unintentional change, reframing or reinterpreting situations, and "sitting back, letting

others try to make things happen, and passively hoping that externally imposed change 'works out okay'" (Bateman & Crant, 1999, pp. 63-64). There are key differences between proactive and passive people:

> Proaction involves creating change, not merely anticipating it . . . To be proactive is to take the initiative in improving business. At the other extreme, behavior that is not proactive includes sitting back, letting others try to make things happen, and passively hoping that externally imposed change 'works out okay.' (Bateman & Crant, 1999, p. 63).

Finally, to provide additional context for the concept of proactive behavior, there are five dimensions in which proactive behavior varies: form, intended target, frequency, timing, and tactics (Grant & Ashford, 2008). First, the form of proactive behavior refers to the type of category of behavior, such as feedback seeking and social networking. Second, proactive behavior can differ with respect to the intended target of impact or who the behavior is going to benefit – the self, other people, or the organization. Frequency refers to how often the proactive behavior occurs, while timing refers to "the degree to which the behavior occurs at particular occasions, phases, or moments" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 12). Finally, tactics describe how the specific methods and strategies are used (Grant & Ashford, 2008). These five dimensions provide a way to categorize and to fully describe the specifics of proactive behavior.

Antecedents

If proactive behavior is viewed as positive, then identifying antecedents of proactive behavior may be important for individuals and for organizations. Antecedents of proactive behavior have been widely discussed (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008;

Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Two categories of antecedents to proactive behavior include individual differences and contextual factors (Crant, 2000). Individual differences comprise proactive behavior constructs such as proactive personality, personal initiative, role breadth self-efficacy, and taking charge (Crant, 2000). In addition, antecedents to proactive behavior include individual differences, such as job involvement, goal orientation, desire for feedback, and need for achievement. Furthermore, contextual factors are associated with a person's decision to engage in proactive behavior; examples of contextual factors that may influence proactive behavior include organizational culture, organizational norms, situational cues, management support, and public or private setting (Crant, 2000, p. 438). Thus, a person's decision to engage in proactive behavior is a function of the person and the environment in which the person works.

Similar to Crant (2000), two antecedents explored by Parker et al. (2006) include personality and the work environment. Within the work environment, job autonomy, co-worker trust, and proactive personality were found to be antecedents of proactive behavior. Results from a study involving a sample of wire makers in the U.K. suggested that in order to have proactive employees, building their self-efficacy and promoting flexible role orientations would be valuable (Parker et al., 2006).

Grant and Ashford (2008) discussed three situational antecedents of proactive behavior, or "how situational features are likely to increase the likelihood of proactive behavior" (p. 13). The three antecedents were accountability, ambiguity, and autonomy (Grant & Ashford, 2008). First, the authors propose that "situational accountability increases the likelihood of proactive behavior" (p. 14). If people know they are going to be held accountable for their actions, then they are more likely to engage in proactive

behavior: "Given that they are already in the spotlight, they may as well anticipate, plan, and act in advance as much as possible to increase their chances of success and demonstrate that they are taking initiative" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 14). The relationship between situational accountability and proactive behavior was mediated by conscientiousness and self-monitoring (Grant & Ashford, 2008). In addition, "research indicates that when employees encounter situations of ambiguity, they are often more likely to display proactive behavior" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 15). Mediated by neuroticism and openness to experience, ambiguity appears to motivate workers to engage in proactive behavior to help reduce uncertainty. Autonomy is the third situational antecedent; workers are more likely to engage in proactive behavior "in situations of autonomy, or freedom and discretion regarding what to do, when to do it, and how to do it" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 15).

Proactivity as a Process

Proactivity has been also been described as a process (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). According to Grant and Ashford (2008), the proactive behavior process comprises three core phases: anticipating, planning, and action directed toward future impact. The first phase includes organizational members anticipating future outcomes and imagining goals. The second phase, planning, takes place when "employees develop plans for how they will act to implement their ideas" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 10). The planning phase is important because it entails translating the vision created in the first phase into real behaviors. The third phase involves taking action directed toward future impact with concrete behaviors while considering the short-term and long-term impact of the actions (Grant & Ashford, 2008).

Parker et al. (2010) discussed proactivity in the context of a goal-generation process: "Our primary perspective is that proactive action is motivated, conscious, and goal directed" (p. 830). Their proactive motivation model focuses on a goal-driven process which includes setting a proactive goal (proactive goal generation) and striving to achieve that goal (proactive goal striving) (Parker et al., 2010). Proactive goals vary on two dimensions: the future the goals aim to bring about and whether the self or situation is being changed (Parker et al., 2010). Overall, proactive people follow these processes as a way to influence their environments.

Proactivity in Organizations

Although proactive behavior has been associated with individual attributes and outcomes, such as salary, promotions, and satisfaction, there are also benefits at the organizational level (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Bateman and Crant (1999) discussed the impact proactive personality has on different groups of people, and the process of generating proactive behavior. Although having proactive employees can generate positive outcomes, challenges may arise if the levels of proaction within an organization are not managed. Two challenges associated with proactivity at the organizational level include generating high levels of proaction and managing the risks associated with such levels (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Three recommendations for creating balanced levels of proactivity in an organization include selecting and training people who are likely to have a proactive disposition; allowing proactive behavior to flourish by "relaxing the overcontrolling tendencies of many company policies and structures," and by inspiring proactive behavior (Bateman & Crant, 1999). When managed well, proactive employees can benefit an organization.

Personal Initiative

A concept similar to proactive personality was developed in Europe during the same timeframe Bateman and Crant were developing the construct of proactive personality in the United States (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Personal Initiative (PI) is described as "a work behavior characterized by its self-starting nature, its proactive approach, and by being persistent in overcoming difficulties that arise in the pursuit of a goal" (Frese & Fay, 2001, p. 134). It is a concept that includes active performance which results in a changed environment (Frese & Fay, 2001). Frese and Faye argued that "the contemporary changes to the workplace call for an active performance concept" (p. 135). PI comprises behavior that is self-starting, proactive, and persisting. With regard to self-starting, "PI is the pursuit of self-set goals in contrast to assigned goals" (p. 139). Proactivity is defined by Frese and Fay (2001) as having "a long-term focus and not to wait until one must respond to a demand" (p. 140). Proactivity includes anticipating problems and opportunities and preparing to deal with them ahead of time. Finally, persistence includes getting past challenges and barriers associated with a change in a process, procedure, or a task. The three areas of personal initiative, self-starting, proactive, and persisting, complement one another. While proactive personality is a personal disposition, the concept of PI is framed as behavior (Frese & Fay, 2001). In the literature, with regard to future perspectives, Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, and Tag (1997) found that people with higher levels of initiative had clearer career plans and higher degrees of transforming the plan into action than people with lower levels of personal initiative. Although proactive personality is measured with a self-report scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993), PI is assessed through personal interviews (Crant, 2000).

Role Breadth Self-Efficacy

In addition to proactive personality and personal initiative, Crant (2000) identified role-breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) and taking charge as being related to proactive behavior. Although proactive personality and personal initiative are not dependent on the conditions of a situation, RBSE and taking charge are expected to change depending on the environment and conditions of a situation (Crant, 2000). RBSE was discussed earlier as an antecedent to proactive personality. Parker (1998) introduced the construct of RBSE and defined it as "employees' perceived capability of carrying out a broader and more proactive set of work tasks that extend beyond prescribed technical requirements" (p. 835). RBSE was found to be associated with membership in improvement groups, job enlargement, and job enrichment and that increases in communication quality and job enrichment promoted greater levels of RBSE (Crant, 2000; Parker 1998). Morrison and Phelps (1999) introduced the construct of taking charge "to capture the idea that organizations need employees who are willing to challenge the status quo to bring about constructive change" (Crant, 2000, p. 443). Taking charge is defined as "constructive efforts by employees to effect functional change with respect to how work is executed" (Crant, 2000, p. 443). Similar to proactive personality, taking charge is "change-oriented and geared toward improvement" (Crant, 2000, p. 443). In a study involving self-report and coworker data for 275 white-collar employees across several organizations, taking charge was associated with several factors: felt responsibility, self-efficacy, and perceptions of top management openness (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Leadership

Proactive personality has been discussed within the context of two kinds of leadership: transformational and charismatic (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant & Bateman, 2000; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012). With regard to transformational leadership, proactivity was related to identification as transformational leaders by the subjects' peers in a sample of 134 MBA students (Bateman & Crant, 1993). With regard to charismatic leadership, self-reported measures of proactive personality were associated with supervisors' ratings of charismatic leadership for a sample of 156 manager-boss dyads at a financial services organization in Puerto Rico (Crant & Bateman, 2000). In addition, Deluga (1998) examined proactivity through the lens of presidential proactivity and found that presidential proactivity was positively associated with charismatic leadership. More recently, there was a positive association between increased leader vision and proactivity for high-RBSE employees (Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2010). Most recently, Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) found job autonomy, RBSE, and transformational leadership to be positively related to proactive behavior. Overall, the research examining the relationship between proactive personality and leadership has been scant over the two decades. Furthermore, proactive personality has not been examined through the lens of leadership development.

Progress in the Literature

In looking at the wide range of literature on proactive personality, four articles stood out in helping to integrate the literature and move it forward (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas et al., 2010). First, Crant (2000) reviewed

different literatures in which proactivity was addressed. In addition, as discussed earlier, he outlined four constructs related to proactive behavior (proactive personality, personal initiative, role breadth self-efficacy, and taking charge) and reviewed six research domains in which proactive behavior had been addressed (socialization, feedback seeking, issue selling, innovation, career management, and stress management). Crant (2000) also introduced an integrative model of the antecedents and consequences of proactive behaviors. Based on his review, Crant (2000) concluded that proactive behavior "1) is exhibited by individuals in organizations; 2) occurs in an array of domains; 3) is important because it is linked to many personal and organizational processes and outcomes; and 4) may be constrained or prompted through managing context" (Crant, 2000, p. 455). Three common themes emerged from his review of the literature. First, authors consistently called for action-oriented approaches in studying people's behaviors over passive, reactive orientations. Second, many of the articles included "an element of taking control of a situation" (Crant, 2000, p. 456) such that an individual's proactive behavior reduces or removes uncertainty and ambiguity in the work environment. Finally, the research consistently addressed people conducting an internal cost/benefit analysis when deciding whether or not to engage in proactive behavior. Along those lines, Crant (2000) describes that:

> People will consider the potential costs and benefits of proactive behavior for their image, job performance, job attitudes, career progression, and other relevant outcomes. . . . If an individual perceives that engaging in proactive behavior risks harming his or her image in the eyes of significant others in the social environment, he or she will be less likely to engage in proactive behavior. (p. 456)

Looking ahead, Crant (2000) offered, "it is important for researchers to further specify the process by which people decided whether or not to engage in proactive behaviors, ways to engage in proactive behaviors more effectively, and the relationship between proactive behavior and organizational outcomes" (p. 459). Crant's (2000) synthesis of the existing *Proactive Personality* literature helped to provide some cross-fertilization among different fields with regard to proactive behavior.

In 2008, Grant and Ashford recognized that the literature on proactive behavior was not systematic or integrated. They acknowledged "we have learned much about the nature, antecedents, processes, and consequences of specific proactive behaviors, but we know little about the more universal dynamics that might govern proactive behavior" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 5). In an attempt to overcome this, they developed the Proactivity Dynamics Framework which identified "common patterns in the nature, antecedents, processes, and consequences of proactive behavior" (p. 5).

In the 1960s, there was a shift from believing employees were passive and reactive to their work environments to believing employees could make decisions based on their personality and the environment they are in (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Situated in the context of work motivation theory, expectancy theory and equity theory provided perspectives that "abandoned the assumption that behavior was a direct function of environmental stimuli and emphasized the importance of psychological processes in shaping employees' behavioral responses to environmental stimuli" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 6). As outlined by Grant and Ashford (2008), expectancy theory states that "employees evaluate the personal utility of engaging in various behaviors at work and select the behaviors that are most likely to achieve outcomes they value" (p. 6) and equity

theory states that "employees make comparative judgments to evaluate the fairness of the rewards and compensation that they receive from managers, and expend effort accordingly" (p. 6).

As described earlier, Grant and Ashford (2008) emphasized proactivity as a process (i.e., anticipation, planning, and action), outlined key dimensions describing proactive behavior (i.e., form, intended target of impact, frequency, timing, and tactics), and described situational antecedents of proactive behavior (i.e., accountability, ambiguity, and autonomy). In addition, they described two consequences of engaging in proactive behavior: dispositional attributions, and reward and punishment reinforcements. Dispositional attributions result from people observing proactive behavior and making judgments about the person engaging in the proactive behavior and his or her values (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Based on how the proactive behavior is interpreted, an employee may be rewarded or punished: "if supervisors and coworkers are pleased with the proactive behavior, they will be more likely to reward it; if they are displeased with the proactive behavior, they will be more likely to punish it" (Grant & Ashford, 2008, p. 18). Bateman and Crant (1999) also discussed the reinforcement of proactive behavior:

> Even for proactive individuals, their behavior ultimately is like any other motivated behavior: If it is rewarded, it will thrive. It if is punished, it won't— with the possible exception of a few hardy souls who keep trying, and who may end up leaving the firm if their efforts are consistently thwarted. (p. 67)

Overall, Grant and Ashford's (2008) framework contributed to the integration of the literature on proactive personality.

In 2009, Fuller and Marler published the first comprehensive review of the proactive personality literature. In the context of career success, after analyzing 107 studies, they concluded that proactive personality is positively related to objective and subjective career success and with several variables which lead to career success, including job performance, taking charge, and voice behavior (Fuller & Marler, 2009). In addition, proactive personality was found to be associated with a variety of employability-related variables, such as learning goal orientation and career self-efficacy. In addition, the relationship between proactive personality and supervisor-rated job performance was stronger than the relationship between the Big Five trait factors and supervisor-rated job performance (Fuller & Marler, 2009). Overall, in their meta-analysis, Fuller and Marler concluded that "people with proactive personalities tend to experience greater career success than those with more passive personalities," "people with proactive personalities are likely to advance because they utilize both contest mobility and sponsored mobility pathways to career success," and "people with proactive personalities appear to be well suited to achieving career success if they pursue more contemporary career pathways" (p. 339). Furthermore, future research focused on "better understanding, selecting, and successfully integrating people with proactive personalities" will be useful to academics and practitioners (Fuller & Marler, 2009, p. 341). Overall, Fuller and Marler's (2009) literature review provided a relevant, comprehensive review of the proactive personality literature.

Most recently, Thomas et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of emergent proactive constructs to progress towards "a more integrative understanding of proactivity" (p. 291). In their analysis of 103 samples, which focused on four proactive

constructs (i.e., proactive personality, personal initiative, taking charge, and voice), proactivity was found to be significantly associated with performance, satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and social networking. In addition, Thomas et al. (2010) compared and contrasted each of the factors within the Big Five factors of personality (conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness). Four of the five were significantly related to proactivity; agreeableness was the only one that was not significantly correlated with proactivity (Thomas et al., 2010). Overall, Thomas et al. (2010) contributed to the proactive personality literature in that they "summarized empirical progress towards a more integrative understanding of proactivity" (p. 291).

Collectively, these four comprehensive reviews have been important to the proactive personality literature. Each addressed concerns the literature had been fragmented across different fields of study and worked to synthesize findings from many domains. Finally, the authors made several useful recommendations for future research, including the need to explore proactive personality in different contexts (Crant, 2000; Fuller & Marler, 2009).

Research in the Air Force

Primarily, this literature review has presented prior research from the private sector. However, proactive personality has also been included in a few studies authored by military members. Specifically, three studies completed by active duty Air Force officers addressed proactive personality in the military population within the broader context of mentoring (Gheesling, 2010; Gibson, 1998; Singer, 1999). In an examination of the effectiveness of supervisory and non-supervisory mentoring relationships, Gibson

(1998) found that "Proactive personality influenced perceptions of mentoring from the mentor perspective" (p. vii). Although Gibson's study focused on mentoring relationships, she tied in the construct of proactive personality in the sense that proactive officers would seek out mentors more often than less proactive officers. When analyzing factors which influenced mentoring effectiveness, proactive personality was found to be significantly correlated with LMX, interpersonal effectiveness, job dedication, and overall performance. Results from surveys collected from 224 company grade officers (CGOs; i.e., lieutenants and captains) and 338 supervisors showed that "CGOs who demonstrated a higher level of work-related competence, proactive personality, and the ability to engage in high quality communication exchanges were not only more likely to have mentors, but they perceived fewer barriers to gaining mentors" (p. 60). Overall, Gibson (1998) concluded that as lieutenants gained more experience and progressed to the rank of captain, "they were more likely to seek out mentors outside of their chains-of-command" (p. vii).

Also in the realm of mentoring, Singer (1999) addressed the Coast Guard's system used to match mentors and mentees as well as barriers to mentoring. Singer stated there may be a possible association between supervisors and members of the "in group" and concepts that characterize effective mentoring. The term "in group" is a construct within *LMX* Theory which refers to a group of people who may have a higher quality relationship with a superior (Singer, 1999). The primary constructs assessed included exposure to mentoring, proactive personality, sense of competence, barriers to mentoring, similarity index, mentor functions, reasons for mentoring, perceptions of risk, and LMX. Based on survey results from 91 junior Coast Guard officers and 57 matched mentors,

Singer reported that officers who did not report having any mentors had lower ratings of self-assurance, which included proactive personality. Overall, Singer (1999) recommended that the Air Force address the challenge of access to mentoring, especially for those members who do not consider their supervisor to be their mentor.

Most recently, Gheesling (2010) explored mentoring relationships in the Air Force, to include proactive personality. Ideally, a mentoring relationship is created between two members in an organization. He stated that "in many cases, however, a protégé might have to go out of his or her way to locate a potential mentor. Recognizing and acting upon this need could be seen as an output of proactive personality" (Gheesling, 2010, p. 17). In addition, the level of LMX reported between a supervisor and subordinate was negatively related to the subordinate's decision to identify an informal mentor, meaning higher quality exchanges resulted in fewer informal mentors. Gheesling (2010) discovered a relationship between LMX and mentoring and suggested the Air Force should consider the benefits of teaching LMX at all levels of leadership as a way to develop a stronger mentoring culture, stronger supervisors, and higher quality leader-subordinate interactions. With regard to proactive personality, however, Gheesling (2010) found that "officers who had identified their supervisors as a mentor reported higher levels of proactive personality than did the officers who had actually sought out an informal mentor" (p. 31).

These three studies have contributed to the proactive personality literature and generated areas for future research within the military population. Although the topic of proactive personality has been addressed in the military literature through the broader context of mentoring, there have not been any studies which examined proactive

personality as the primary construct of interest. Thus, the current study helps to close the gap in addressing proactive personality within military organizations at the cadet level.

Examining the Research Foundations – Identifying the Gaps

This section addresses each of the current study's research questions in the context of previous research. The five research questions are as follows:

1. How does a cadet's proactive personality influence levels of perceived organizational support, the quality of the cadet's leader-member exchanges, and the cadet's affective commitment to the Academy?

2. How does a cadet's proactive personality influence job performance, job satisfaction, and intention to quit the Air Force?

3. Is there a difference in the proactive personalities of first- and third-year cadets?

4. How do cadets define being proactive? What does proactive behavior look like to cadets?

5. From the cadets' perspective, how does being proactive influence cadet performance and leadership development?

Since Bateman and Crant (1993) introduced the construct of proactive personality, it has been studied in many different contexts. Many of the studies included samples of students or graduates from different academic institutions; however, there has not been a focus in the potential benefits of encouraging proactivity in higher education or in the realm of leadership development. Furthermore, with the exception of the three studies outlined previously, no other studies to date have examined proactive personality in a military context. Specifically, this study attempts to narrow this gap by exploring proactive personality in a higher education context at a military service academy.

In their foundational article, Bateman and Crant (1993) found proactivity to be significantly correlated with extracurricular and civic activities, personal achievements, and transformational leadership. Since then, it has been linked to many different aspects of the work environment, to include charismatic leadership (Crant & Bateman, 2000), career success (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), motivation to learn (Major et al., 2006), job performance (Crant, 1995; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thompson, 2005), mentoring intentions (Hu, Thomas, & Lance, 2008), leader-member exchanges (Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010), and job satisfaction (Li et al, 2010). Furthermore, proactive personality has been related with several individual and organizational outcomes, such as tolerance for stress in demanding jobs (Parker & Sprigg, 1999), leadership effectiveness (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant & Bateman, 2000; Deluga, 1998), participation in organizational initiatives (Parker, 1998), and entrepreneurship (Becherer & Mauer, 1999; Crant, 1996). This study will attempt to examine a few of the previously established relationships within a sample of cadets at the Air Force Academy.

Influence on POS, LMX, Affective Commitment

The first research question focuses on the influence of a cadet's proactive personality on his or her level of perceived organizational support (POS), the quality of the cadet's leader-member exchanges (LMX), and the level of affective commitment felt by the cadet towards the Academy.

POS. The construct of POS describes a person's belief concerning how an organization cares for an individual and their well-being. POS is a measure of how much the organization is perceived to value an individual. POS has been found to be related to

affective commitment and negatively related to intention to quit (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Thus, the first hypothesis follows:

Hypothesis 1a: Cadets' proactive personalities positively influence their

perceived organizational support.

LMX. LMX is an indicator of the quality of a relationship between a supervisor and subordinate and has been positively related to factors of career success, to include salary progression, promotability, and career satisfaction (Wayne et al., 1999). In examining the relationship between proactivity and LMX, Li et al. (2010) stated: "the proactive dispositional trait will influence the way in which employees approach, interpret, and establish relationships with their supervisors" (p. 396). LMX was shown to mediate the effects of proactive personality on job satisfaction (Li et al., 2010). In addition, in their meta-analysis of over 100 studies, Fuller and Marler (2009) found that proactive personality was positively related to LMX. Therefore, the next hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1b: Cadets' proactive personalities positively influence the quality of

their leader-member exchanges.

Affective Commitment. Affective commitment reflects the emotional attachment a member has towards an organization. With regard to the link between proactive personality and organizational commitment, Fuller and Marler (2009) stated, "The results indicating a positive relationship between proactive personality and organizational commitment are not surprising given the positive relationship between proactive personality and job performance" (p. 340). Overall, results from Thomas et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis of the proactive personality literature supported a positive relationship

between proactivity and affective organizational commitment. Therefore, the next hypothesis is:

> *Hypothesis 1c: Cadets' proactive personalities positively influence their affective commitment to the Academy.*

Influence on Job Performance, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Quit

The second research question addresses how cadets' proactive personalities may influence their job performance, job satisfaction, and their intention to quit the Air Force. A fair amount of proactive personality literature has focused on career success and career satisfaction. The context of this study does not lend itself to examining career success of the cadets; however, job performance and job satisfaction, as it relates to being a cadet, will be examined. In Academy cadets, job performance, job satisfaction, and intention to quit may be associated with a cadet's tendency to engage in proactive behavior.

Job Performance. Proactive personality has been linked to job performance (Crant, 1995; Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas et al., 2010; Thompson, 2005). Specifically, Crant (1995) found that more proactive real estate agents had higher job performance as measured by the number of houses sold, number of listings obtained, and commissions earned over a 9-month period. Crant (1995) concluded that "More proactive people can be expected to create situations and environments conducive to effective performance" (pp. 532-533). Furthermore, Thompson (2005) found a relationship between proactive personality and job performance in business school alumni, a relationship that was mediated by employee network building and initiative taking. More recently, Grant et al. (2009) found that "proactive behavior was a significant predictor of supervisor performance evaluations"

(p. 42) with samples of managers enrolled in an MBA program along with their supervisors, and firefighters and their supervisors. Finally, two recent meta-analytic studies found consistent evidence which supported a positive correlation between proactive personality and job performance (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas et al., 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis will be tested with regard to job performance:

Hypothesis 2a: Cadets' proactive personalities have a positive influence on their job performance.

Job Satisfaction. Proactive personality has also been linked to job satisfaction (Fuller & Marler, 2009). In a study of Chinese employees in state-owned companies, Li et al. (2010) found support for an LMX-mediated relationship between proactive personality and job satisfaction. Li et al. explained, "Proactivity is associated with job satisfaction because proactive people tend to create conditions more conducive to personal success at work" (p. 396). In the nursing field, AL-Hussami (2008) found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and POS, as well as between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in a sample of 55 nurses who worked in nursing homes in Florida. In addition, organizational commitment and POS were found to be significant predictors of job satisfaction (AL-Hussami, 2008). Most recently, results from a meta-analysis conducted by Thomas et al. (2010) also supported a positive correlation between proactivity and job satisfaction. Thus, the next hypothesis follows:

Hypothesis 2b: Cadets' proactive personalities have a positive influence on their job satisfaction.

Intention to Quit. The relationship between proactive personality and intention to quit has not been examined exclusively. However, Wayne et al. (1997) found a

significant, negative relationship between POS and intention to quit. Based on the context of the cadet wing and the environment at the Academy, this study proposes that first-year cadets have higher levels of intention to quit based on their short tenure at the Academy and increased stress levels associated with the first year at the Academy. Conversely, third-year cadets have been able to adapt to changing stress levels, have more at stake, and likely have lower levels of intention to quit. It follows that:

Hypothesis 2c: Cadets' proactive personalities have a negative influence on their intention to quit the Air Force.

Change in Proactive Personality

The third quantitative research question addresses potential differences in the levels of proactive behavior between first- and third-year students at the Academy. The literature consistently describes proactive personality as a stable disposition (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Seibert et al., 2001). Based on this, the next hypothesis posits there are no differences between levels of proactive personality for first-year cadets and third-year cadets.

Hypothesis 3: There is no difference between the levels of proactive personality of first-year and third-year cadets.

Proactive Personality at a Military Service Academy

To date, the literature on proactive personality tells us very little, if anything, about how proactive personality of military service academy cadets may influence their leadership development. Furthermore, with the exception of the personal initiative research, there is no research that addresses proactive personality from a qualitative

perspective. Thus, the final two research questions address the specific context of this study from a qualitative perspective.

How Proactive Personality Occurs for Cadets

The next research question addresses how cadets define being proactive and what proactive behavior looks like for cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy. In their recommendations for future research, Parker et al. (2010) noted that, "there is rather less in existing research on the reasons why individuals are proactive" (p. 848). To gain a better understanding of what the phenomenon of proactivity looks like at the Academy and how proactivity occurs to cadet, qualitative questions were asked as a part of the survey. Based on the proactive personality literature, two qualitative hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 4a: Cadets define being proactive as a positive factor in their cadet experience.

Hypothesis 4b: As defined by cadets, proactive behavior at the Academy includes scanning for change opportunities; setting effective, change-oriented goals; anticipating and preventing problems; doing different things, or doing things differently; taking action; persevering; and achieving results.

Influence of Proactive Personality on Leadership Development

Previous research has connected proactive personality to job performance (Crant, 1995), transformational leadership (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012), charismatic leadership (Crant & Bateman, 2000), and leader vision (Griffin et al., 2010). This study aims to qualitatively capture cadet perspectives on how proactive behavior has influenced their performance and leadership development. Thus, the

answers to the following qualitative questions will help to capture the essence of what it means to be proactive at the Academy:

> *Hypothesis 5a: From the cadets' perspective, being proactive has positively influenced their job performance.*
>
> *Hypothesis 5b: From the cadets' perspective, being proactive has positively influenced their development as a leader.*

Research Gap

Although the proactive personality literature is extensive and has been applied in many domains, there has yet to be any application within a higher education context at military service academy. Furthermore, proactive personality has not been applied in the context of leadership development. This study aims to address these gaps through the examination of proactive personality through the context of the cadet experience at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The next chapter outlines the research design and methods used in this study. Proactive personality theory serves as the framework for this study's research design, methods, and analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Philosophy

The goal of examining proactive personality within USAFA cadets informed the research design, methods, and analysis for this study. The existing body of literature on proactive personality supports a quantitative approach to answering the research questions. Although numerous quantitative studies have been published, proactive personality has not been examined from a qualitative perspective. Furthermore, no studies have examined proactive personality in the context of a military service academy. Thus, this study examined the construct of proactive personality in the context of a military academy using a mixed methods approach. This mixed methods study employs a convergent parallel design, which consists of collecting and analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, followed by the integration of the two sets of results in the interpretation phase of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). For this study, the two datasets are treated as independent and with equal priority. They are analyzed separately and interface only during the interpretation phase. Using this approach allows for the comparison and integration of the findings from the survey with the perspectives of cadets. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative results provides a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of proactivity at USAFA (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In this study, survey data was used to examine how proactive personality influenced several factors within cadets, including perceived organizational support (POS), leader-member exchange (LMX), affective commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, and intention to quit the organization. Qualitatively, the purpose of the phenomenological aspect of the study was to examine the construct of proactivity from the cadets' perspective and give voice to their experience with proactive behavior. The qualitative data was analyzed for themes related to how cadets define the construct of proactivity, what proactive behavior looks like in cadets, and how cadets feel proactivity has influenced their performance and leadership development. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to bring greater insight than would be obtained by either type of independent data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Research Questions

Specifically, this mixed methods study addressed five research questions:

- How does a cadet's proactive personality influence levels of perceived organizational support, the quality of the cadet's leader-member exchanges, and the cadet's affective commitment to the Academy?

- How does a cadet's proactive personality influence job performance, job satisfaction, and their intention to quit the Air Force?

- Is there a difference between the proactive personalities of first- and third-year cadets?

- How do cadets define being proactive? What does proactive behavior look like to cadets?

▪ From the cadets' perspective, how does being proactive influence cadet performance and leadership development?

In addition, this study addressed the collective results which emerged from comparing the quantitative outcomes with the qualitative survey responses. The answers to these research questions will inform future programmatic decisions, as well as support and strengthen the theoretical foundation for the process of developing cadets into leaders of character for the U.S. Air Force. Specifically, results will help answer how the construct of proactive personality may fit into the CCLD's Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character.

Sample

The sample comprised a purposeful sample of Academy cadets in their first and third years of their 4-year Academy experience. This group of cadets represents those at the beginning of their academic experience and those who are just over halfway through their tenure as cadets. The sample included cadets enrolled in two required core courses: first-year students (fourth-class cadets) in Behavioral Science 110 (BS310) and third-year students (second-class cadets) in Behavioral Science 310 (BS310); approximately 500 students are enrolled in each course per semester. These cadets had the opportunity to complete the survey for extra credit.

The cadets accessed the survey through the SONA system, which is managed by the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership (DFBL); SONA is used to track research protocols available to cadets in BS110 and BS310 for extra credit. Upon approval from the USAFA and University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), a message was loaded in SONA which explained the

study's purpose and included an external link to the survey. The message requested the cadets' voluntary and confidential participation. Although data was collected over two semesters, cadets only took the survey one time.

Survey

The survey was distributed using an on-line website, SurveyMonkey. For the enhanced security of the cadets' personal information, the survey was housed in the Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development's secure SurveyMonkey account. The survey comprised 80 questions – 13 demographic questions; 44 questions regarding proactive personality, POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, intention to quit, and the Academy culture; 13 questions addressing social desirability, and 10 qualitative open-ended questions. The following demographic indicators were collected: gender, ethnicity, projected graduation year, grade point average (GPA), military performance average (MPA), international student status, academic major, desired career field, coaching status, intercollegiate athlete status, academic probation status, and honor probation status. In the fall 2014 semester, the survey was available to cadets for the month of December. In the spring 2015 semester, the survey was available from January through March.

Measures

The measures addressed six dependent variables: proactive personality, POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit. All except two of the questions came from previously developed measures. With the exception of the job satisfaction questions, responses were measured using a 7-point Likert scale with possible answers ranging from strongly disagree (coded as *1*) to strongly agree (coded as *7*). The

four job satisfaction questions were answered using a 7-point scale, but with varying response anchors. A full list of survey questions is included in Appendix A.

Proactive Personality. Proactive personality indicates a cadet's tendency towards exhibiting proactive behaviors and was measured with a 10-item abbreviated version of Bateman and Crant's (1993) original 17-item scale. In their conclusion after reviewing 109 studies using varying versions of the original 17-item scale, Fuller and Marler (2009) recommended using the 10-item scale or the original 17-item scale for scale reliability. Examples of questions in the Proactive Personality Scale include "*If I see something I don't like, I fix it*" and "*I am always looking for better ways to do things*." The scores on the 10 items were added together to create a composite proactive personality score. A total of 54 studies in Fuller and Marler's (2009) meta-analysis reported using the 10-item scale; the average Cronbach alpha for these samples was 0.86 and ranged from 0.77 to 0.94, which is an acceptable reliability score.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS). POS refers to an employee's belief regarding how much the organization values him or her as an individual (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS was measured using a shortened version of the 36-item Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al. which included nine items. The questions were customized by inserting the phrase "Academy leadership" into the questions instead of the original "management." Examples of questions included "*The Academy leadership shows very little concern for me*" and "*The Academy management cares about my opinions*." Cadets were asked to consider "the Academy leadership" as the entire institution, including their chain-of-command, beginning with them, up to and including the Superintendent, and all three mission areas

(Dean of Faculty, Commandant of Cadets, and the Athletic Department) collectively. Two of the nine items were reverse scored per the original instrument (Eisenbarger et al., 1986); the scores on the nine items were added together to create a total POS score. The same scale was used by Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-Lamastro (1990). In addition, Wayne et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 for the same 9-item scale.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). The LMX questions indicated the quality of the relationship between a cadet and one of his or her leaders. The original 7-item scale was developed by Graen and Cashman (1975) and Liden and Graen (1980). In 1993, Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell modified the wording of the questions so that a 7-point Likert scale could be used. The original set of questions referenced a "manager;" however, cadets were asked to consider their Air Officer Commanding (AOC) instead of a manager. An AOC is a permanent party member responsible for one cadet squadron and is an active duty officer who holds the rank of major (O-4) or lieutenant colonel (O-5). There are a total of forty AOCs within the cadet wing – one for each cadet squadron. Each AOC is responsible for around 100 cadets spanning all four year groups. Examples of questions included "*I usually know where I stand with my AOC*" and "*My working relationship with my AOC is effective.*" The scores on the seven items were added together to create a composite LMX score. Previously reported Cronbach's alpha were 0.84 (Scandura & Graen, 1984), 0.90 (Liden et al., 1993), 0.94 (Bauer & Green, 1996), 0.90 (Wayne et al., 1997), and 0.85 (Li et al., 2010).

Affective Commitment. Affective commitment represents the emotional connection an employee (i.e., cadet in this case) has for his or her organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984) and was measured using seven items from the original 15-item instrument

from Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974). Wayne et al. (1997) previously used the same version of the measure. Some of the wording was adjusted slightly to fit the context of an academic institution versus an organization where individuals work at a traditional job. Examples of questions include "*I am proud to tell others I am part of the Academy*" and "*I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.*" The scores on the items were added together to create a total affective commitment score. Wayne et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the same scale.

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction represents how satisfied cadets were with their jobs as cadets. Job satisfaction was measured using four items originally developed by Hoppock and validated by McNichols, Stahl, and Manley (1978). Cadets were asked to consider their "job" to include all of the roles they hold as a cadet at the Academy, including the role of student, military member, and athlete. The questions were measured using a 7-point scale; however, the responses were different for each question. An example of the questions included "*Which of the following shows how much of the time you feel satisfied with your job?*" The range of possible responses ranged from "never" (coded as *1*) to "all of the time" (coded as *7*). Another question asks cadets how well they like their job with responses ranging from "I hate it" (coded as *1*) to "I love it" (coded as *7*). The scores on the four items were added together to create an overall job satisfaction score. McNichols et al. reported Cronbach's alpha values between 0.76 and 0.89 for the four samples used to show sufficient reliability for Hoppock's Job Satisfaction Measure.

Job Performance. A combination of GPAs and MPAs were used to represent cadet job performance; they were both continuous variables ranging from 0 to 4.0. The two values for GPA and MPA were run separately during analysis and then added

together to create a composite job performance score. These indicators were included in order to examine responses from cadets who had different levels of job performance.

Intention to Quit. Intention to quit represented a cadet's propensity to leave the Air Force either while they are a cadet at the Academy or after their initial active duty service commitment (ADSC) is complete. Intention to quit was measured with five items. For the three items developed by Landau and Hammer (1986), cadets were asked to consider their job as including all of the roles they hold as a cadet at the Academy, as well as their post-graduation ADSC. ADSCs differ by career field; for example, pilots have an initial commitment of 10 years, while support career fields such as cyberspace, maintenance, or logistics require an initial commitment of five years. Questions were customized with "Academy" or "Air Force" included for the organization. Examples of the questions include "*As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave the Air Force*" and "*I am seriously thinking about quitting the Academy.*" Wayne et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. However, they used the same three questions from Landau and Hammer with two additional questions – one locally developed question and one question from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. Based on the unique context of a cadet's commitment to the Air Force upon graduation, two new items were included: "*I plan to separate from the Air Force when my initial commitment is complete*" and "*I plan to make a career out of the Air Force.*" The scores on the five items were added together to create an overall intention to quit score. Four of the five questions were reverse-coded for analysis.

Reliability analysis. A reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the primary measures (Urdan, 2010). All of the values were consistent

with previously reported Cronbach alpha values. Table 2 contains the results from the

reliability analysis.

Table 2

Reliability Analysis for the Measured Construct

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Proactive Personality	10	0.79
Perceived Organizational Support	9	0.89
Leader-Member Exchange	7	0.89
Affective Commitment	7	0.86
Job Satisfaction	4	0.78
Intention to Quit	5	0.77

Covariates. Additional covariates included gender, ethnicity, projected

graduation year, academic major, desired career field, coaching status, intercollegiate

athlete status, and academic probation experience. All of the covariates were dummy-

coded to allow for the use of comparison groups during analysis. Three of the covariates

were dichotomous and were coded as "no" (coded as *0*) and "yes" (coded as *1*): coaching

status, intercollegiate athlete status, and academic probation experience. These variables

were included as a way to control for differences in cadet backgrounds and to allow for

the comparison of different groups of cadet respondents during both quantitative and

qualitative analyses.

Gender. Gender was included as a covariate to control for differences by gender

and was a dichotomous variable coded as "*0*" for males and "*1*" for females.

Race. Race was included to control for differences in cadets by ethnic backgrounds and included six possible responses, to include 1 (*White/Caucasian*), 2 (*American Indian or Alaskan Native*), 3 (*Asian or Pacific Islander*), and 4 (*Black or African American*), 5 (*Hispanic American*), and 6 (*Multiple Ethnicity*). Cadets who selected Multiple Ethnicity were able to specify which ethnicities they identified with via open text.

Class year. Participants were cadets from the class of 2016 and the class of 2018.

Academic major. The Academy offers 27 academic majors for cadets. Figure 1 includes a complete list of academic majors offered at the Academy. This variable was included to allow for the comparison of responses from cadets with different majors during analysis.

Desired career field. Upon graduation, cadets enter a myriad of different career fields; *Desired Career Field* was included in the analysis to allow for the comparison of responses from cadets who wish to enter different groups of career fields upon graduation. A complete list of career fields is listed in Table 1.

Intercollegiate athletes. During the 2014-15 academic year, 792 cadets participated as intercollegiate athletes in a range of 29 sports (www.academyadmissions.com); these cadets are commonly referred to as "ICs." In the Class of 2016, 146 cadets were classified as ICs, and in the class of 2018, 306 cadets were classified as ICs (L. Huggler, personal communication, March 30, 2015). Cadets who are not classified as ICs are required to participate in intramural sports every semester. Participating as an athlete often requires cadets to travel, causing them to miss

several academic classes during their primary season. This indicator was included in order to examine any significant differences in responses from non-IC cadets and ICs.

MOSAIC Character Coaching. The MOSAIC Character Coaching Program, offered as a voluntary program to first-year cadets beginning in 2012, entails assessments of cadets' abilities to identify with a set of 11 virtues consistent with military service, feedback regarding the assessments, and a 5-week coaching relationship with a trained Character Coach. According to USAFA's Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD; CCLD, 2013), Character Coaching is defined as "facilitating someone's development as a Leader of Character, through an engaging relationship of challenge and support—focused on strengthening the Leader's competence, confidence, and commitment in applying the virtues embodied in the Air Force Core Values" (p. 6). This process is a very intentional, systematic approach to creating an engaging relationship with the specific purpose of promoting ownership and practice in one's development. Simply stated, Character Coaches focus their coaching efforts on strengthening the client's, or in this case the cadet's, virtues. This indicator was included in order to examine any significant differences in survey responses from cadets who volunteered for and completed Character Coaching and those who did not.

Academic probation. A cadet is considered academically deficient and placed on academic probation when mid-semester progress reports are published or at the end of a semester or summer term. Cadets are placed on academic probation when they receive at least one failing grade or a controllable incomplete; or their semester, core, and/or cumulative GPAs fall below 2.00. In addition, first-class cadets (seniors) with a majors' GPA of less than 2.00 can be placed on academic probation (USAFA, 2014c). This

indicator was included in order to examine any differences in responses between cadets who had been on academic probation at least one time and cadets who had never been on academic probation.

   Social desirability. Finally, a measure for social desirability was included. Social desirability bias is described by Ganster, Hennessey and Luthans (1983) as "a tendency for an individual to present him or herself, in test-taking situations, in a way that makes the person look positive with regard to culturally derived norms and standards" (p. 322). In other words, cadets may respond with answers they think are the correct or socially accepted answers. Academy cadets are students at a military academy and have been introduced to the Air Force Core Value of "Excellence in All We Do." The expectation for them to live up to the core values had already been communicated to cadets prior to the study as part of their induction into military service and as part of their military education. Thus, the cadets may have responded with socially desirable answers. To account for this, a valid shortened version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) was used, which included a total of 13 items (Reynolds, 1982). Cadets were asked to consider statements concerning personal attitudes and traits and to decide whether each item is true or false as it pertains to them personally. Examples of the questions include "*I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me*" and "*I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake*."

Analysis

   The quantitative analysis consisted of three steps. For the first part of the quantitative analysis, means, standard deviations, and correlations for each variable are reported. The second part of the quantitative analysis included a series of regression

models designed to test the influence proactive personality has on the other variables of interest. The regression analyses were completed using SPSS. The final part of the quantitative analysis addressed potential differences in the proactive personalities of first-year and third-year cadets.

Within the initial set, the first model had proactive personality and a group of demographic variables regressed on POS, the second model added the social desirability variable, and the third model added an interaction term to see if social desirability moderated the relationship between proactive personality and the dependent variable (DV). Similar models were also run with the following variables included as the DV: LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, MPA, GPA, and intention to quit.

The following equations represent the regression equations, with X representing the bundled covariates and Y representing the eight different dependent variables (POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, MPA, GPA, and intention to quit):

Model 1 $\quad$ $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \text{error}$

Model 2 $\quad$ $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \beta_3(\text{Social Desirability}) + \text{error}$

Model 3 $\quad$ $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \beta_3(\text{Social Desirability}) +$

$$\beta_3(\text{Social Desirability*Proactive}) + \text{error}$$

The following student-level variables were controlled for during the regression analyses: gender, ethnicity, graduation year, coaching experience, intercollegiate athlete status, academic probation experience, social desirability, and social desirability interacted with proactive personality.

In addition, the data was screened for normality and collinearity and responses were examined for missing data prior to analysis. The data were examined for patterns of missing data and whether the data was missing completely at random (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). Depending on the extent of missing data, multiple imputations may be used, cases with missing data may be deleted, or certain variables may not be included in specific portions of the analyses. However, the regression models were run in SPSS using the "deleted pairwise" option, meaning that all available data is included in the analyses, but that the case with the missing data remains in the analysis. Thus, the remaining data for the case is still available during the testing of additional models. The final part of the quantitative analysis included an independent t-test to determine if there were any significant differences in the proactive personalities between first- and third-year cadets.

The qualitative analysis consisted of several steps. First, descriptive data was compiled using the survey responses directly from SurveyMonkey. Second, qualitative analysis techniques were applied based on the works of Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2013). After reviewing each survey response, the process of phenomenological reduction was followed. This process includes reviewing the data, highlighting meaningful statements, and grouping the highlighted statements into clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Finally, after the clusters of meanings are grouped into themes, the essence of what it means to be proactive at the Academy is presented. According to Moustakas (1994),

> the steps of Phenomenological Reduction include: *Bracketing*, in which the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question; *horizonalizing*, every

statement initially is treated as having equal value. Later, statements irrelevant to

the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are

deleted, leaving only the *Horizons* (the textural meanings and invariant

constituents of the phenomenon); *Clustering the Horizons Into Themes'*, and

Organizing the Horizons and Themes Into a Coherent Textural Description of the

phenomenon. (p. 97)

At the end of the phenomenological reduction process, the focus was on creating a

collective statement which represents the "essence" of what it means for cadets to

experience proactivity at the Academy.

In order to analyze the survey responses, the data was exported from

SurveyMonkey into an Excel file; the file was then imported into NVIVO, a qualitative

analysis software package, as a dataset. Prior to beginning the coding process, several

steps were taken to prepare the data for coding within NVIVO. First, the dataset was

auto-coded by case (participant) and survey question. Auto-coding is a feature that allows

the researcher to slice across the data and put specific information into individual folders

for ease of reference during the coding process (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). In this case,

auto-coding by case created a node (i.e., folder) for each participant that included only his

or her survey responses. In addition, the dataset was auto-coded by question, which

created a separate node for each survey question. Therefore, the data was able to be

viewed in different ways, primarily by participant and by survey question. Finally, using

the demographic responses, several sets were created to enable matrix coding queries,

allowing for an analysis of responses based on different groupings of personnel in the

sample. The sets were based on the demographic data collected and included gender,

ethnicity, projected graduation year, academic major, desired career field, coaching experience, intercollegiate athlete status, and academic probation experience. As an example, this feature allowed for the comparison male and female cadets in how they defined proactive behavior or how they felt proactive behavior influenced leadership development. After the dataset was auto-coded and the sets were created, similar statements from the open-ended question were clustered into nodes and aggregated into themes. Word frequency and matrix queries were performed to create an overall context for the cadets' responses. Based on the qualitative analysis, emergent themes are presented in chapter 4 and recommendations are made in chapter 6.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability challenges were considered during the design of this study. With the exception of two questions related to the cadets' intention to quit, two questions related to cadet culture, and 10 open-ended questions, this study employed previously validated scales. A reliability analysis showed that the measures were internally consistent when compared to previously reported Cronbach alpha values (see Table 2).

Including qualitative, open-ended questions enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the study because they allowed the personal perspectives of the cadets to be brought to the forefront rather than solely depending on numbers to tell a story (Creswell, 2013). The quantitative and qualitative pieces complemented one another in order to provide a more realistic picture of what proactive behavior looks like and how proactive personality occurs at the Academy. The study was further strengthened by the use of validation strategies, including clarifying potential research biases and providing a rich, thick description of the participants and the themes which emerged from the open-ended

survey questions (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the qualitative coding structure was discussed with and reviewed by an NVIVO subject matter expert, strengthening the overall foundation of the qualitative analysis.

Limitations

Several limitations existed with this study. First, the narrow context limited the ability to generalize outside the context of a military academy. In addition, the data was self-reported by volunteer participants who were motivated by receiving extra credit in an academic class. Thus, although the sample demographics were similar to the demographics of the overall cadet wing, the findings were not necessarily generalizable to the entire population of cadets at USAFA. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the data limited the ability to infer causality among the variables.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for this study included cadets and permanent party assigned to the Academy, as well as cadets and cadre members associated with other commissioning sources (i.e., Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps and Officer Training School) and the other service academies (i.e., U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy). In addition, the following stakeholders may benefit from the results of this study: the U.S. Air Force Academy Superintendent, the Dean of Faculty, the Commandant of Cadets, and the Director of the Center for Character and Leadership Development. Results from this study will be made available to Academy personnel as required.

Positionality

This study is founded on the philosophical assumptions associated with an ontological approach and a post-positivist worldview. An ontological approach was chosen because the research questions reflected the need to capture the nature of the reality of proactive personality as it occurs for cadets and the Academy. A post-positivism worldview was appropriate because the design and methodology consists of a series of logically related steps and is reductionist in nature; in addition, computer software was used during the analysis to help portray multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, in phenomenological research, researchers examine a construct through an experiential lens and attempt to bracket or set aside any presuppositions and biases by following the Epoche process (Creswell, 2013; Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). This process enables the process of horizonalization, or being able to view each idea as a new horizon or possibility, to take place while coding the data (Moustakas, 1994). Acknowledging prior experiences and interests allows researchers to see the phenomenon of interest through a fresh lens and to approach it with an open mind. As an Air Force member, I have more than 20 years of experience on active duty. Being proactive has always been something I talk about with my peers and subordinates. For example, I encouraged my Military Training Instructors (MTIs) to be proactive during my tenure as a squadron commander at Air Force Basic Military Training. However, informing my MTIs that I thought it was important to be proactive and telling them to be proactive did not necessarily mean they had access to what it takes to be proactive. To help others gain access to the benefits of proactive behavior, documenting how proactive behavior occurs for Academy cadets may help open the door to future

learning opportunities in gaining access to proactive behavior. Thus, my interest in how

being proactive can contribute to the leadership development of future officers was

generated from my personal experience as a military officer and supervisor.

CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

This study addressed the following three quantitative research questions:

1. How do cadets' proactive personalities influence their levels of perceived organizational support, the quality of their leader-member exchanges, and their affective commitment to the Academy?

2. How do cadets' proactive personalities influence their job performance, job satisfaction, and their intention to quit the Air Force?

3. Is there a difference in the proactive personalities of first- and third-year cadets?

The quantitative results are discussed in this chapter, followed by the qualitative results in chapter 5. Although the quantitative and qualitative data was collected at the same time in one survey, the initial analyses were conducted separately. Chapter 6 addresses observations and results which emerged from examining the outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative survey results both independently and as a collective whole.

Sample Descriptives

A total of 173 cadets responded to the survey; however, two cases were not included in the analysis due to the cadets answering only the demographics questions. Overall, 101 cadets from the class of 2016 (third year) and 70 cadets from the class of 2018 (first year) participated in the study. One-third of the cadets were female (33.9%)

and two-thirds were male (66.1%). With respect to race, three-quarters of the respondents

were White/Caucasian (77.8%). A total of 15 cadets were Asian/Pacific Islander (8.8%);

8 cadets identified as Black or African American (4.7%); and 8 cadets identified as

Hispanic American (4.7%). None of the cadets selected the American Indian/Alaskan

Native option. Five cadets selected Multiple Ethnicity (2.9%) and indicated they were:

Caucasian and Filipinio; Hispanic and Caucasian; Caucasian and Asian; White and

Black; and South Asian. Nearly one quarter of the participants (40 cadets; 23.4%)

indicated they were intercollegiate athletes (ICs). In addition, results indicated that 102

(59.6%) had completed Character Coaching during their first year at the Academy, and

30 cadets (17.5%) had been on academic probation at least one time. A summary of

descriptive statistics for cadet participants and the entire Cadet Wing population is

included in Table 3. When compared to the overall Cadet Wing population, the sample

had a higher percentage of female participants as well as participants who had completed

the Character Coaching program.

In addition, with the exception of the general studies major, all of the academic

majors were represented (see Figure 1). Cadets also listed a wide range of Air Force

Specialty Codes when asked to indicate their desired career fields. Nearly half of the

cadets (47.8%) indicated they wanted to become a pilot after graduating from the

Academy. A total of 18 cadets (10.5%) indicated they hoped to enter one of the medical

career fields (i.e., dentist, physician, nurse, health services). Another 15 cadets (8.7%)

would like to become intelligence officers, 10 cadets (5.8%) plan to become engineers

(i.e., civil engineer, developmental engineer), and 8 cadets (4.7%) hope to go into the

acquisitions career field. The following career fields were also selected by at least one

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Cadet Participants

	Cadet Wing N = 3897		Combined Sample N = 171		Class of 2016 N = 101		Class of 2018 N = 70	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender								
Male	3033	77.83	113	66.10	71	69.60	43	61.40
Female	864	22.17	58	33.90	31	30.40	27	38.60
Race								
White/Caucasian	2827	72.54	133	77.80	80	78.40	54	77.10
Black/African American	323	8.29	8	4.70	4	3.90	4	5.70
Asian/Pacific Islander	339	8.70	15	8.80	8	7.80	7	10.00
Hispanic	358	9.19	8	4.70	5	4.90	3	4.30
Native American/Alaskan Native	50	1.28	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Multiple Ethnicity	*	*	5	2.90	3	2.90	2	2.90
Not Reported	*	*	2	1.20	2	2.00	0	0.00
Service Academy Exchange Cadets	34	0.87	4	2.30	4	3.90	0	0.00
International Cadets	56	1.44	5	2.90	3	2.90	2	2.90
Completed Character Coaching	873	22.40	102	59.60	78	77.20	24	34.40
Intercollegiate Athletes	792	20.32	40	23.30	24	23.50	16	22.90
Academic Probation Experience	*	*	30	17.40	20	19.60	10	14.30

Note. * = Data not available.

cadet: contracting, cyber operations, finance, judge advocate general, maintenance, OSI, personnel, public affairs, scientist, and space operations.

To answer the three quantitative research questions, the analysis consisted of three steps. First, means, standard deviations, and correlations for each of the variables were calculated (see Table 4). Second, a series of regression models were tested to assess the influence of proactive personality on the other variables of interest. Finally, an independent sample t-test was completed to assess the difference in proactive personalities between first-year and third-year cadets. The regression analyses and independent sample t-test was completed using SPSS.

The data were screened for collinearity; none of the variables were collinear. In checking the regression residuals for normality, skewness values, kurtosis values, and histograms were reviewed. With the exception of affective commitment being slightly negatively skewed (-1.25) and MPA being positively kurtotic (K = 3.63), all other studentized residual values were within the acceptable ranges for skewness (+/-1) and kurtosis (+/-3). Thus, no data transformations were performed.

The dataset was examined for missing data prior to analysis. A total of 82 missing values were detected across all of the questions, 58 of which came from one construct which contained two newly-developed questions related to the Academy culture. Thus, the culture questions were not included in the analysis. In addition, the data was examined to determine if the missing data was missing completely at random (MCAR; Mertler & Vannatta, 2010) using the Little's test in SPSS. The missing data was found to be MCAR (Chi-Square = 78.838, DF = 91, Sig. = .815; Graham, 2009). Therefore, the regression models were run using the "deleted pairwise" option, meaning that the

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Proactive Personality	57.62	6.06	-								
2. POS	41.07	10.21	0.22**	-							
3. LMX	35.87	7.88	0.32**	0.34**	-						
4. Affective Commitment	40.53	6.82	0.31**	0.53**	0.26**	-					
5. Job Performance	6.24	0.72	0.17*	0.10	0.16*	0.04	-				
6. MPA	3.16	0.33	0.20*	0.16*	0.19*	0.13	0.75**	-			
7. GPA	3.08	0.52	0.11	0.04	0.10	-0.03	0.91**	0.42**	-		
8. Job Satisfaction	20.07	3.46	0.35**	0.54**	0.26**	0.63**	0.20**	0.20**	0.15*	-	
9. Intention to Quit	29.84	4.86	-0.15	-0.29**	0.12	0.51**	0.05	-0.04	0.10	-0.46**	-

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01.

remaining data for the cases with missing data was still available during the regression

analyses. No data imputations were made (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

Descriptive Statistics

The proactive personality composite variable consisted of 10 items, was measured

on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and had an overall mean of

57.62 out of 70 points. The perceived organizational support (POS) variable consisted of

nine items, was measured on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and

had an overall mean of 41.07 out of 63 possible points. The leader-member exchange

(LMX) variable included seven items, was measured on a scale from 1 (*strongly*

disagree) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and had an overall mean of 35.87 out of 49 points. The

affective commitment variable consisted of seven items, was measured on a scale from 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and had an overall mean of 40.53 out of 49

points. Intention to quit consisted of five questions, was measured on a scale from 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and had an overall mean of 29.84 out of 35

points. The four job satisfaction questions were also measured on a 7-point scale;

however, each of the questions had a unique set of responses. When added together, the

job satisfaction variable included four items with a mean of 20.07 out of a possible 35

points. Job performance was measured using the MPAs and GPAs reported by the cadets.

The two values were added together to create an overall job performance score, with a

possible range between 0 and 8.0. MPA responses ranged from 1.90 to 3.90 with a mean

of 3.16. GPA responses ranged from 1.50 to 4.00 with a mean of 3.08. Therefore, job

performance scores ranged from 3.40 to 7.90 with a mean of 6.24. Table 5 includes a list

of the study variables and the scales of measurement.

Table 5

Study Variables and Scales of Measurement

Variable	Possible Points	Scale of Measurement
Independent Variables		
Proactive Personality	0-70	Ordinal, 1-7
Gender		Nominal, 0 = male, 1 = female
Race		Nominal, 1 = American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2 = Asian/Pacific Islander, 3 = Black/African American, 4 = Hispanic American, 5 = White/Caucasian, 6 = Multiple Ethnicity
Class Year		Nominal, 0 = Class of 2016, 1 = Class of 2018
Character Coaching		Nominal, 0 = no coaching, 1 = coached
Intercollegiate Athletes		Nominal, 0 = non-athlete, 1 = athlete
Academic Probation		Nominal, 0 = no probation, 1 = probation experience
Dependent Variables		
Perceived Organizational Support	0-63	Ordinal, 1-7
Leader-Member Exchange	0-49	Ordinal, 1-7
Affective Commitment	0-49	Ordinal, 1-7
Job Satisfaction	0-28	Ordinal, 1-7
Job Performance	0-8	Continuous, 0-8
MPA	0-4	Continuous, 0-4
GPA	0-4	Continuous, 0-4
Intention to Quit	0-35	Ordinal, 1-7

Regression Results

Because proactive personality was the primary construct of interest, eight sets of regression models were run. Within the initial set, the first model had proactive personality and a group of demographic variables regressed on POS, the second model added the social desirability variable, and the third model added an interaction term to see if social desirability moderated the relationship between proactive personality and the dependent variable (DV). Similar models were also run with the following variables

included as the DV: LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, MPA, GPA, and intention to quit. Three models did not contain the social desirability or interaction terms; controlling for social desirability was not appropriate because MPA and GPA were reported as numbers ranging from 0 to 4.0, and job performance was a combination of MPA and GPA.

The following equations represent the regression equations, with X representing the bundled covariates and Y representing the dependent variables (POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, MPA, GPA, and intention to quit):

Model 1 $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \text{error}$

Model 2 $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \beta_3(\text{Social Desirability}) + \text{error}$

Model 3 $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Proactive}) + \beta_2(X) + \beta_3(\text{Social Desirability}) +$

$$\beta_3(\text{Social Desirability*Proactive}) + \text{error}$$

Each set of regression models is discussed separately. The following student-level variables were controlled for during the regression analyses: gender, ethnicity, graduation year, coaching experience, intercollegiate athlete status, academic probation experience, social desirability, and social desirability interacted with proactive personality.

Research Question #1: Influence of Proactive Personality on Perceived Organizational Support, Leader-Member Exchange, and Affective Commitment.

POS. Hypothesis 1a stated cadets' proactive personalities positively influence their level of POS. The first set of regression models assessed the influence of proactive personality on POS after controlling for several cadet characteristics. Three variables were significant. First, in support of hypothesis 1a, proactive personality was a significant predictor of POS ($\beta = .40$); for every 1-point increase in proactive personality, POS also

increased by 0.40 points on the scale. Second, race was dummy-coded to allow for the comparison of the influence of proactive personality on POS among cadets who identified with a specific race; the White/Caucasian category was used as the reference group. One comparison was significant: compared to White/Caucasian cadets, Asian/Pacific Islander cadets had higher levels of POS ($\beta = 6.22$). Finally, with regard to class year, compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had significantly lower levels of POS ($\beta = -4.22$). Table 6 contains additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influences of proactive personality on POS.

Table 6

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on POS

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	se	β	se	β	se
(Constant)	2.24	1.75	2.17	1.76	1.72	1.79
Proactive Personality	0.42**	0.13	0.41**	0.13	0.40**	0.13
Gender (Male)	-0.55	1.62	-0.30	1.64	-0.15	1.66
Race						
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.13*	2.76	7.44**	2.81	6.22*	2.89
Black or African American	-3.84	3.67	-4.46	3.81	-3.88	3.83
Hispanic American	2.66	3.67	2.73	3.69	2.86	3.71
Multiple Ethnicity	4.25	4.60	4.24	4.63	4.78	4.66
Graduation Year (2016)	-4.22*	1.74	-4.26*	1.75	-4.58*	1.77
Character Coaching	0.73	1.77	0.61	1.78	1.10	1.81
Intercollegiate Athlete	-0.48	1.89	-0.22	1.94	-0.40	1.95
Academic Probation	-2.40	2.04	-2.42	2.05	-2.24	2.06
Social Desirability			0.22	0.33	0.22	0.33
Social Desirability x Proactive					0.11	0.05

Note. Dependent variable: Perceived Organizational Support. R^2 (Model 1) = 0.175; R^2 (Model 2) = 0.153; R^2 (Model 3) = 0.151.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

LMX. Hypothesis 1b stated that cadets' proactive personalities positively influence the quality of their leader-member exchanges. The next model assessed the

influence of proactive personality on LMX after controlling for several cadet characteristics. The only significant variable was proactive personality (β = .40), which provided support for hypothesis 1b. Thus, for every 1-point increase in proactive personality, LMX also increased by 0.40 points on the scale. Table 7 displays additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence of proactive personality on LMX.

Table 7

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on LMX

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	se	β	se	β	se
(Constant)	0.37	1.36	0.30	1.37	0.06	1.39
Proactive Personality	0.42**	0.10	0.40**	0.10	0.40**	0.10
Gender (Male)	0.36	1.25	0.54	1.28	0.66	1.29
Race						
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.02	2.14	2.38	2.19	1.75	2.25
Black or African American	-2.11	2.84	-2.82	2.96	-2.52	2.98
Hispanic American	-1.19	2.84	-1.11	2.87	-1.04	2.88
Multiple Ethnicity	-1.43	3.56	-1.44	3.60	-1.17	3.62
Graduation Year (2016)	0.09	1.35	0.05	1.36	-0.11	1.38
Character Coaching	0.08	1.37	-0.06	1.39	0.19	1.41
Intercollegiate Athlete	-1.77	1.46	-1.48	1.51	-1.57	1.52
Academic Probation	-1.60	1.58	-1.61	1.60	-1.52	1.61
Social Desirability			0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26
Social Desirability x Proactive					0.05	0.04

Note. Dependent variable: Leader-Member Exchange. R^2 (Model 1) = 0.135; R^2 (Model 2) = 0.140; R^2 (Model 3) = 0.150.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Affective Commitment. Hypothesis 1c stated that cadets' proactive personalities positively influence their level of affective commitment. The next model assessed the influence of proactive personality on affective commitment after controlling for cadet characteristics. Three variables were significant. First, in support of hypothesis 1c,

proactive personality was a significant predictor of affective commitment (β = .36),

meaning that for every 1-point increase in proactive personality, affective commitment

also increased by 0.36 points on the scale. In addition, one race comparison was

significant; when compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Black or

African American had significantly lower levels of affective commitment (β = -5.83).

Finally, with regard to class year, compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had

significantly lower levels of affective commitment (β = -3.60). Table 8 contains

additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence of

proactive personality on affective commitment.

Table 8

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on Affective Commitment

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	se	β	se	β	se
(Constant)	42.34	1.14	42.28	1.15	42.24	1.18
Proactive Personality	0.36**	0.08	0.34**	0.08	0.34**	0.09
Gender (Male)	0.03	1.05	0.17	1.07	0.19	1.09
Race						
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.72	1.80	-0.44	1.83	-0.54	1.90
Black or African American	-5.83*	2.39	-6.40*	2.47	-6.35*	2.52
Hispanic American	1.58	2.39	1.65	2.40	1.66	2.44
Multiple Ethnicity	2.57	3.00	2.56	3.01	2.60	3.06
Graduation Year (2016)	-3.60**	1.14	-3.63**	1.14	-3.66**	1.16
Character Coaching	1.06	1.15	0.94	1.16	0.99	1.19
Intercollegiate Athlete	-0.72	1.23	-0.49	1.26	-0.50	1.28
Academic Probation	0.09	1.33	0.08	1.33	0.09	1.36
Social Desirability			0.20	0.22	0.20	0.22
Social Desirability x Proactive					0.01	0.04

Note. Dependent variable: Affective Commitment. R^2 (Model 1) = 0.193; R^2 (Model 2) = 0.197; R^2 (Model 3) = 0.198.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Research Question #2: Influence of Proactive Personality on Job

Performance, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Quit.

Job Performance. Hypothesis 2a stated that cadets' proactive personalities positively influence their level of job performance. The next model assessed the influence of proactive personality on job performance after controlling for several cadet characteristics. Four variables were significant, including two of the race comparisons. First, when compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Black or African American had significantly lower levels of job performance ($\beta = -.51$). Similarly, as compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Hispanic had significantly lower levels of job performance ($\beta = -.60$). With regard to class year, when compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had significantly higher levels of job Performance ($\beta = .42$). Finally, cadets who have been on academic probation at least one time have significantly lower measures of job performance ($\beta = -.94$). Because proactive personality was not a significant predictor of job performance, hypothesis 2a was not supported. Additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence of proactive personality on job performance are reported in Table 9. The results for job performance do not include the social desirability or interaction terms since it comprised MPA and GPA, which were reported as numbers each ranging from 0 to 4.0. Furthermore, two additional regression models were run for the performance indicators that comprised job performance: MPA and GPA.

Table 9

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on Job Performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	β	se	t	*p*
(Constant)	6.24	0.10	12.72	0.00
Proactive Personality	0.01	0.01	1.55	0.12
Gender (Male)	0.14	0.09	1.53	0.13
Race				
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.01	0.16	-0.08	0.94
Black or African American	-0.51	0.21	-2.41	0.02*
Hispanic American	-0.60	0.21	-2.84	0.01**
Multiple Ethnicity	0.42	0.26	1.60	0.11
Graduation Year (Class of 2016)	0.42	0.10	4.18	0.00**
Character Coaching	-0.18	0.10	-1.78	0.08
Intercollegiate Athlete	-0.14	0.11	-1.25	0.21
Academic Probation	-0.94	0.18	-8.04	0.00**

Note. Dependent variable: Job Performance. $R^2 = 0.421$.
p < .05. **p* < .01.

MPA. This model assessed the influence of proactive personality on MPA after controlling for several cadet characteristics. In this model, four variables were significant. First, proactive personality was a significant predictor of MPA (β = .01), meaning that for every 1-point increase in proactive personality, MPA also increased by 0.01 points. When compared to White/Caucasian cadets, Hispanic cadets had lower MPAs (β = -.26). In addition, intercollegiate athletes reported lower MPAs (β = -.14). Finally, cadets who had been on academic probation at least one time reported lower MPAs (β = -.18). Additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels are reported in Table 10. The results for MPA do not include the social desirability or interaction terms; MPA was reported as a single number ranging from 0 to 4.0.

Table 10

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on MPA

	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	β	se	t	p
(Constant)	3.21	0.05	11.26	0.00
Proactive Personality	0.01	0.00	2.43	0.02*
Gender (Male)	-0.04	0.05	-0.75	0.45
Race				
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.15	0.09	1.72	0.09
Black or African American	-0.03	0.11	-0.31	0.76
Hispanic American	-0.26	0.11	-2.30	0.02*
Multiple Ethnicity	0.05	0.14	0.32	0.75
Graduation Year (Class of 2016)	0.10	0.05	1.84	0.07
Character Coaching	-0.03	0.05	-0.61	0.54
Intercollegiate Athlete	-0.14	0.06	-2.41	0.02*
Academic Probation	-0.18	0.06	-2.80	0.01**

Note. Dependent variable: Military Performance Average. $R^2 = 0.191$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

GPA. The next model assessed the influence of proactive personality on GPA

after controlling for various cadet characteristics. In this model, seven of the variables

were significant, including three of the four race comparisons. First, with respect to

gender, as compared to female cadets, male cadets reported significantly higher GPAs

($\beta = .18$). When compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Black or

African American had significantly lower GPAs ($\beta = -.46$). In addition, as compared to

White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Hispanic had significantly lower GPAs

($\beta = -.34$). Furthermore, when compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who

identified as having a Multiple Ethnicity had significantly higher GPAs ($\beta = .38$). With

regard to class year, when compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had

significantly higher GPAs ($\beta = .32$). Finally, cadets who have been on academic

probation at least one time had significantly lower GPAs (β = -.77). The character

coaching variable was significant under in model 1 and model 2, but not in model 3.

Additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence of

proactive personality on GPA are reported in Table 11. The results for GPA do not

include the social desirability or interaction terms because GPA was reported as single

number ranging from 0 to 4.0.

Table 11

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on GPA

	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	β	se	t	*p*
(Constant)	3.03	0.30	9.81	0.00
Proactive Personality	0.00	0.01	0.37	0.72
Gender (Male)	0.18	0.06	2.85	0.01**
Race				
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.16	0.11	-1.47	0.14
Black or African American	-0.47	0.14	-3.30	0.00**
Hispanic American	-0.34	0.14	-2.36	0.02*
Multiple Ethnicity	0.38	0.18	2.09	0.04*
Graduation Year (Class of 2016)	0.32	0.07	4.69	0.00**
Character Coaching	-0.15	0.07	-2.13	0.04*
Intercollegiate Athlete	0.00	0.07	0.06	0.96
Academic Probation	-0.77	0.08	-9.62	0.00**

Notes. Dependent variable: Grade Point Average. R^2 = 0.486.
p < .05. **p* < .01.

Job Satisfaction. Hypothesis 2b stated that cadets' proactive personalities

positively influence their level of job satisfaction. The next model assessed the influence

of proactive personality on job satisfaction after controlling for cadet characteristics. In

this model, proactive personality was the only significant predictor of job satisfaction

(β = .18), indicating that for every 1-point increase in proactive personality, job

satisfaction also increased by 0.18 points on the scale. These results provide support for hypothesis 2b. Table 12 contains additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence of proactive personality on job satisfaction.

Table 12

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on Job Satisfaction

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	se	β	se	β	se
(Constant)	20.28	0.59	20.21	0.59	20.18	0.60
Proactive Personality	0.20**	0.04	0.18**	0.04	0.18**	0.04
Gender (Male)	0.25	0.54	0.41	0.55	0.42	0.56
Race						
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.42	0.93	0.72	0.94	0.65	0.98
Black or African American	-1.00	1.23	-1.61	1.27	-1.57	1.29
Hispanic American	-0.44	1.23	-0.37	1.23	-0.37	1.25
Multiple Ethnicity	1.81	1.55	1.80	1.54	1.83	1.57
Graduation Year (2016)	-0.69	0.59	-0.72	0.58	-0.74	0.60
Character Coaching	0.52	0.59	0.40	0.59	0.43	0.61
Intercollegiate Athlete	-0.60	0.64	-0.35	0.65	-0.36	0.66
Academic Probation	-0.95	0.69	-0.96	0.68	-0.95	0.70
Social Desirability			0.21	0.11	0.21	0.11
Social Desirability x Proactive					0.01	0.02

Note. Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction. R^2 (Model 1) = 0.161; R^2 (Model 2) = 0.182; R^2 (Model 3) = 0.183.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Intention to Quit. Hypothesis 2c stated that cadets' proactive personalities have a negative influence on their intention to quit. The final model assessed the influence of proactive personality on intention to quit after controlling for several cadet characteristics. Three variables in model 3 were significant. With regard to class year, when compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had significantly higher levels of intention to quit (β = 2.88). Next, intercollegiate athletes had significantly higher levels of intention to quit (β = 3.29). Finally, the interaction term for social desirability and

proactive personality was significant, indicating that social desirability moderated the

relationship between proactive personality and intention to quit in a negative direction

(β = -.06). To interpret this result, I picked several possible values for social desirability

and ran the numbers through the appropriate equation (Aiken & West, 1991; Jaccard &

Turrisi, 2003). Results indicated that at increasing levels of social desirability, proactive

personality was negatively related to intention to quit at an increasing rate. In addition,

proactive personality was significant in model 1, but not in models 2 or 3. These results

do support hypothesis 2c, but with the addition of the moderated relationship. Table 13

displays additional unstandardized coefficients and significance levels for the influence

of proactive personality on intention to quit.

Table 13

OLS Regression Results for the Influence of Proactive Personality on Intention to Quit

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	se	β	se	β	se
(Constant)	8.41	0.80	8.46	0.80	8.71	0.80
Proactive Personality	-0.13*	0.06	-0.12	0.06	-0.11	0.06
Gender (Male)	-0.42	0.73	-0.55	0.75	-0.67	0.74
Race						
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.08	1.25	-0.18	1.28	0.48	1.30
Black or African American	-1.87	1.67	-1.35	1.73	-1.66	1.72
Hispanic American	-2.44	1.67	-2.49	1.68	-2.56	1.66
Multiple Ethnicity	-1.92	2.09	-1.91	2.11	-2.20	2.09
Graduation Year (2016)	2.85**	0.79	2.88**	0.80	3.05**	0.79
Character Coaching	-0.32	0.80	-0.22	0.81	-0.48	0.81
Intercollegiate Athlete	3.50**	0.86	3.29**	0.88	3.38**	0.88
Academic Probation	-0.19	0.93	-0.18	0.94	-0.27	0.93
Social Desirability			-0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.15
Social Desirability x Proactive					-0.06*	0.02

Notes. Dependent variable: Intention to Quit. R^2 (Model 1) = 0.217; R^2 (Model 2) = 0.225; R^2 (Model 3) = 0.251.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Research Question #3: Difference in Proactive Personalities.

Independent t-Test Results. The third research question examined potential

differences in proactive personalities between first- and third-year cadets; hypothesis 3

stated there is no difference between the levels of proactive personality of first-year and

third-year cadets. To answer this question, an independent t-test was conducted. The

analysis produced a non-significant t value ($t_{(165)}$ = .962, p = .337). An examination of the

means revealed that third-year cadets had higher levels of proactive personality (M =

58.00) than first-year cadets (M = 57.09); however, the difference was not statistically

significant, providing support for hypothesis 3. The results for the independent sample t-

test are listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Results for Independent Samples t-Test

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
Year Group							
Class of 2016	97	58.00	6.557	.666	.962	165	.337
Class of 2018	70	57.09	5.283	.631			
Mean Difference = .914							
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F = 2.299, p = .131							

Discussion

The purpose of the quantitative analyses was twofold: to examine the influence of

cadets' proactive personalities on 8 variables related to cadet life at the Academy, and to

examine the potential difference in proactive personalities among first- and third-year

cadets. The results from the analyses helped answer the quantitative research questions.

The first research question addressed the influence of proactive personality on

POS, LMX, and affective commitment. Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c posited that proactive

personality would positively influence POS, LMX, and affective commitment for cadets. To test these hypotheses, a regression analysis was conducted as a follow on to the bivariate correlations; results showed that proactive personality did significantly and directly influence all three of the variables. Although the magnitude of the beta coefficients were small, hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c were all supported.

The second research question addressed the influence of proactive personality on job satisfaction, job performance (to include MPA and GPA), and intention to quit. Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c posited that proactive personality would positively influence job satisfaction and job performance and negatively influence intention to quit. Regression results showed that proactive personality did significantly influence job satisfaction and MPA; however, there was no evidence that proactive personality influenced cadet overall job performance or GPA. In addition, social desirability moderated the negative influence of proactive personality on intention to quit. Although the magnitude of the beta coefficients were small, hypothesis 2a was partially supported and 2c was supported.

Looking across the results, a few trends emerged with regard to race, class year, academic probation, and ICs. With respect to race, compared to White/Caucasian cadets, Black or African American cadets had significantly lower levels of affective commitment ($\beta = -6.35$), job performance ($\beta = -.51$), and had lower GPAs ($\beta = -.46$). In addition, compared to White/Caucasian cadets, Hispanic cadets had lower levels of overall job performance ($\beta = -.60$), had lower MPAs ($\beta = -.26$), and had lower GPAs ($\beta = -.34$). Furthermore, as compared to White/Caucasian cadets, cadets who identified as Asian/Pacific Islander reported significantly higher levels of POS ($\beta = 6.22$).

When cadets from different year groups were compared, there were several significant differences. When third-year cadets were compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets had lower levels of POS (β = -4.22), lower levels of affective commitment (β = -3.66), higher levels of job performance (β = .42), higher GPAs (β = .32), and higher levels of *i*ntention to quit (β = 2.85).

Furthermore, cadets who had been on academic probation at least once had lower measures of job performance (β = -.94), to include lower MPAs (β = -.18) and lower GPAs (β = -.77). Finally, cadets who were classified as ICs reported lower MPAs (β = -.13) and higher levels of intention to quit (β = 3.38).

Also, when intention to quit was the DV, proactive personality was significant in model 1, but not in models 2 or 3. This change suggests that the influence of social desirability decreased the amount of variance accounted for by the proactive personality construct. With regard to the social desirability and the interaction terms, out of the five models they were included in, none of the social desirability terms were significant and the interaction term was only significant for intention to quit. This suggests there is something unique about how social desirability and proactive personality work together to predict the level of intention to quit (β = -.06) and indicates that social desirability moderates the relationship between proactive personality and intention to quit. At increasing levels of social desirability, proactive personality was negatively related to intention to quit at an increasing rate. In addition, proactive personality was significant in model 1, but not in models 2 or 3. These results supported hypothesis 2c with a moderated relationship.

The third research question addressed any potential differences in the levels of proactive personality between first-year cadets and third-year cadets. Hypothesis 3 posited that there would not be a significant difference between the proactive personalities of the two classes. To examine the differences, an independent sample t-test was conducted to assess the potential difference in proactive personalities among cadets from the class of 2016 and the class of 2018. Results indicated there was no significant difference in the proactive personalities between the two classes of cadets.

This chapter presented the results of the quantitative analysis and addressed the first three research questions. Overall, results supported hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 2b, 2c, and 3. Hypothesis 2a was partially supported because proactive personality was a significant predictor of MPA, but not GPA or overall job performance. The next chapter presents the results from the qualitative analysis and chapter 6 includes a discussion and recommendations pertaining to all of the results.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

In addition to the quantitative questions, this study explored two qualitative research questions:

4. How do cadets define being proactive? What does proactive behavior look like to cadets?

5. From the cadets' perspective, how does being proactive influence cadet performance and leadership development?

To address these questions, the qualitative analysis consisted of thematic analysis techniques based on the works of Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2013). A total of 166 responses were used in the qualitative analysis; five participants from the class of 2016 did not submit answers for any of the questions requiring open-ended responses. Thus, a total of 96 responses from the class of 2016 and 70 responses from the class of 2018 were included in the qualitative analysis.

After initially reviewing each survey response, the process of phenomenological reduction was followed. According to Moustakas (1994),

the steps of Phenomenological Reduction include: *Bracketing*, in which the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question; *horizonalizing*, every statement initially is treated as having equal value. Later, statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are

deleted, leaving only the *Horizons* (the textural meanings and invariant

constituents of the phenomenon); *Clustering the Horizons Into Themes'*, and

Organizing the Horizons and Themes Into a Coherent Textural Description of the

phenomenon. (p. 97)

At the end of the phenomenological reduction process, the focus was on creating a

collective statement which represents the "essence" of what it means for cadets to

experience proactivity at the Academy. The open-ended survey questions addressed four

areas regarding proactivity at the Academy: how cadets define being proactive, what

proactive behaviors the cadets engage in, how proactive behavior benefits them, and how

cadets who are proactive are perceived by others cadets. To give voice to the cadets and

their experiences, direct quotes from the survey responses are used throughout this

chapter.

In order to analyze the survey responses, the data was exported from

SurveyMonkey into an Excel file; the file was then imported into NVIVO, a qualitative

analysis software package, as a dataset (Jackson, 2012). Prior to coding, the dataset was

auto-coded in two different manners. NVIVO uses the term "auto-code" to describe steps

that help researcher "automate some routine code-related tasks, giving more time to

concentrate on less mechanical, more interpretive work" (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p.

108). Contrary to what the term appears to mean, auto-coding does not automatically

code all of the qualitative data for the researcher; auto-coding can be used as a way to

prepare and set-up the dataset for the coding process. Accordingly, auto-coding is

described as "more of an administrative process than an interpretive process" (Jackson,

2012, p. 29).

To begin, the dataset was auto-coded by case (participant) and by survey question. Auto-coding by case created a node (i.e., folder, bucket, bin) for each participant that included only his or her survey responses. In addition, the dataset was auto-coded by question, which created a separate node for each survey question. Therefore, the data was able to be viewed in different ways, primarily by participant and by survey question. For example, all of the responses from the question that asked cadets to describe what being proactive means to them were placed into a node labeled as "Definition of Proactivity." This allowed the responses for each question to be grouped together during the coding process.

Furthermore, node classifications were created and linked to the survey responses, which allowed easy access to the demographic attributes associated with each individual response during the coding process (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Finally, using the demographic responses, several sets of participants were created within NVIVO, which enabled matrix coding queries and allowed for an analysis of responses from different groups of participants (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). The sets were based on the demographic data collected and included gender, ethnicity, projected graduation year, coaching experience, intercollegiate athlete status, and academic probation experience. As an example, this feature allowed for the comparison of male and female cadets in how they described the proactive behavior they engage in or how they felt proactive behavior influenced leadership development.

After the dataset was auto-coded, node classifications were created, and sets were created, the next phase of coding included "open coding." Open coding is an interpretive process in which the researcher determines "the meaning of a specific portion of text or

media" and then places the content into the appropriate node (Jackson, 2012, p. 29).

During the open-coding process, similar statements from the open-ended questions were

clustered into nodes and aggregated into themes.

Query Results

Two types of queries were run during the qualitative analysis: word frequency and

matrix. These queries were performed to complement the overall context for the cadets'

responses. Word frequency queries helped describe the dataset, while matrix coding

queries allowed for the analysis of the data based on different sets of cadet participants.

The use of matrix queries allows for a deeper look into a particular area within the data

and to compare responses for different groups of participants (Jackson, 2012). The

queried data included only the participants' responses, not the survey questions. The

word frequency query results are discussed below; results for the matrix queries are

discussed within the appropriate themes.

Table 15 includes results from a word frequency query for the top 35 most

commonly used words in the survey responses, including similar word stems. For

example, the most commonly used words across all of the responses included cadet and

cadets, which was used 201 times throughout the dataset. The word frequency query was

run prior to the open-coding process; this information is provided to help paint the picture

of what language was used by cadets within their responses. Upon examination of the

query results, five out of the top ten words used are related to taking some sort of action

(i.e., getting, helping, making, working, and changing), and the primary variable of

interest in the overall study, proactive, also falls into the top 10 words used by cadets in

their responses. In addition, several of the works appear to have a positive sentiment, such as better, good, and motivation.

Table 15

Word Frequency Query Results of the 30 Most Commonly Used Words

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
cadets	201	1.82	cadet, cadets
getting	173	1.57	get, gets, getting
people	157	1.42	people, peoples
help	147	1.33	help, helped, helpful, helping, helps
make	137	1.24	make, makes, making
things	136	1.23	thing, things
times	130	1.18	time, timely, times
working	119	1.08	work, worked, working, works
change	113	1.02	change, changed, changes, changing
proactive	110	1.00	proactive, proactively, proactivity
like	86	0.78	like, liked, likely, likes
taking	86	0.78	take, takes, taking
trying	85	0.77	tries, try, trying
done	84	0.76	done
think	83	0.75	think, thinking, thinks
need	82	0.74	need, needed, needing, needs
seen	82	0.74	seen
way	77	0.70	way, ways
better	69	0.62	better, betters
good	68	0.62	good
ahead	67	0.61	ahead
something	67	0.61	something
motivation	66	0.60	motivate, motivated, motivates, motivating, motivation, motivator, motivators
problems	66	0.60	problem, problems
want	65	0.59	want, wanted, wanting, wants
leadership	63	0.57	leadership
sees	63	0.57	see, seeing, sees
class	61	0.55	class, classes
academy	58	0.53	academies, academy
others	57	0.52	others

Figure 4 represents a cloud of the top 100 most commonly used words in the survey responses. The size of each word represents how many times it was mentioned; the bigger the word, the more times it was mentioned. In this case, it is easy to see which words were referenced the most and allows readers to get a feel for some of the key phrases and terminology used by cadets.

Figure 4. Top 100 Words used by participants in the survey responses.

Coding Process

Coding of the qualitative data was an interpretive process (Creswell, 2013) and included looking at the data from many different angles. Initially, the data from each individual question was examined. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes and trends using both inductive and deductive coding. Based upon the focus of the research questions and the specific questions asked in the survey, an initial coding structure was used; a node was created in NVIVO for each topic in the open-ended questions (i.e., definition, behavior, leadership development, benefits, and perceptions). Maxwell (2005)

refers to these as organizational categories, which are "broad areas or issues that you establish prior to your interviews or observations, or that could usually have been anticipated … Organizational categories function primarily as 'bins' for sorting the data for further analysis" (p. 97). Substantive categories are descriptive in nature and are based upon the content of the participants' responses (Maxwell, 2005). In NVIVO, the five organizational categories were labeled as nodes; then, sub-nodes were created for groups of significant statements and meaning units within each of the five nodes (Creswell, 2013).

The initial, surface-level coding of the responses resulted in the creation of 315 nodes or meaning units. The next round of coding focused on clustering similar nodes together based on similar meanings. This process was completed several times, resulting in a final total of 60 nodes. Table 16 displays the code reduction process for each of the five themes.

Table 16

Code Reduction Process

Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
1. Taking the Initiative (82) 2. Anticipate What's Coming (64) 3. Performing Duties (38) 4. Taking Action (37) 5. Making Improvements (13) 6. Planning Ahead (9) 7. Building Relationships (6)	1. Taking Action 2. Anticipating the Future 3. Performing Duties	Proactivity Defined by Cadets
1. Academics (51) 2. Time (49) 3. Relationships (40) 4. Anticipate 5. Initiate (19) 6. Improve (18) 7. Action & Performance (58) 8. Physical (16) 9. Participate (11) 10. Squadron (10) 11. Personal Attributes (16) 12. Goals (7)	1. Academics 2. Engaged in Cadet Life 3. Personal Attributes	Cadet Proactive Behavior
1. Positive (53) 2. It Depends (49) 3. Negative (40) 4. Labels (25) 5. Positive & Negative (16)	1. Sentiment 2. Labels Used to Describe Proactive Cadets	How Proactive Cadets are Perceived
1. Practice for Active Duty (94) 2. Anticipating & Planning (48) 3. Teaches (32) 4. Taking Care of People (20) 5. Setting the Example & Professionalism (17) 6. Initiative (13) 7. Time Management (12) 8. Improving (11) 9. Preventing Problems (8) 10. Opportunities (3) 11. Motivation (5) 12. Stand Out From Peers (4) 13. Communication (4) 14. Character & Integrity (3)	1. Practicing for Active Duty 2. Anticipating, Planning Ahead, and Additional Opportunities	Influence on Leader Development

1. Better Grades (30) 2. Reduced Stress (19) 3. Academics – Other (19) 4. More Time (18) 5. Building Relationships (14) 6. Increased Opportunities (12) 7. Avoiding Problems (11) 8. Athletics & Physical (10) 9. More Efficient (10) 10. Squadron Jobs (4) 11. Goals (4) 12. Has Not Helped (4) 13. Leader Development (3) 14. Understanding (3) 15. Teacher Feedback (2) 16. Well-Rounded Cadet (2) 17. Learning (2) 18. Maturity (2) 19. Planning (2) 20. Help Change Things (2) 21. Decision Making (2) 22. More Prepared (2)	1. Better Grades, Reduced Stress, and Increased Happiness 2. Increased Recognition and Relationships	How Proactive Behavior Helps

Note. The number of references for each basic theme is located in parentheses.

Themes

The five key topic areas in the qualitative data were: how cadets define proactivity, cadet proactive behavior, perceptions of proactive cadets, contributing to leadership development, and how proactive behavior helps. These topic areas are referred to as global themes in Table 16. Table 17 provides a synopsis of the global themes, to include the name of each theme, a brief description of each theme, and an exemplar quote that is a sample of the content contained within each respective theme.

Table 17

Description of Qualitative Themes

Global Theme	Description	Exemplar Quote
Proactivity Defined by Cadets	Explains what being proactive means to cadets	"Being proactive means looking for an opportunity amid an unclear future and seizing the initiative to act on it."
Cadet Proactive Behavior	Includes specific ways in which cadets engage in proactive behavior	"When it comes to new topics I always try to read ahead in books so that I can identify the topics that I struggle with, have my questions answered, and then go to class to reinforce what I learned. Additionally, I will do homework well in advance so that even if I forget that I had homework or assigned reading, it will already be done as opposed to not."
How Proactive Cadets are Perceived	Describes how natural "go-getter" cadets are perceived within the cadet wing	"It all depends on how they approach each situation. There is a difference between someone who likes a challenge and is ready and willing to work their butt off to accomplish it and someone who loves to tell people about how hard they're working and all of the awesome things that THEY are doing."
Influence on Leader Development	Explains how cadets believe proactivity is important to leader development	"Cadets who see an issue that needs fixing and take charge without being told are naturally developing their skills as leaders, and if they do it throughout their time here, they tackle newer challenges with the experience they gained from old ones."
How Proactive Behavior Helps	Describes how proactive behavior has helped cadets	"It has helped me do better with my grades and work harder. It has made me a better leader, wing mate, and squad mate. It also helps mold my character on a daily basis and gives me a feeling of self-pride."

Theme 1 – Proactivity Defined by Cadets

The first theme answers the first part of the fourth research question: how do cadets define being proactive? When asked to describe what they thought it meant to be proactive, cadets provided a wide range of responses. The first round of coding for this question resulted in the creation of 71 separate nodes; the second round consolidated several of the initial nodes into 7 nodes. The final round of coding resulted in additional clustering and merging similar groupings of statements in into a total of three nodes or organizing themes, which were also considered sub-themes: *taking action, anticipating the future,* and *performing duties*. The sub-themes are discussed in order of how many references were included in each sub-theme; the sub-theme with the highest number of references is discussed first.

Taking action. The first sub-theme in the cadets' definitions included the concept of *taking action*. Within that concept, 132 references included the following concepts: taking the initiative, getting things done without being asked, getting involved, preventing and solving problems, seeking opportunities, staying motivated, and making improvements. A male Service Academy Exchange Program cadet from the U.S. Naval Academy shared that being proactive means "Getting involved in the school with leadership roles and volunteering for activities and to help run activities." Another male cadet from the class of 2016 responded that "Being proactive means looking for an opportunity amid an unclear future and seizing the initiative to act on it." Overall, over half of the cadets mentioned something about taking initiative in their responses and 23 of the responses related to getting things done without having to be asked.

A male cadet in his first year at the Academy who aspires to become a pilot, stated that being proactive means "being quick to act and willing to participate and make change in order for your and someone else's benefit." The cadet definitions also included the notion of "doing what needs to be done." A female meteorology major from the class of 2018 stated that being proactive means to "go out and do what needs to be done without being told to by other people." Finally, making the choice to act was mentioned by one cadet in particular; a female cadet from the class of 2016 who hopes to become a developmental engineer on active duty; she stated being proactive means "choosing to do something even when your action is not necessarily required, but beneficial." Overall, nearly one-quarter of the participants included some sort of action in their definition of being proactive.

In addition to taking action and anticipating the future, another theme present within the definitions provided by the cadets included the concept of making *improvements*. A female philosophy major from the class of 2016 stated that being proactive means, "looking around and noticing anything that could be improved, and doing it yourself before your superiors have to ask you." A female mechanical engineering major, also from the class of 2016, stated that being "proactive means that you're thinking one step ahead and are constantly doing things to better yourself and complete your job."

Anticipating the future. Another key aspect of the cadets' definitions included the concept of *anticipating* what needs to be done in the future. A total of 73 references included the concept of anticipating, planning ahead, or completing tasks ahead of time. A first-year cadet who had completed Character Coaching stated, "To be proactive is to

work ahead and consciously make decisions which better self and environment. To remain diligent in all activities." A third-year economics major stated that being proactive is "anticipating the work that needs to be done. Usually, a proactive person is a great organizer that knows the right time to start studying ahead of schedule." Another nine references were made regarding the future; a female cadet from the class of 2016 wrote that being proactive means "Taking advantage of the situation and looking beyond today." Another female cadet in her first year, stated that being proactive means "to take initiative and do your job as well as you can, as efficiently as you can and take steps to ensure things continue to go smoothly in the future." Fourteen cadets included the concept of preparing for the future in their definitions. A female cadet in her third year shared,

> I think it means to be prepared for the future and on top of your game. I think that the road can change unexpectedly, but if you are prepared for what you expected to happen, the change in the road will be less dramatic.

A male cadet from the class of 2018 shared his definition of proactivity: "Work ahead of assignments, know and be actively engaged in preparing for what is coming in the future rather than reacting as events come." Finally, three references included the concept of perspective, such as recognizing what needs to be done, observing what is happening around you, and seeing the big picture. Nearly 40% of the cadets made a reference to anticipating the future when providing a definition of proactivity.

Within this sub-theme, planning ahead was also mentioned several times. The sub-theme of planning included setting and meeting goals; and being organized. A male political science major in his third year responded that being proactive is "always

knocking out the goal that is closest to your first while also keeping in mind the goals that lay in the future." Another cadet in his third year at the Academy shared that being proactive means "seeking out experiences and opportunities and putting my best effort into making my goals come to fruition." With regard to being organized, a third-year economics major stated "a proactive person is a great organizer that knows the right time to start studying ahead of schedule." A total of nine references were made to planning.

Performing duties. *Performance* was another concept within the definitions provided by cadets. Within performance, cadets provided answers that included phrases, such as, "going above and beyond," "staying on top of your work," being "actively engaged," and completing work in a "timely manner." A female biochemistry major in her first year at the Academy responded that to her, being proactive means:

> To go out of your way to make sure that even though your work meets the standards, that you make sure you do the best job you can do even if that means going above and beyond. It also means taking an initiative when the chance arises.

Furthermore, a male biochemistry major in his third year at the Academy shared that being proactive means "doing something above or beyond the requirements to better yourself, others or the institution as a whole." A male first-year cadet who hopes to become a pilot, stated that being proactive means to "be actively engaged in preparing for what is coming in the future rather than reacting as events come." In addition, several cadets made reference to knowing what their duties are and completing work in a timely manner. Along similar lines, a first-year female cadet who would like to become a pilot stated that in being proactive, "Planning is essential as well as knowing what exactly your

duties are." There were 38 references made to the concept of performance in the cadet definitions of proactivity.

Cadets were asked to describe what being proactive meant to them as a way to answer the first part of the fourth research question: how do cadets define being proactive? Overall, the cadets provided a wide range of answers; all of the responses were grouped into three sub-themes. Simply stated, for Academy cadets, being proactive encompasses taking action, anticipating the future, and performing their duties.

Theme 2 – Cadet Proactive Behavior

This theme answers the second part of the fourth research question: what does proactive behavior look like to cadets? To answer this question, cadets were asked to describe proactive behaviors they personally exhibit at the Academy. This theme is distinct from the previous theme in that the survey question asked cadets to list actual behaviors they exhibit versus providing a definition of proactivity. Many of the responses to this question were similar to the definitions provided for what the cadets think it means to be proactive. However, a few different themes were distinguished regarding specific examples of how cadets are proactive. The initial round of coding resulted in a total of 61 separate nodes. Subsequent coding resulted in a total of 13 nodes regarding cadet proactive behavior. The final round of coding collapsed the 13 nodes into 6 sub-themes. In addition to the sub-themes discussed in Theme 1 (*taking action*, *anticipating the future*, and *performing their duties*), the cadets offered specific ways in which they engage in proactive behavior in the following areas: *academics*, *engaged in cadet life*, and *personal attributes*. Because many of the responses were similar to responses in the

previous theme, only the three new organizing themes, also referred to as sub-themes, are discussed.

Academics. Many of the cadets provided specific ways in which they are proactive when it comes to *academics*, to include attending Extra Instruction (EI), keeping on top of assignments, and studying. A total of 50 responses included behavior directly related to academics. Specifically, a female political science major in her third year responded "I'm academically proactive. I'm very driven in my studies. I think that's my most important duty here right now so that's where I find I am most committed and proactive." When it came to academics, "not procrastinating" was mentioned specifically by three cadets and going to EI was mentioned by 8 cadets. However, the category of responses which had the most references in it was "keeping on top of assignments"; nearly 25% of participants indicated they are proactive in this manner. A first-year foreign area studies major reported: "I usually go to my first class of the day thirty minutes to an hour early and stay second period if it is available." Another first-year cadet shared his strategies for being proactive in his classes:

When it comes to new topics I always try to read ahead in books so that I can identify the topics that I struggle with, have my questions answered, and then go to class to reinforce what I learned. Additionally, I will do homework well in advance so that even if I forget that I had homework or assigned reading, it will already be done as opposed to not.

Furthermore, a third-year political science major explained how he is proactive by: "printing out and organizing all course readings from lesson one, starting papers early, building relationships with Air Officers Commanding, cadets, and instructors before any

problems have occurred." Overall, many cadets reported ways in which they engage in proactive behavior within the realm of academics.

Engaged in cadet life. In addition to attending classes, cadets have many other requirements to fulfill, as well as opportunities to participate in other activities. In their responses, cadets talked about being *engaged in cadet life*. Within this concept, three sub-categories were evident: *athletics and physical requirements*, *participating in events*, and *life in the squadron*.

Athletics and physical requirements. First, an area in which cadets described engaging proactive behavior was in the area of *athletics* and the other *physical requirements*, such as the Aerobic Fitness Test (AFT) and Physical Fitness Test (PFT), team sports, and working out. Four cadets specifically referenced the AFT/PFT requirement and that they work on preparing for those assessments ahead of time. The AFT includes a timed 1.5 miles run and the PFT is comprised of 5 events: pull-ups, long jump, crunches, push-ups, and a 600-yard run (www.academyadmissions.com). A computer engineering major from the class of 2016 stated, "working out for the AFT/PFT even if it's a long way off" is how he is proactive in this area of cadet life. In addition, a first-year biology major shared that she "works on my physical conditioning on my own at times." A total of 16 references were made to working out, team sports, or preparing for the required physical assessments that are required for cadets each semester.

Participating in events. Next, cadets discussed how they *participate* in different types of events as a way of being proactive. One first-year cadet mentioned he "goes to all training sessions so I can be a part of my 4-degree [first-year] team even if I could schedule an EI request last minute to get out of it." An exchange cadet described

attending meetings with permanent party members to discuss potential institutional

changes. A first-year female cadet "participates in many clubs to exceed my potential."

Another first-year female cadet stated she attends squadron events as a way of being

proactive. Starting or participating in community service events was also mentioned by

four cadets. A total of 11 references were made to participating in different types of

events as a means of being proactive.

    Life in the squadron. The third sub-theme in the proactive behavior described by

Academy cadets included *life in the squadron*. Eight references were made to the jobs

cadets hold within their respective squadrons and to helping in the squadron. A female

operations research and applied math double major from the class of 2016 explained:

> I frequently go for the higher jobs in my squadron so I have the ability to change
>
> things for my classmates and squad-mates that I feel are not beneficial to them.
>
> As an element leader this semester, I speak up when something goes wrong with
>
> the people in my element and try to get them the fairest treatment possible.

On the other end of the spectrum, a mechanical engineering major in this third year

shared, "I am not very proactive with respect to extensive military activities. I usually

hold a fairly low responsibility job so that I can focus my time on academics." The cadets

who mentioned helping within their squadrons referenced keeping their rooms clean,

taking laundry to cadets' rooms, and participating in squadron events. Furthermore, a

male first-year cadet indicated he is proactive by "keeping my squad mates up to date."

    In addition, several references were made to communicating with and leading

other members of the squadron. A female legal studies major who hopes to enter the

Office of Special Investigations, stated, "You go to your people continuously and often to

see how they are. This way you aren't just talking to them when they get in trouble or when they need help. They know that they care about you." Furthermore, a first-year cadet who hopes to become a pilot shared,

> I am really attached to my classmates. I notice what they are going through and how it is affecting the goals they brought with them. If I feel someone from my social circle or work environment is leading himself or herself to something that can be harmful. Instead of idly sitting, I try to warn them and reason them through it to stop or change the course of actions.

Personal attributes. Finally, some of the cadets included *personal attributes* in their description of the proactive behavior they engage in; nine references were made to having a good attitude, being aware of their surroundings, standing up for what they believe in, being consistent, listening, and being loyal as ways they can be proactive. A female cadet from the class of 2018 who aspires to be an intelligence officer shared:

> As a Doolie [first-year student], I think proactive can also be an attitude choice. We have a lot thrown out us, and it can be easy for us to grow stagnant towards this system, but it is up to us to stay positive and make the best of it.

In addition, a male cadet in his third-year who plans to become a dentist stated he engages in proactive behavior by "being aware of what's going on around me, and trying to see more." As indicated in the cadet responses, being proactive can include internal thought processes as well as physical actions.

> Overall, cadets provided a wide range of proactive behaviors they engage in at the Academy. First and foremost, cadets are proactive when it comes to academics; they attend EI sessions with instructors when they need help in a class, keep on top of

assignments and projects, and study ahead of time for tests. Outside of their academic requirements, cadets are also engaged in proactive behavior in other areas of cadet life; these areas include keeping in shape and preparing for athletic assessments, participating in events within the squadron or on the Academy, and they plan to hold different levels of jobs within their squadrons. Finally, cadets engage in internal proactive behaviors, such as maintaining a positive attitude or being aware of their surroundings. Cadets indicated they engage in a myriad of behaviors they consider proactive across all three key mission element areas in Academy cadet life (academics, military, and athletics/physical).

Theme 3 – How Proactive Cadets are Perceived

The next theme also answers the fourth research question: what does proactive behavior look like to cadets? This theme addressed perceptions of cadets who are considered by others to be naturally proactive or natural "go-getters" within the cadet wing. When asked how these cadets are perceived, the content of the responses indicated two organizing or sub-themes: the sentiment associated with the perceptions of naturally proactive cadets and labels given to the naturally proactive cadets. With respect to the sentiment expressed within the responses, 53 references (33%) contained positive statements regarding the proactive cadets; 49 (30%) stated that how they are perceived depended on the cadet's approach; and 40 references (25%) contained negative statements regarding the proactive cadets. Regarding the labels, several cadets referred to the proactive cadets using specific words that implied a negative connotation.

Sentiment. Several cadets from both classes indicated that the cadets perceived as natural go-getters have a good reputation. A male first-year cadet stated, "Respect can go a long way in life. Their influence motivates many around them and those are the people

who guys like me want to learn from." Another male cadet from the class of 2018 shared, "the go-getters are seen very highly through the eyes of most cadets because it usually means they want to make a change to the academies ways of life in a positive way for younger and future cadets." A female first-year cadet explained, "They have good reputations because they bring the people around them up, so everyone does better. People look at them as motivating and inspiring." Furthermore, a male cadet from the class of 2016 shared the following thoughts on how the cadets seen as natural go-getters are perceived: "People that are fun and enjoyable to be around. They are also inspiring people to pursue their own personal goals each day."

Many cadets indicated that how the natural go-getters are received depends on their approach. A male biochemistry major from the class of 2016 stated,

It all depends on how they approach each situation. There is a difference between someone who likes a challenge and is ready and willing to work their butt of to accomplish it and someone who loves to tell people about how hard they're working and all of the awesome things that THEY are doing.

Another third-year male cadet shared, "How they're seen depends on how they influence their environment." Furthermore, a female from the class of 2016 explained,

It depends on the way they approach the problem. Those who influence the environment because they honestly think it will help are seen in a positive light. However, those who influence the environment just to say they influenced/changed something (or it appears that way) are seen negatively.

A female first-year cadet thinks there is a double-standard with respect to gender and natural go-getters: "I believe it depends on the gender. If it is a guy, they are seen as

outgoing, really good with people. If it is a girl, they are seen as rude and known as different rude names."

Finally, forty cadets responded that cadets who are natural go-getters are viewed negatively. A female first-year cadet shared, "These people are often seen as softhearted people who want to violate tradition. They are seen as whining about the current circumstances, rather than being seen as someone who is trying to create a better system." A second female first-year cadet explained, "They don't have a very good reputation. Upper classmen don't like people who have the ability to influence the environment. They want things as it is. So someone of the nature is usually considered kind of a rebel." A third first-year female cadet stated,

> I think at the Academy the natural go-getters tend to have a negative association, to some degree. I mean almost everyone here is a go-getter to some extent, otherwise they probably wouldn't be here. But those who exert themselves beyond that tend to be seen as trying to hard or too 'hooah.'

In addition, two male cadets from the class of 2016 also thought the proactive cadets are perceived in a negative manner. The first cadet stated, "They are seen in a negative light - I think the 'go getter' mentality here at USAFA is not truly intrinsic as their class rank and potential job opportunities are tied to their positions as cadets." Similarly, the second male cadet shared,

> Most people see those people as 'stuck up' -- it's like they think they are better and want to step on others to succeed. However, I realize this point of view yet disagree. I think it is important to be ambitious.

An additional 16 cadets included a positive and negative statement within their responses. For example, a male systems engineering major from the class of 2016 shared, "I think positively of them, yet others who hope things will just go their way sometimes get jealous since they just see the go-getters getting everything they want, but do not understand the work that goes into it." These statements indicated that the individual cadet thought highly of the go-getters, but that others thing negatively of them.

Labels used to describe proactive cadets. Finally, within these responses, an interesting trend emerged. Twenty-five cadets used a handful of labels to help describe how the naturally proactive cadets are perceived across the cadet wing. Three labels were used several times within the responses: "try-hards," "too hua," and "tool." Cadets used the term "try-hard" 11 times to describe the natural go-getters and cadets who try too hard to perform well. The term "too hua" was used 6 times and implied that the cadet was an overachiever; "hua" is a phrase commonly used by U.S. Army soldiers as an affirmative response or an acronym for "heard, understood, acknowledged." In addition, the terms "tool" or "toolbag" were used 5 times, indicating a cadet who follows the rules and corrects others when they are not following the rules, such as or wearing their uniform properly. Other labels that were included in the responses included "goo," "goodie two shoes," "narp," "nerd," "overachiever," "pet," "brown-noser," and "stuck up." For example, a male first-year cadet shared, "Sometimes, depending on what their motivation is, they are seen as too 'hua.' Other times, though, as I have observed, they are looked upon as a promising leader and a great officer-candidate that I would want to follow." Similarly, a third-year male management major stated, "They see them as impressive or try-hards, depending on their personality. The try-hards are the ones that

are go getters, but let you know that they are go getters. They seek attention. This is 90% of the academy." Overall, these labels had a negative context associated with them.

Because this was not an anticipated sub-theme, I dug a little deeper to see if I could parse out which cadets may have been more likely to view the naturally proactive cadets with a positive or negative perception. When the responses were examined using a matrix query in NVIVO, results indicated that more than twice as many cadets from the class of 2016 used the answer of "it depends" as compared to the class of 2018; 33 cadets from the class of 2016 (33%; N = 96) and 15 cadets from the class of 2018 (21%; N = 70) said that how the "go-getter" is perceived depends on his or her approach and attitude. In addition, the responses from the class of 2018 contained a higher number of positive statements regarding the naturally proactive cadets (30 positive and 17 negative), while the responses from the class of 2016 were evenly split between positive and negative statements regarding the proactive cadets (23 each). Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the sentiment within the responses by class, which provides additional insight for how cadets feel about other cadets who are naturally proactive and out-going.

When I looked further into the specific attributes of the cadets who used labels to describe the naturally proactive cadets, the results indicated that the numbers of cadets who used a label to describe other cadets who are considered to be naturally proactive were relatively evenly distributed by class, coaching experience, and gender. The biggest difference was in class: 15 cadets from the class of 2016 used labels and 10 cadets from the class of 2018 used labels in their responses. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of cadets who used a label in their response by class, gender, and whether or not they participated in Character Coaching.
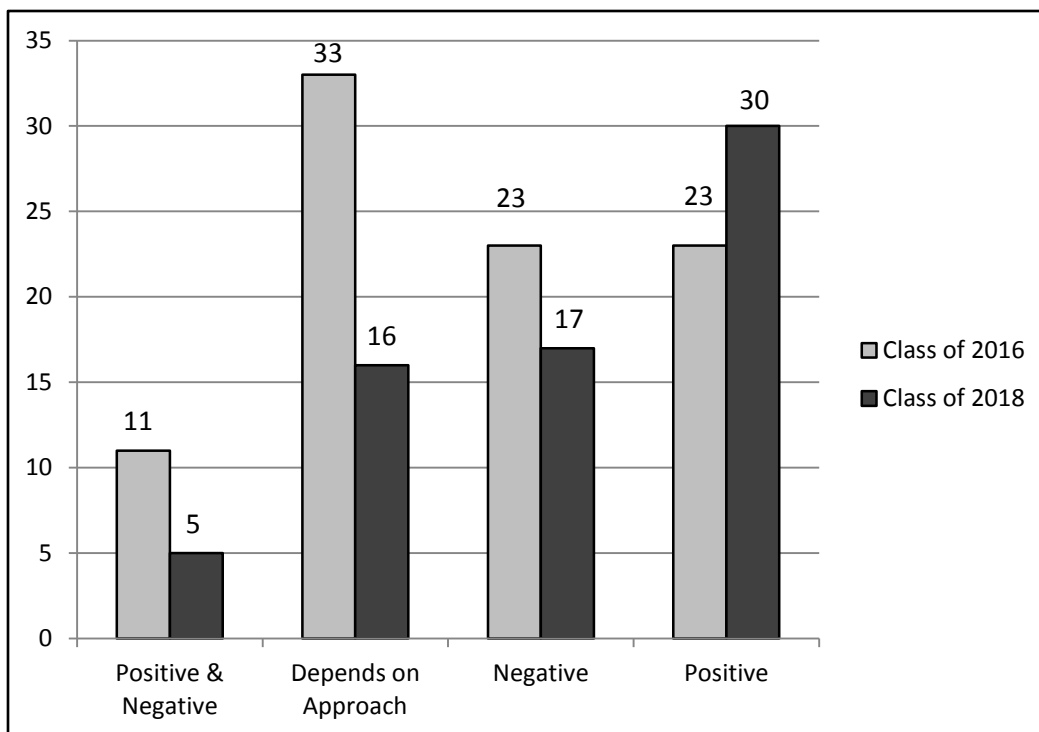
Figure 5. Breakdown of how naturally proactive cadets are perceived by class.

Overall, participants did not agree on how cadets who are perceived as naturally proactive or go-getters are seen throughout the cadet wing. Responses were relatively evenly split between positive, negative, and "it depends" answers. Furthermore, 16% of respondents used a label, such as "try-hard," "too hua," and "tool" to describe how naturally proactive cadets are perceived within the cadet wing.

Theme 4 – Influence on Leader Development

This theme answers the first part of the final research question: from the cadets' perspective, how does being proactive influence leadership development? Within this theme, cadets provided examples of how being proactive is important to their personal
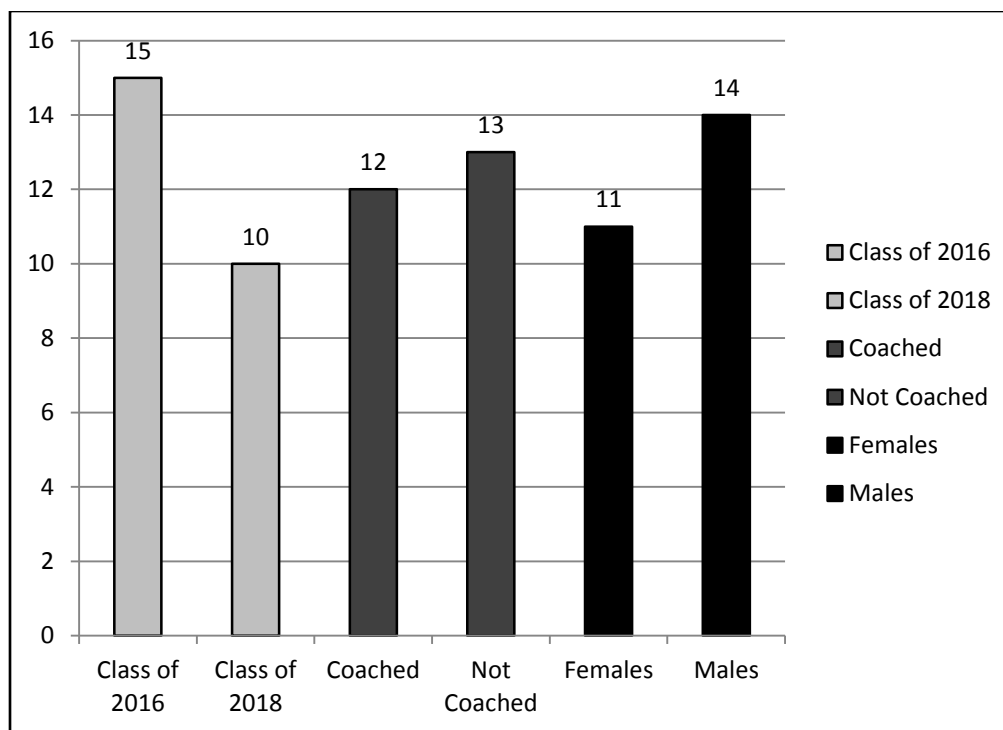
Figure 6. Breakdown of cadets who used labels to describe naturally proactive cadets.

leadership development. Initial coding of this question resulted in 89 sub-nodes; in the

second round of coding, similar statements were combined into clusters of meaning,

resulting in 43 sub-nodes. The next round of coding resulted in 22 sub-nodes, and the

final round of coding resulted in a total of 6 sub-nodes. The two most prominent sub-

nodes with regard to the influence of proactive behavior on leadership development are

discussed in detail: *Practicing for Active Duty* and *Anticipating, Planning, and*

Opportunities.

Practicing for active duty. One of the prominent sub-themes was the concept of

cadets being able to practice their leadership skills ahead of graduating and entering

active duty; a total of 106 references were made to this concept. Within this sub-theme,

several concepts related to practicing for active duty, which included teaching; building

connections; time management; setting the example; and improving. A first-year male

cadet stated, "The more proactive you are as a cadet, the easier it will be to use your 'skills' in life after graduation." A cadet from the Class of 2018 who hopes to enter the intelligence field, provided her insight on how proactivity is important to leader development,

> As officers we need to understand how to make the best decisions, and to do so quickly. By being a proactive cadet we prepare for the times when we are leaders and have to make decisions that have greater effects than the possibility of doing pushups.

Similarly, another male computer and network security major who plans to go into the Cyber Operations career field, stated, "It will allow a cadet to in the future be able to handle the large amounts of responsibilities that new Lieutenants will have." Finally, a female biochemistry major from the class of 2016 explained that, "Cadets have to be proactive now, because in the big AF, there won't be other leaders there to explicitly tell you what needs to get done." The environment at the Academy allows cadets to practice their leadership skills before entering active duty.

Teaching. A total of 32 cadets referred to *teaching* when responding to the question about how being proactive helps in the leadership development process. Cadets discussed that practicing their skills teaches them to be able to focus on important tasks, teaches them responsibility, builds awareness, enables independence, and trains cadets how to be more effective and efficient. Cadets included phrases, such as "teaches how to be a leader to subordinate and peers," "teaches them to be bold and not afraid to make changes," "teaches you that the bare minimum shouldn't be the standard," "teaches them to solve problems," "teaches them to prioritize their schedules," and "teaches you to

understand the mission and work hard to accomplish it." A female legal studies major

from the class of 2016 shared, "It teaches you that you cannot be reactionary in the real

world and be a good officer. You need to plan ahead in order to fulfill the mission and

accomplish goals." Furthermore, a first-year male cadet who would like to become a pilot

explained that, "If you can learn how to be proactive, you may be able to teach your

Airmen how to be proactive. Or, maybe your attitude will motivate them to be proactive."

According to the responses, engaging in proactive behavior helps teach cadets many

skills required to become a leader.

Setting the example & building professionalism. Several cadets thought being

proactive helped *set an example* for others they are trying to lead. For example, a first-

year male cadet shared, "Without it, you cannot preach pro-activity and excellence to

those that you lead. It also puts you in a mind set to always get things done for your

people ASAP and care right away." Similarly, a first-year biology major explained,

"Leaders must set an example. If the leader is not proactive with his work, how can we

expect subordinates to do the same?" From a different perspective, a third-year male

cadet stated, "making a habit of procrastinating looks bad to those beneath you." A

female third-year cadet explained how being proactive helps you enhance your

professionalism: "As you move up the leadership later, more responsibility is put on your

plate. Therefore it is important to be proactive to decrease the chance of feeling

overwhelmed as things pile up." A total of 17 cadets stated that setting the example and

learning how to be professional was important to the leadership development process.

Improving. Eleven cadets provided responses that included references to making

changes and improving themselves and their environment as part of the leadership

development process. For example, a female first-year cadet stated,

> One needs to be proactive in order to be a leader. You can't lead someone if you sit in the shadows and don't do anything to make lives (whether it be your own or someone else's) better in some way, one should always be striving to improve themselves.

In addition, a male biochemistry major from the class of 2016 explained, "As a budding leader, if we see things that are within our power to improve the academy we should be confident that we can affect change." Furthermore, another male cadet from the class of 2016 stated,

> Cadets who see an issue that needs fixing and take charge without being told are naturally developing their skills as leaders, and if they do it throughout their time here, they tackle newer challenges with the experience they gained from old ones.

Finally, a first-year female cadet shared,

> It [being proactive] is a huge part of a cadet's leadership. To be proactive means that Academy and the Cadet Wing is only improving. Without being proactive, I feel like an individual is hindering their progress as a leader and just as an individual.

Overall, the concept that cadets are able to practice their leadership skills before going on active duty was important to the cadets when relating proactivity to the leadership development process. The 4-year Academy experience teaches cadets how to focus, how to be independent, how to be responsible, how to be aware of their surroundings, and how to be effective and efficient. In addition, cadets build connections with peers and subordinates. Cadets have the opportunity to set the example for others

and enhance their professionalism. Furthermore, cadets can practice their time management skills and can also look for opportunities to make improvements. From the cadets' perspective, engaging in proactive behavior has a positive influence on their leadership development process.

Anticipating, planning ahead, and additional opportunities. A total of 49 cadets mentioned the concepts of anticipating, planning ahead, taking the initiative, preventing problems, and increased opportunities with regard to the leadership development process. A first-year male cadet shared that, "A leader must be proactive in order to always think a step ahead, or think about how actions will evolve and create new dilemmas." Another first-year male cadet explained, "We need to plan things well in advance so that our subordinates have enough reaction time to follow us." Finally, a female management major who would like to go into the acquisitions career field, stated, "As you move up the leadership ladder, more responsibility is put on your plate. Therefore, it is important to be proactive to decrease the chance of feeling overwhelmed as things pile up." A dozen cadets felt that being able to anticipate and plan ahead was important to their leadership development.

Initiative. Cadets also feel that being proactive helped them have initiative, which is an importance piece of their leadership development process. When asked how being proactive is important to his leadership development, a third-year management major stated, "It shows initiative and confidence. When a leader shows these types of traits, people are more willing to follow." In addition, a male first-year aeronautical engineering major shared, "If you can spot what needs to be done and take the initiative to do it, you will know what to expect when in charge."

Time management. Twelve references were made to *time management* as it relates to leadership development. The overall feeling was that practicing good time management skills will allow cadets to free up time to dedicate to other tasks, such as leadership development. As such, a third-year male cadet who is a civil engineering major stated, "If you aren't proactive then you are reactive and often behind in your duty. By being proactive you have a lot more control of your time and environment which you can use to develop your leadership." A female cadet from the class of 2018 shared, "A cadet cannot lead unless they can first take care of themselves and their time allotment." Similarly, a male systems engineering major from the class of 2016 stated, "[Being proactive] allows you to practice time management. Last minute people make terrible bosses because they struggle to take care of themselves and give the people below them short suspenses for tasks." Being proactive helps facilitate time management skills.

Additional opportunities. According to several cadets, being proactive also affords cadets more time to pursue leadership opportunities at the Academy. A first-year male cadet who hopes to become a pilot has already discovered that, "The most important leadership development opportunities only happen once you have a handle on the 'busy work' or other less helpful items such as school, meaningless training, random briefings, and other fluff of cadet life." A female third-year economic major who also hopes to become a pilot shared, "The Academy is full of opportunities that cadets could really miss out on if they are not proactive." Similarly, another third-year female cadet explained,

> If a cadet isn't proactive, they won't get to experience the full multitude of experiences and opportunities the Academy has to offer. Additionally, cadets have

to be proactive now, because in the big AF, there won't be other leaders there to explicitly tell you what needs to get done.

Overall, the cadets provided many different types of answers when asked how being proactive contributes to the leadership development process. Cadets stated that being proactive gave them a chance to practice for life on active duty through building connections with other people, seeking opportunities to make improvements, setting the example for others, and building their skills as a professional. In addition, cadets felt that being able to anticipate the future and to plan ahead contributed to their leadership development.

Theme 5 – How Proactive Behavior Helps

The second part of the fifth research question inquired about how proactive behavior helps with cadet job performance. Cadets responded with many different ways in which being proactive has helped them in their life at the Academy. Initial coding of this question resulted in 79 separate nodes; subsequent rounds of coding resulted in 52 nodes. The top two areas in which being proactive have benefitted cadets are as follows: *better grades, reduced stress, and increased happiness,* and *increased recognition and relationships*.

Better grades, reduced stress, and increased happiness. A total of 69 cadets specifically mentioned that being proactive has helped them earn better grades, reduce their stress, and increase their happiness. In addition to earning higher grades, the cadets also mentioned other benefits that complemented their higher grades. For example, a first-year male cadet who wants to become a pilot shared how being proactive has benefitted him personally,

It has helped me do better with my grades and work harder. It has made me a better leader, wing mate, and squad mate. It also helps mold my character on a daily basis and gives me a feeling of self-pride.

In addition, a third-year female political science major stated,

I've gotten good grades and had some incredible experiences. Some of it fell into my lap without me doing the work, but some things I had to pursue. I've really enjoyed those experiences I fought for. I feel as though I accomplished something.

Another third-year cadet explains how being proactive helped him achieve higher grades, but that being proactive also presented a challenge for him:

It has both helped and hindered me. It has helped me achieve a high GPA, helped me get plenty of sleep at night, and increased my overall fitness dramatically. It has hurt because I identify problems that people don't want identified and that I am not in a position to fix or to see the whole picture of.

Another seventeen cadets mentioned that being proactive helped them to not fall behind in their schoolwork, allowed them to complete assignments on time, and enabled them to seek help from instructors when needed. Overall, close to a quarter of the participants reported that being proactive has benefitted them in the area of academics.

With regard to reducing stress, a first-year cadet shared that being proactive "relieves some of the stresses of being a freshman. If I can work on push-ups on my own, then when I am in a training environment, I will not struggle, and can give back to the team." Another first-year cadet stated, "Being proactive reduces stress and has made school easier to handle." A female from the class of 2016 stated simply, "I am much

happier and able to sleep better." A male from the class of 2016 explained, "It often cheered me up when I was going through hard times."

Increased recognition and relationships. A total of 27 cadets mentioned that engaging in proactive behavior allowed them to be recognized more by others and allowed them to cultivate relationships with others.

Recognition. Cadets explained that by being proactive, they have earned more recognition and respect from their instructors and fellow cadets. A third-year female economics major shared, "It has gotten me recognition and respect. And honestly it has made me happier. If you don't take advantage of the experience while you're here, you're going to be miserable sitting in your room." A first-year female biochemistry major explained,

> Being proactive really helps you to be noticed. When you even do small tasks, people notice and when you do them with a positive attitude, it becomes really noticeable. Not only has it helped me to be seen as a good trustworthy cadet it has also allowed me to develop my personal relationships with other Cadets as well.

Furthermore, a third-year geospatial sciences major stated, "It has helped me gain not only the respect, but appreciation from others. Many cadets know they can count on me and like how approachable I am." Finally, a male first-year cadet stated, "It has made me become the sort of cadet I'd hoped I would be in the eyes of my leadership, contributing to a cause rather than weighing one down." Approximately 32% of the sample reported increased levels of respect and recognition and relationship-building.

Relationships. Fourteen cadets mentioned that they were able to build new relationships or strengthen their current relationships as a result of being proactive. A

third-year male who has a double major (political science and legal studies), shared that, "It has enabled me to better understand the needs of those around me." A third-year female biochemistry major explained, "I've connected better with people and gotten jobs that I love and I wouldn't have been able to have had I not gone after them and been proactive." Similar to the time sub-theme, caring for others and building relationships was a consistent response across all of the themes.

To expand on the idea of building relationships and caring for others, cadets also included the notion of helping and caring for others within three of the other themes. Six cadets specifically mentioned the concept of helping others in their definitions of proactivity. For example, a management major from the class of 2016 shared the following: "to me it [being proactive] means to be actively involved with the subordinates and be there for them all the time when they need you." In addition, a female systems engineering major from the class of 2018 shared, "Proactive means that you take it upon yourself to go out and do the things that need to be done not only for your job but for yourself and others." A male biochemistry major from the class of 2016 who is also an intercollegiate athlete stated that being "Proactive means that you take it upon yourself to go out and do the things that need to be done not only for your job but for yourself and others."

When cadets were asked to provide examples of the proactive behavior they have engaged in, 40 references were made towards building relationships and connecting with others. A female third-year materials chemistry major shared her example of proactive behavior, "I check in on element members to see how they are doing." Another female third-year cadet shared that she is proactive by "asking my subordinates how they're

doing before they tell me there is a problem." A third female cadet from the class of 2016 shared the following with regard to how she engages in proactive behavior: "You go to your people continuously and often to see how they are. This way you aren't just talking to them when they get in trouble or when they need help. They know that they care about you." Finally, another female third-year cadet stated that she gets to know people on a personal level as a way of engaging in proactive behavior. Two cadets specifically mentioned going to their AOC if they have a problem and building relationships with their AOC and fellow cadets as a way of being proactive.

In addition, when asked how being proactive influenced their leader development, twenty cadets included references to taking care of subordinates as a leader. Cadets connected that being proactive allowed them more time to dedicate to taking care of the people around them. A third-year cadet who wants to become a pilot stated, "Without it, you cannot preach pro-activity and excellence to those that you lead. It also puts you in a mindset to always get things done for your people ASAP and care right away." Another third-year cadet shared, "It shows that you care, and people are much more likely to listen and follow when they know that you care." Furthermore, a third male cadet from the class of 2016 explained, "If you can take care of your own work then you can look out for others and set an example." According to the cadets, being proactive enables cadets to learn how to take care of people, which is an important leadership skill. Overall, a total of 66 references were made to building relationships and caring for others across four of the five key themes.

In summary, cadets reported many ways in which engaging in proactive behavior has benefitted them. First and foremost, being proactive resulted in better grades for

many cadets. Also within the academic realm, cadets reported that being proactive allowed them to keep up with their work. In addition, cadets reported being happier and less stressed. They also reported being recognized and gaining respect from others as a result of being proactive. In addition to the top two areas mentioned by cadets as benefits of being proactive, cadets also reported that being proactive helped them to: build relationships, perform better athletically, get more sleep, be more productive, feel more prepared, and to have a positive mindset. Overall, many of these responses indicated that proactive behavior did help cadets increase their job performance.

Discussion

The purpose of the qualitative analyses was threefold: to enrich and inform the quantitative analyses, to explore how cadets define being proactive and what proactive behavior looks like to them, and to explore how cadets believe being proactive influences cadet performance and leadership development. The results from the analyses helped to answer the qualitative research questions.

Thematic analyses techniques were used within NVIVO to analyze the responses to the open-ended survey questions. Based on the topics included in the questions, five overall themes were created: how cadets define proactivity, cadet proactive behavior, perceptions of proactive cadets, contributions to leadership development, and outcomes of proactive behavior. Each theme had several sub-themes within it. Looking across the results, it is evident that many of the sub-themes were consistent across more than one of the five primary themes. For example, anticipate, initiative, performance, planning, and time management were evident in three of the primary themes. In addition, two sub-themes appeared across four of the five primary themes: improving and building

relationships. All of the sub-themes included in the definition of proactive were also evident in the cadet descriptions of the proactive behavior they engaged in. The leader development and outcomes of proactive behavior themes included a more diverse list of responses than the other three themes. Overall, the responses provided answered both of the qualitative research questions.

In response to the first research question, Academy cadets consider being proactive as taking action, anticipating the future, and performing their duties. Cadets engage in many different proactive behaviors, ranging from attending Extra Instruction sessions with academic instructors and starting projects early to preparing for bi-annual athletic assessments in advance, participating in squadron events, and maintaining an overall positive attitude. Cadets engage in a myriad of proactive behaviors across all three key mission element areas (academics, military, and athletics/physical). Cadets do not agree on how other cadets who are considered naturally proactive or "go-getters" are perceived by others within the cadet wing. Responses were relatively evenly split between participants who thought perceptions regarding the naturally proactive cadets were positive, negative, and "it depends on their approach." Furthermore, labels such as "try-hard," "too hua," and "tool" were used by several cadets when describing how naturally proactive cadets are perceived within the cadet wing. When cadets were asked to describe what being proactive meant to them personally and what proactive behaviors they exhibit, the responses were generally positive; however, the responses when cadets were asked to describe other naturally proactive cadets contained more responses with a negative context. With respect to themselves, being proactive seems generally well accepted, whereas, other cadets who are naturally proactive or outgoing are not

universally viewed in a positive manner depending on how the cadets come across.

With regard to leadership development, being proactive gives cadets a chance to practice for life on active duty through building connections with other people, seeking opportunities to make improvements, setting the example for others, and building their skills as a professional. In addition, being able to anticipate the future and to plan ahead contributed to the cadets' leadership development in a positive manner.

With regard to cadet performance, cadets reported many ways in which engaging in proactive behavior benefitted them. First and foremost, being proactive resulted in better grades for many cadets. Also within the academic realm, being proactive allowed them to keep up with their work. In addition, cadets reported that proactive behavior lead to being happier and less stressed. Cadets also reported increased recognition and additional respect from others. Although many cadets indicated that being proactive resulted in better grades, only a handful of cadets mentioned specific increases in their military or physical appraisals. Thus, the cadets realized benefits primarily in the areas of academics and in their personal well-being.

Finally, table 18 is presented as a summary of the number of references in each theme broken down by class year to help further understand some of the areas where there are consistencies and divisions in thinking within the five themes. The table breaks down the sub-themes with respect to the number of references made by cadets in the two different classes. For example, when responding what being proactive means to them, first-year cadets tended to include words and phrases related to performing duties as compared to third-year cadets. In addition, there was a noticeable difference in the number of positive references between the two classes regarding the perceptions of the

Table 18

Number of References within each Theme Broken Down by Class

	Class of 2016 N = 96	Class of 2018 N = 70
1. Define Proactivity		
Taking Action	19 (20%)	18 (26%)
Anticipate What's Coming	*42 (44%)*	*22 (31%)*
Making Improvements	5 (5%)	8 (11%)
Taking the Initiative	*53 (55%)*	*29 (41%)*
Building Relationships	3 (3%)	3 (4%)
Performing Duties	**13 (14%)**	**25 (36%)**
Planning Ahead	5 (5%)	4 (6%)
2. Cadet Proactive Behavior		
Relationships	20 (21%)	20 (29%)
Academics	*24 (25%)*	*27 (39%)*
Anticipate, Plan, Prepare	*64 (67%)*	*38 (54%)*
Engaged in Cadet Life	19 (20%)	18 (26%)
Personal Attributes	10 (10%)	6 (9%)
Taking Action	34 (35%)	24 (34%)
3. Perceptions Regarding Naturally Proactive Cadets		
Both Positive & Negative	11 (11%)	5 (7%)
Depends on Approach	*33 (34%)*	*16 (23%)*
Negative	23 (24%)	17 (24%)
Positive	**23 (24%)**	**30 (43%)**
Labels	15 (16%)	10 (14%)
4. Contributes to Leader Development		
Anticipating & Planning Ahead	27 (28%)	21 (30%)
Practice for Active Duty	54 (56%)	40 (57%)
5. How Proactive Behavior Helps		
Better Grades	*24 (25%)*	*25 (36%)*
Academics (Other)	9 (9%)	10 (14%)
Reduced Stress	27 (28%)	25 (36%)
Avoid Problems	9 (9%)	2 (3%)
Build Relationships	6 (6%)	8 (11%)
Increased Opportunities	8 (8%)	4 (6%)
Time	8 (8%)	10 (14%)

Note. Italicized numbers indicate a difference of > 10%; bold numbers indicate a difference > 15%.

naturally proactive cadets; the class of 2018 has almost double the number of positive comments as the class of 2016.

This chapter presented the results of the qualitative analysis and addressed the two qualitative research questions. The following chapter includes a discussion pertaining to the quantitative and qualitative results separately as well as the collective results. In addition, implications, conclusions and recommendations for future research are presented in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The analysis considered the results from two perspectives, including a quantitative analysis of survey data and a qualitative analysis of open-ended survey responses. Collectively, proactive personality theory (Bateman & Crant, 1993), and the CCLD's (2011) Conceptual Framework for Development Leaders of Character provided the foundation and focus for this study and were used as theoretical lenses through which to view the results. Using the research questions and relevant literature as a guide, this chapter begins with a review of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses and how they compared and contrasted with previous literature. Next, the collective findings are presented and discussed, followed by implications, recommendations, future research possibilities, and concluding thoughts relating to the overall study.

Quantitative Analysis

First, the quantitative analyses examined the influence of cadets' proactive personalities on variables related to cadet life and examined the potential difference in proactive personalities among first-year and third-year cadets. Consistent with previous studies, results supported hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 2b, and 3. Thus, proactive personality was a significant predictor of perceived organizational support (POS), leader-member exchange (LMX), affective commitment, job satisfaction, and military performance

averages (MPA) for cadets in the sample. However, hypotheses 2a and 2c were not supported; thus, there was no evidence that proactive personality influenced overall job performance, GPA, and intention to quit.

Research Question #1

The first research question explored how a cadet's proactive personality influenced levels of POS, LMX, and affective commitment.

POS. Hypothesis 1a posited that a cadet's proactive personality would positively influence their level of POS. Correlations between POS and affective commitment and between POS and intention to quit supported Wayne et al.'s (1997) findings; POS was positively correlated with affective commitment ($r = 0.53$, $p < .01$) and negatively correlated with intention to quit ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$). In addition, proactive personality was found to be a significant predictor of POS ($\beta = .04$, $p < .01$). Thus, a cadet's propensity to engage in proactive behavior predicted the level to which the cadet feels the Academy supports him or her as an individual; the more proactive a cadet is, the more supported they feel.

LMX. Hypothesis 1b posited that a cadet's proactive personality would positively influence their level of LMX. Results from this study were consistent with Fuller and Marler (2009), in which they found proactive personality to be positively related to LMX. Findings supported a positive, significant correlation between proactive personality and LMX ($r = .32$, $p < .01$) and found proactive personality to significantly predict LMX ($\beta = .40$, $p < .01$). In the context of this study, this means that a cadet's tendency to engage in proactive behavior predicted the quality of the exchanges between the cadet

and their Air Officer Commanding (AOC); the more proactive a cadet is, the better the quality of his or her relationship with the AOC.

Affective Commitment. Hypothesis 1c posited that a cadet's proactive personality would positively influence their level of affective commitment. Consistent with previous literature (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas et al., 2010), results indicated a significant positive relationship between proactive personality and affective commitment ($r = .31$, $p < .01$). Results from the regression analysis also indicated that proactive personality is a significant predictor of affective commitment ($\beta = .34$, $p < .01$), meaning that a cadet's tendency to engage in proactive behavior predicted his or her level of emotional attachment to the Academy. The more proactive a cadet is, the greater his or her emotional attachment to the Academy.

Research Question #2

The second research question assessed how a cadet's proactive personality influenced job performance, job satisfaction, and the cadet's intention to quit the Air Force.

Job Performance. Hypothesis 2a posited that a cadet's proactive personality would positively influence their overall job performance, as measured by their MPA and GPA. The regression results for job performance from this study were not consistent with previous studies which examined the relationship between proactive personality and job performance. Prior studies reported a significant positive relationship between the two variables (Crant, 1995; Grant et al., 2009; Fuller & Marler, 2009; Thomas et al., 2010, Thompson, 2005). Although results from this study supported a positive correlation between proactive personality and job performance ($r = .17$, $p < .05$), proactive

personality was not found to be a significant predictor of job performance for cadets in the regression analysis. A potential explanation for this contradiction could be the way job performance was measured. Whereas previous studies used measures such as number of houses sold (Crant, 1995) and supervisor performance evaluations (Grant et al., 2009), this study used cadet MPAs and GPAs to represent job performance. In addition, the unique student/working context for cadets could have contributed to the results. Previous studies used employees when measuring job performance, as compared to college students. Furthermore, when the variables which comprised job performance were examined individually, MPA was found to be significantly correlated with job performance ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) while GPA was not. proactive personality was a significant predictor of MPA ($\beta = .01$, $p < .05$), but not GPA. Thus, a cadet's tendency to engage in proactive behavior was a predictor of how they were assessed in their military duties, but not with their academic grades. This was an interesting finding and will be discussed in more detail as part of the collective findings.

Job Satisfaction. Hypothesis 2b posited that a cadet's proactive personality would positively influence their job satisfaction. Consistent with findings published by Fuller and Marler (2009) and Thomas et al. (2010), the results from this study indicated a positive correlation between proactive personality and job satisfaction ($r = .35$, $p < .01$). In addition, proactive personality was found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction among cadets ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$), meaning that cadets' tendencies to engage in proactive behavior predicted their level of job satisfaction as cadets. This means that as a cadet's likelihood to be proactive increased, the cadet's job satisfaction also increased.

Intention to Quit. Hypothesis 2c posited that a cadet's proactive personality would negatively influence their intention to quit. The relationship between proactive personality and intention to quit had not been examined exclusively prior to this study. However, the significant negative correlation between POS and intention to quit ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$) is consistent with results published by Wayne et al. (1997). Two things were noted in these results; in the third model, the proactive personality variable was not significant, but the interaction term for proactive personality and social desirability was significant. The significant interaction term indicated that the cadets' tendency to provide socially desirable responses moderated the influence of proactive personality on the cadets' intention to quit ($\beta = -.06$, $p < .05$). This means that at increasing levels of social desirability, proactive personality is negatively related to intention to quit at an increasing rate. The interaction term was only significant in the intention to quit models. Although the beta is small, this suggests there is something unique about how social desirability and proactive personality work together to predict a cadet's intention to quit ($\beta = -.06$).

Furthermore, when intention to quit was the DV, proactive personality was significant in model 1 (social desirability variable not included), but not in models 2 (social desirability variable included) or 3 (social desirability and interaction term included). This change suggests that controlling for the moderation of social desirability on the influence of proactive personality on intention to quit resulted in less variance being accounted for by the cadets' proactive personalities.

Research Question #3

The third research question explored potential differences between the proactive personality of first-year and third-year cadets. Hypothesis 3 posited that there are no

differences between the two year groups with regard to proactive personalities.

Consistent with the literature which stated proactive personality is a stable tendency

(Bateman & Crant, 1993), results indicated there was no significant difference in the

proactive personalities between the two classes of cadets. Although there were no

significant differences in the levels of proactive personalities between first- and third-

year cadets, when cadets from different year groups were compared using other variables,

there were several significant differences. Compared to first-year cadets, third-year cadets

had lower levels of POS (β = -4.22), lower levels of affective commitment (β = -3.60),

higher levels of job performance (β = .42), higher GPAs (β = .32), and higher levels of

intention to quit (β = 2.85). These results were not expected; it is interesting that third-

year cadets have lower levels of POS and affective commitment. In addition, the fact that

third-year cadets had higher levels of intention to quit was not expected. However, if they

have lower levels of POS and affective commitment, the higher intentions to quit do

make sense. One thing to note was that the intention to quit measure addressed the

cadets' intention to quit over a period of time to include their time at the Academy and

their time on active duty. In the future, it would be better to focus on one or the other to

narrow down when the cadet is intending to quit. Overall, these results indicate there may

be something significantly different with regard to the culture associated with first- and

third-year cadets.

In addition, there were a few trends with regard to academic probation and

intercollegiate athletes (ICs). Not surprisingly, cadets who had been on academic

probation at least one time had lower measures of overall job performance (β = -.94), to

include lower MPAs (β = -.18) and GPAs (β = -.77). Although MPAs and GPAs are

calculated differently, the two variables were positively correlated ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), meaning that as GPAs increase, MPAs also increase. Finally, cadets who were classified as ICs reported significantly lower MPAs ($\beta = -.14$) and had higher levels of intention to quit ($\beta = 3.50$) when compared to cadets who were not ICs. A potential explanation for this is that ICs tend to spend less time in their squadrons because of team practices and games, resulting in lower visibility with cadet leadership and permanent party leadership, resulting in lower MPAs. In addition, it was interesting that ICs had higher intentions to quit the Air Force. This could be a result of ICs possibly deciding to come to the Academy based on the opportunity to play sports versus an overall desire to serve in the Air Force.

Overall, the quantitative results answered the first three research questions and provided additional insight into how the cadets' proactive personalities are shaping some of their Academy experiences. Many of the findings were consistent with previous studies; however, several areas for future research were uncovered based on unexpected differences among different groups of cadets. Overall, hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 2b, and 3 were supported, while hypotheses 2a and 2c were not supported. The results from the qualitative analysis are highlighted next.

Qualitative Analysis

The results from the qualitative analyses addressed the final two research questions and explored how cadets defined being proactive, what proactive behaviors they engaged in, how proactive cadets are perceived by others, how proactive behavior influenced cadet performance, and how proactive behavior influenced leadership development. Five themes emerged from the qualitative thematic analysis: how cadets

define proactivity, cadet proactive behavior, perceptions of proactive cadets, importance to leadership development, and outcomes of proactive behavior.

Consistent with the proactive personality literature, hypotheses 4a was supported, which posited that cadets define being proactive as a positive factor in their cadet experience. Hypothesis 4b was partially supported, which posited that cadets would define proactive behavior at the Academy to include the following behaviors: scanning for change opportunities; setting effective, change-oriented goals; anticipating and preventing problems; doing different things, or doing things differently; taking action, persevering, and achieving results. Cadets gave examples which included five of the seven proactive behaviors listed in the literature. With the exception of persevering, all of the other examples were evident in the cadet responses. Hypothesis 5a and 5b were both supported, which posited that being proactive positively influenced cadets' job performance and leader development. Cadets gave a wide range of examples in which being proactive benefitted their performance and their development as a leader. Overall, hypotheses 4a, 5a, and 5b were supported and hypothesis 4b was partially supported.

Research Question #4.

The fourth research question explored how cadets define being proactive and what proactive behavior looks like to cadets. Hypotheses 4a was supported, which posited that cadets define being proactive as a positive factor in their cadet experience. Hypothesis 4b was partially supported, which posited that proactive behavior at the Academy would include scanning for change opportunities; setting effective, change-oriented goals; anticipating and preventing problems; doing different things, or doing things differently; taking action, persevering, and achieving results. The examples

provided by cadets included all of these except persevering. Overall, there were three qualitative areas addressed regarding the fourth research question; these three areas include how cadets define proactivity, cadet proactive behavior, and how proactive cadets are perceived.

How cadets define proactivity. Based on the participants' responses, Academy cadets considered being proactive to include taking action, anticipating the future, and performing their duties. Grant and Ashford (2008) defined proactive behavior as "anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments" (p. 8). Cadet definitions were consistent with definitions in the literature.

Cadet proactive behavior. In addition, cadets reported engaging in many different proactive behaviors, ranging from attending extra instruction sessions with academic instructors and starting projects early, to preparing for bi-annual athletic assessments in advance, participating in squadron events, and maintaining an overall positive attitude.

Bateman and Crant (1999) listed the specific behaviors of proactive people, which include scanning for change opportunities; setting effective, change-oriented goals; anticipating and preventing problems; doing things differently; taking action; persevering; and achieving results. With the exception of doing things differently and persevering, all of the other examples highlighted by Bateman and Crant (1999) were similar to answers provided by cadets. In addition, the two distinctive characteristics of proactive behavior, acting in advance (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Frese & Fay, 2001) and intended impact (Bateman & Crant, 1999), were also evident in the definitions provided by the cadets.

With respect to the five dimensions in which proactive behavior varies (Grant & Ashford, 2008), cadet responses fell into three of the five dimensions. Cadets were specific in the forms of proactive behavior they engaged in (i.e., planning ahead, seeking help), their intended target (i.e., the individual cadet, squadron mates or classmates), and the specific tactics they used, (i.e., going to extra instruction sessions, starting homework early, using free periods to work ahead). However, cadet definitions did not address how often their proactive behavior occurred (frequency) or in what "particular occasions, phases, or moments" their proactive behavior took place (timing) (Grand & Ashford, 2008, p. 12). Perhaps future research could focus more within these two areas.

Furthermore, Grant and Ashford (2008) outlined proactivity as a process which includes the following three phases: anticipating, planning, and action directed toward future impact. As outlined in Table 15, the concepts of anticipating, planning, and taking action were evident within the definitions of proactivity and examples of proactive behavior provided by cadets. The list of proactive behaviors cadets engaged in spanned across all three key mission element areas (academics, military, and athletics/physical).

Finally, two of the three processes within the interactionist approach were prominent within the definitions and examples of proactive behavior provided by the cadets. According to Bandura (1986), symbolic processes in the form of "images of a desirable future" allow a person to create courses of action designed toward reaching a goal (p. 13). In their responses, cadets talked about anticipating the future, making improvements, and working towards goals. They also mentioned concepts consistent with practicing their leadership skills for when they enter active duty, which is a reflection of visualizing their future as an officer. Next, self-regulatory processes appeared to have a

role in shaping the cadets' experiences. As such, "people are not simply reactors to external influences. They select, organize, and transform the stimuli that impinge upon them" (Bandura, 1977, p. vii). In this respect, cadet responses indicated that they take the initiative, are engaged in cadet life, and that they seek additional opportunities, which indicate that they do actively interact with the environment at the Academy. However, cadets did not address specific situations where they might or might not decide to be proactive in. Thus, additional research is required to look deeper into whether the situations experienced by cadets at the Academy are "as much a function of the person as the person's behavior is a function of the situation" (Bowers, 1973, p. 327).

How proactive cadets are perceived. Cadets did not agree on how other cadets who are considered naturally proactive or "go-getters" are perceived within the cadet wing. Relatively equal percentages of cadets felt perceptions regarding the naturally proactive cadets were positive, negative, and "depends on their approach." Finally, labels such as "try-hard," "too hua," and "tool" were used by several cadets when describing how naturally proactive cadets are perceived within the cadet wing. When cadets were asked to describe what being proactive meant to them personally and what proactive behaviors they exhibit, the responses were generally positive; however, when cadets were asked to describe other naturally proactive cadets, the responses contained more responses with a negative context. Being proactive seemed generally well accepted when considered for themselves as individuals. However, other cadets who are naturally proactive or outgoing are not universally viewed in a positive manner depending on the cadet's attitude or approach. Finally, the literature review for the current study did not explore how proactive people are perceived in other contexts outside of this sample.

Class differences. Furthermore, when the themes were examined from the perspectives of the two individual classes, there were a couple of noticeable differences. First, when asked what being proactive means to them, first-year cadets tended to include words and phrases related to performing duties as compared to third-year cadets who tended to include words and phrases related to anticipating the future or taking the initiative (see Table 18). A possible explanation for this could be that the first-year cadets were still trying to get used to the fast-paced cadet life and associated expectations, whereas third-year cadets are more settled in and are able to focus more of their energy towards future events and expectations. In addition, there was a noticeable difference in the number of positive references between the two classes regarding the perceptions of other naturally proactive cadets; the class of 2018 has almost double the percentage of positive comments as the class of 2016. Overall, definitions provided by cadets and the examples of proactive behavior they engaged in were consistent with the previous literature on proactivity.

Research Question #5

The final research question addressed two different areas of cadet life: how does being proactive influence cadet job performance and leadership development? Hypotheses 5a was supported, which posited that from the cadets' perspectives, being proactive positively influenced their job performance. Hypothesis 5b was also supported, which posited that from the cadets' perspective, being proactive positively influenced their development as a leader. Cadets provided numerous examples of how engaging in proactive behavior had benefitted their performance and leadership development. The

final two qualitative areas addressed the fifth and final research question; these two areas include "Importance to Leader Development" and "Outcomes of Proactive Behavior."

Importance to leader development. Although proactive personality has been discussed in prior literature through the context of transformational and charismatic leadership (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant & Bateman, 2000; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012), proactive personality had not been addressed through the context of leader development prior to this study. When asked how being proactive was important to a cadet's leadership development, cadets primarily felt being proactive gave them an opportunity to practice for life on active duty through building connections with other people, seeking opportunities to make improvements, setting the example for others, and building their skills as a professional. Being proactive allows cadets to complete what is expected of them so they can focus on larger issues.

The Academy is unique in that the cadets know they will be entering active duty upon graduation. They may not know what career field they will enter until their final year, but they enter the Academy knowing that when they graduate, they will be an officer in the Air Force. Furthermore, some career fields are competitively based, so cadets have motivation to be proactive if they have a specific career field for which they are working towards getting selected. In addition, the cadets felt being able to anticipate the future and to plan ahead positively contributed to their leadership development.

Overall, the notion that cadets are able to practice their leadership skills before entering active duty was important to cadets when relating proactivity to their personal leadership development. The 4-year Academy experience teaches cadets how to focus, how to be independent, how to be responsible, how to be aware of their surroundings, and

how to be effective and efficient. In addition, cadets build connections with peers and subordinates and learn how to take care of others. Cadets have the opportunity to set the example for others and enhance their professionalism. Furthermore, cadets can practice their time management skills and can also look for opportunities to make improvements. From the cadets' perspective, engaging in proactive behavior has a positive influence on their leadership development process.

Outcomes of proactive behavior. When asked how being proactive helped them at the Academy, cadets reported many different ways in which engaging in proactive behavior had benefitted them. First and foremost, being proactive resulted in higher grades for nearly 20% of the sample. Also within the academic realm, being proactive allowed cadets to keep up with their school work, seek help when needed, complete assignments on time, and not fall behind in their work. According to the responses, cadets realized benefits primarily in the area of academics. In addition, cadets reported benefits related to their personal well-being, such as being happier, less stressed, getting more sleep, and having more time for their social life. Cadets also reported higher levels of being recognized by others as well as gaining respect from others. Finally, cadets referenced being able to help others and build relationships as a result of being proactive.

Class differences. When the final two themes were examined from the perspectives of the two individual classes, there were several consistencies and one primary difference (see Table 18). The classes were consistent in their examples of how being proactive is important to leadership development; however, when they were asked how being proactive had benefitted them at the Academy, a higher percentage of first-year cadets reported that being proactive resulted in achieving higher grades. A possible

explanation for this could be that, as compared to third-year cadets who have more experience with academics at the Academy, the first-year cadets are still trying to figure out how to manage their academic load; thus, they may be actively trying to sort out what proactive behaviors are working to their benefit. This information is provided for additional context and insight into the final two themes.

Looking across all of the qualitative results, it is evident that many of the basic themes (see table 15) were consistent across more than one of the five primary themes. For example, anticipate, initiative, performance, planning, and time management were evident in three of the primary themes. In addition, two sub-themes appeared across four of the five primary themes: improving and building relationships. All of the sub-themes included in the definition theme were also evident in the cadet descriptions of the proactive behavior they engaged in. The leader development and outcomes of proactive behavior themes included a more diverse list of responses than the other three themes. Overall, the responses answered both of the qualitative research questions.

Collective Findings

The quantitative and qualitative analyses and results were initially considered independently. Once both of the separate analyses were complete, the results were considered together at the same time to illuminate potential consistencies and contradictions. Collectively, there were several consistencies across the results and one key contradiction in the area of how cadets reported proactive behavior benefitted them. Each of the research questions will be addressed from the perspectives of the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Research Question #1

Considering the quantitative results in which proactive personality was found to be a significant predictor of POS, LMX, and affective commitment in cadets, it made sense that the definitions for proactivity and the examples of proactive behavior provided by the cadets were generally positive and consistent with the definitions provided in the literature. Cadets who are more likely to engage in proactive behavior have higher levels of feeling supported by the Academy, have higher quality leadership exchanges with their AOC, and have more of an emotional attachment to the Academy. The quantitative relationships discovered aligned with the positive sentiment of the qualitative findings.

Research Question #2

In addition, cadets' proactive personalities were found to positively influence their job satisfaction, positively influence their MPAs, and negatively influence their intention to quit, moderated by social desirability. Cadets' proactive personalities were not significant predictors of cadets' overall job performance or GPA. The primary contradiction between the quantitative and qualitative results fell in the specific area of academics within the broader category of cadet performance. Although proactive personality was not found to be a significant predictor of overall job performance or GPA in the quantitative results, nearly 20% of the cadets reported that their grades improved as a result of being proactive in the qualitative results. This contradiction is surprising and warrants further research, perhaps in the form of in-depth interviews or focus groups with cadets and academic instructors, which would allow for a deeper look at this inconsistency.

Research Question #3

The quantitative results for the third research question indicated there were no significant differences between the proactive personalities of first- and third-year cadets – proactive personality is stable. In the qualitative results, however, a few differences were highlighted within the five key themes (see Table 18). The differences in the definition theme were such that first-year cadets focused more on performing their duties, while third-year cadets focused more on taking the initiative and anticipating the future. Similarly, within the examples of proactive behavior provided by the cadets, first-year cadets focus more on examples related to academics and third-year cadets focused more on anticipating, planning, and preparing for the future. With regard to how cadets perceive other proactive cadets, more first-year cadets reported having a positive perception of them. When asked to describe how being proactive had benefitted them, first-year cadets reported being proactive has helped them improve their grades more often than third-year cadets, which aligned with the differences identified in the definitions the cadets provided.

Research Question #4

This research question explored how cadets define being proactive and what proactive behavior they have engaged in. Three areas were explored "How Cadets Define Proactivity," "Cadet Proactive Behavior," and "Perceptions of Proactive Cadets." Considering the quantitative results, the cadet responses regarding what they thought being proactive meant and what proactive behavior they engaged in, supported the quantitative findings in that, according to cadets, proactive behavior influenced several

areas of cadet life, to include academics, their emotional well-being, and their overall satisfaction with cadet life.

Research question #5

The final research question addressed the influence of proactive personality on cadet performance and leader development from a qualitative perspective. Cadets responded with many different ways in which being proactive has helped them at the Academy. The most referenced areas in which being proactive benefitted cadets were: improved grades, reduced stress, and increased happiness, and increased recognition and relationships. As previously discussed within this section for the second research question, there was one primary contradiction between the quantitative and qualitative results with regard to how being proactive influences cadets in the area of academics. The other outcomes of proactive behavior listed by cadets were consistent with the quantitative results in that proactive personality positively influenced POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, MPA, and intention to quit. While the cadet responses did not use these terms specifically, the basic themes were similar to the overall concepts. For example, POS could be seen in the increased recognition and respect; the construct of LMX is reflected in the area of building relationships and teacher feedback. The notion of affective commitment was evident in the cadet responses that addressed enhanced understanding, increased maturity, and helping to change things. Job satisfaction was clearly evident in the outcomes of proactive behavior provided by cadets, such as better grades, reduced stress, increased happiness, more time, and increased opportunities. Finally, the notion of intention to quit was not evident in the answers

provided by the cadets in relation to how being proactive has benefitted them at the Academy.

Overall, considering both sets of results at the same time creates a third perspective from which to view the collective results. Several consistencies were evident among both sets of results; however, one key contradiction in the area of academics warrants further research to clarify the inconsistency between the qualitative and quantitative results in this one specific area.

Impact and Implications

Significance to USAFA

This study created a foundation for exploring proactive personality within a specific context that had not been examined previously. A baseline was established for examining proactivity in Academy cadets and an overall description of how proactive behavior occurred for cadets was provided. Furthermore, this study explored how cadets' proactive personalities influenced a variety of variables (POS, LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and intention to quit). Results will inform USAFA senior leaders regarding how focusing on the development of cadets' proactive personalities could contribute to their leader development. Furthermore, results could also inform additional military communities, to include other military academies, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, or Officer Training School. Results will be made available to the Academy leadership and other relevant communities.

This study has demonstrated that cadets' proactive personalities influenced several areas of cadet life, connecting the findings with the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 1. Results from this study will benefit USAFA in its continuing

progress to enhance the leadership development of cadets. Specifically, results will help

plant a seed for how the construct of proactive personality may fit into the CCLD's

(2011) Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character.

As depicted in Figure 3, the process of developing a cadet into a Leader of

Character at the Academy comprises three parts: owning his or her development process

toward a desired identity (a leader of character), engaging in purposeful experiences, and

practicing habits of honorable thoughts and actions (CCLD, 2011). Two of the three

pillars (own, engage, and practice) upon which the Framework rests overlap with the

responses provided by cadets. Specifically, cadets reported that being proactive

encompassed being engaged and being able to practice for their life on active duty.

However, the concept of owning their own development did not overlap with any of the

definitions or experiences reported by the cadets. Thus, one specific recommendation is

to link the concepts of owning their development and being proactive; thereby engaging

cadets in the leadership development process sooner. Although attempting to further

develop cadets' Proactive Personalities may prove to be challenging, the cadets may be

able to own their development process in a more complete way if they are encouraged,

supported, and coached on how to access the concept of "being proactive as a cadet."

Overall, both the quantitative results and the qualitative perspectives of cadets indicated

that being proactive has been beneficial in many areas of cadet life, to include the leader

development process.

Significance for AOCs

Results from this study supported a positive, significant correlation between

proactive personality and LMX ($r = .32$, $p < .01$) and found proactive personality to

significantly predict LMX (β = .40, *p* < .01). In the context of this study, this translates to cadets' tendencies to engage in proactive behavior predicting the quality of the exchanges between the cadets and their AOC; the more proactive a cadet is, the better the quality of his or her relationship is with the AOC. Future research should examine if similar results exist for different relationships cadets have across different mission elements, such as athletic coaches or academic instructors. For AOCs, these results reinforce the importance of not only to what role of being proactive plays in their relationships with cadets, but also as an overall reminder of how the constructs of proactive personality and proactive behavior have been shown to positively influence many areas of cadet life.

Specifically, the benefits associated with proactive personality should be addressed as part of the AOC Master's Program, the one-year academic program focused on developing leadership and counseling skills for Air Force officers who have been selected to become AOCs. Future AOCs receive training on leadership coaching during their training; coaching cadets on the benefits of engaging in proactive behavior and how to gain access to being proactive at the Academy may be useful in the cadets' leadership development. Two additional areas for AOCs to focus on include helping cadets to understand it is acceptable to view other proactive cadets in a high regard, and helping proactive cadets with their approach to being proactive and how their actions are perceived by others.

Recommended Future Research

This study has identified several areas in which future research could be useful. Future research should replicate the study using samples from different higher education organizations, such as other military service academies, ROTC cadets, or other university

students. Comparisons could then be made between the proactive personalities of Academy cadets and other student populations. In addition, the current study could be repeated in one or two years to examine potential change in proactive personalities of cadets over time. Furthermore, although this study is descriptive in nature and does not attempt to infer any causality between proactive personality and any of the other variables, a repeat of the current study using a random sample of cadets from all four year groups at the Academy would allow for the inference of causality and perhaps provide additional insight into the phenomenon of proactive personality at the Academy.

The context regarding LMX was limited to one superior-subordinate relationship between the cadet and his or her AOC. Given that cadets in their first and third years have just recently moved into their squadrons, it may be beneficial to explore different relationships cadets have across different mission element areas, such as those they have with academic instructors or team coaches.

Future research might also focus on the influence of organizational tenure on POS and affective commitment, as well as examining these concepts across all four year groups of cadets. Also, this area would benefit from the ability to dig deeper into these topic areas using a methodology which included in-depth interviews or focus groups.

With respect to the five dimensions in which proactive behavior varies (Grant & Ashford, 2008), cadet responses fell into three of the five dimensions. Cadets were specific in the forms of proactive behavior they engaged in (i.e., planning ahead, seeking help), their intended target (i.e., the individual cadet, squadron mates or classmates), and the specific tactics they used, (i.e., going to Extra Instruction sessions, starting homework early, using free periods to work ahead). However, cadet definitions did not address how

often their proactive behavior occurred (frequency) or in what "particular occasions, phases, or moments" their proactive behavior took place (timing) (Grand & Ashford, 2008, p. 12). Future studies could provide additional focus within these two areas.

Finally, cadets did not directly address which situations they might or might not decide to be proactive in. Social Cognitive Theory and the concept of interactionism states that a person's actions are dependent upon the person and the setting in which the person is in. Future research in this area would strengthen the alignment of cadet behavior within these concepts and provide further insight into the cadet decision-making process with respect to engaging in proactive behavior.

Conclusion

This research contributed to the literature on proactive personality by examining the construct within a new context that had not been previously explored. This study created a foundational baseline regarding the proactive personality of military academy cadets. Specifically, results provided insight into the proactive disposition of Academy cadets and the proactive behavior they engage in. Cadets provided their perspectives on how proactive behavior contributes to their leadership development and performance and allowed for the "essence" of what it means to be proactive at the Academy to be conveyed. Overall, the proactive personality of cadets was shown to predict how cadets feel supported by the Academy, the quality of their relationship with their AOC, their emotional attachment to the Academy, their job satisfaction, their MPA, and their intention to quit. Cadets also provided detailed descriptions of how they define being proactive, what proactive behaviors they have engaged in, how proactive cadets are perceived by others, and how proactive behavior contributes to performance and leader

development. The collective responses contributed to the overall essence of what it means to be proactive at the Academy from the perspectives of cadets.

The mixed methods approach allowed the phenomenon of being proactive at the Academy to be examined from both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The collective results support the notion that encouraging cadets to be proactive and helping them gain access to being proactive may contribute to their leadership development. The results also align with Bandura's (2003) assertion that "People are producers of their environment, not just products of it." As such, the construct proactive personality should be considered as part of the CCLD's (2011) Conceptual Framework for Developing Leaders of Character in the future, specifically within the area of cadets owning their development, the first key step in the deliberate process of leader development at the Academy.

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Appendix A

Survey Protocol

Demographic Questions (17 items)

1. What is your gender? (male or female)

2. What is your ethnicity? (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Hispanic American, White/Caucasian, Multiple ethnicity).

3. In what year will you graduate? (2016 or 2018)

4. (Class of 2016) Are you a Service Academy Exchange Cadet? (yes or no)

5.

    a. (Class of 2016) Did you participate in MOSAIC Character Coaching during your fourth-class year? (yes or no)

    b. (Class of 2018 Only) (Spring semester only) Are you participating in the MOSAIC Character Coaching program this semester? (yes or no)

6. What is your cumulative GPA? (number ranging from 0 to 4.0)

7. What is your cumulative MPA? (number ranging from 0 to 4.0)

8. Are you an international student? (yes or no).

9. What is your academic major? (open text)

10. What career field do you hope to be assigned to? (open text)

11. Are you an intercollegiate athlete? (yes or no)

12. Have you ever been on Honor Probation? (yes or no)

13. Have you ever been on Academic Probation? (yes or no)

Proactive Personality **Questions** (10 items)

Please indicate the level at which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.

15. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.

16. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.

17. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.

18. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.

19. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.

20. I excel at identifying opportunities.

21. I am always looking for better ways to do things.

22. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.

23. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.

Leader-Member Exchange Questions (7 items)

Consider your AOC for the next set of questions. Please indicate the level at which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. I usually know where I stand with my AOC.

25. My AOC has enough confidence in me that he/she would defend and justify my decisions if I was not able to do so.

26. My working relationship with my AOC is effective.

27. My AOC understands my problems and needs.

28. I can count on my AOC to "bail me out", even at his/her own expense, when I really need it.

29. Regardless of how much power my AOC has built into his or her position, my AOC would be personally inclined to use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work.

30. I have enough confidence in my AOC that I would defend and justify his or her decisions if he or she were not present to do so.

Perceived Organizational Support Questions (9 items)

For the next set of questions, "*The Academy*" encompasses the entire institution. Please think of the institution as a whole, to include your chain-of-command from you up to and including the Superintendent, and all three mission areas (Dean of Faculty, Commandant of Cadets, and the Athletic Department) collectively.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31. The Academy leadership shows very little concern for me.

32. The Academy leadership cares about my general satisfaction at work.

33. The Academy leadership really cares about my well-being.

34. The Academy leadership strongly considers my goals and values.

35. The Academy leadership cares about my opinions.

36. Even if I did the best job possible, the Academy leadership would fail to notice.

37. The Academy leadership takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

38. The Academy leadership is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.

39. Help is available from Academy leadership when I have a problem.

Affective Commitment Questions (7 items)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

40. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the Academy be successful.

41. I really care about the fate of the Academy.

42. I am extremely glad that I chose the Academy over other schools I was considering at the time I joined.

43. I talk up the Academy to my friends as a great institution for which to attend/work.

44. I am proud to tell others that I am part of the Academy.

45. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

46. For me, this is the best of all possible organizations/institutions for which to work/attend.

Job Satisfaction Questions (4 items)

For the next set of questions, please consider your job to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

47. Considering your "job" to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet (i.e., student, athlete, military member), which of the following shows how much of the time you feel satisfied with your job?

   1. Never.
   2. Seldom.
   3. Occasionally.
   4. About half of the time.
   5. A good deal of the time.
   6. Most of the time.
   7. All of the time.

48. Considering your "job" to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet (i.e., student, athlete, military member), choose one of the following statements which best tells how well you like your job?

   1. I hate it.
   2. I dislike it.
   3. I don't like it.
   4. I am indifferent to it.
   5. I like it.
   6. I am enthusiastic about it.
   7. I love it.

49. Considering your "job" to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet (i.e., student, athlete, military member), which one of the following best tells how you feel about changing your job?

   1. I would quit this job at once if I could.
   2. I would take almost any other job in which I could earn as much as I am earning now.
   3. I would like to change both my job and occupation.
   4. I would like to exchange my present job for another one.
   5. I am not eager to change my job, but I would do so if I could get a better job.
   6. I cannot think of any jobs for which I would exchange my job for.
   7. I would not exchange my job for any other.

50. Considering your "job" to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet (i.e., student, athlete, military member), which one of the following shows how you think you compare with other people?

    1. No one dislikes my job more than I dislike mine.
    2. I dislike my job much more than most people dislike theirs.
    3. I dislike my job more than most people dislike theirs.
    4. I like my job about as well as most people like theirs.
    5. I like my job better than most people like theirs.
    6. I like my job much better than most people like theirs.
    7. No one likes his job better than I like mine.

Intention to Quit Questions (5 items)

For the next set of questions, please consider your job to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

51. As soon as I can find a better job/school, I'll leave the Air Force Academy.

52. I am seriously thinking about quitting the Academy.

53. I am actively looking for a job (or school) outside the Air Force Academy.

54. At this time, I plan to separate from the Air Force when my initial commitment is complete.

55. I plan to make a career out of the Air Force.

Social Desirability Questions (13 items)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is *true* or *false* as it pertains to you personally.

56. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.

57. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

58. On a few occasions I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.

59. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.

60. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

61. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

62. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

63. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

64. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

65. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.

66. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.

67. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

68. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Open-Ended Questions (9 items)

69. Describe what you think it means to be proactive. (open text)

70. What proactive behaviors do you exhibit as a cadet? (open text)

71. How is being proactive important to a cadet's leadership development? (open text)

72. How has being proactive helped you at the Academy? (open text)

73. Considering your life as a cadet, what are some of the USAFA living conditions, policies, practices and culture that would motivate you to do something about the cadet environment in which you live? (open text)

74. Considering your life as a cadet, what are some of the USAFA living conditions that act as barriers to doing something about the cadet environment in which you live? (open text)

75. Some people are sort of natural go-getters, they have tendencies to influence the environment in which they are in. When you think about people like that at the Academy, what type of reputation do they typically have? That is, how are they seen by other cadets? (open text)

76. USAFA has become interested in creating a place where cadets are committed to the Academy and not just complying with expectations and standards. Describe how the Academy provides support for cadets in ways that encourage commitment. (open text)

77. USAFA has become interested in creating commitment rather than compliance. Describe how the Academy does not provide support for cadets, but actually discourages commitment. (open text)

Please indicate the level at which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

78. Cadets who actively and consistently take steps to influence USAFA are likely to find that they are listened to, get the material and time support they need, and make small impacts of making USAFA a better place.

79. Stealth cadets are sort of a natural by-product of the USAFA system. Working hard to make positive changes generally produces tension or disagreement with permanent party and is likely to decrease one's standing (e.g., MPA) rather than improve it.

Concluding Question

80. Please use the space below to provide comments regarding this survey. (open text)

Appendix B

USAFA IRB Exemption Approval Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

24 October 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR LT COL MICHELE E. JOHNSON

FROM: HQ USAFA/A9N

SUBJECT: Protocol FAC20150003E Exempt Status

1. The HQ USAFA Institutional Review Board considered your request for exempt status for FAC20150003E, An Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed Methods Study. Your request and any required changes were deemed exempt from IRB oversight in accordance with *32 CFR 219.101, paragraph (b)(2)* by the USAFA IRB. The USAFA IRB agreed that sufficient safeguards were in place to protect research participants. Please note that the USAFA IRB, Authorized Institutional Official (HQ USAFA/CV), and the Surgeon General's Research Oversight & Compliance Division, AFMSA/SGE-C review all exemptions and may amend this decision or identify additional requirements. The USAFA's DoD Assurance Number is 50046, expiration date 16 September 2016 our Federalwide Assurance number is FWA00019017, expiration date 20 June 2017.

2. Since you are obtaining attitude, opinion, or intention data, you cannot start this study until you have approval from the Survey Program Manager. The Survey Program Manager will issue a survey control number when the survey is approved. The protocol will be considered closed, but will be retained in USAFA/A9N for 3 years then sent to permanent storage. As the principal investigator on the study, the Surgeon General's Research Oversight & Compliance Division requires that you retain your data, reports, etc. for 3 years following completion of the study.

3. An approved protocol does not guarantee access to subjects or data. Please coordinate through the appropriate USAFA POCs.

4. In accordance with AFI 40-402, if this protocol is submitted to the UCCS IRB (or any other institution's IRB) you may NOT start collecting any data until submitting the UCCS determination to the USAFA IRB who will, in turn, submit it to SGE-C for a Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) review.

5. If any aspect of your research protocol changes, you must notify the IRB Administrator immediately. We will advise you on whether additional IRB review is required.

6. Please use tracking number FAC20150003E in any correspondence regarding this protocol. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 333-6593 if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

LAURA J. NEAL
HQ USAFA IRB Administrator

Developing Leaders of Character

Appendix C

USAFA IRB Amendment Approval Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

MEMORANDUM FOR LT COL MICHELE JOHNSON   14 November 2014

FROM: HQ USAFA/A9N

SUBJECT: Protocol FAC20150003E Amendment Approval

1. The HQ USAFA Institutional Review Board (IRB) considered your amendment request for FAC20150003E, Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed Methods Study for the following:

 a) Change #1. Deleted four demographic questions: assigned cadet group, prior enlisted status, parent graduate status, and prep school status.

 b) Change #2 – Added one demographic question (Service Academy Exchange status). This question will allow the researcher to code responses during analysis based on the fact that exchange cadets have not been at USAFA for their entire cadet career.

 c) Change #3 – Adjusted the wording on the four job satisfaction questions in order to provide additional context for the cadets. The researcher added the approved wording located at the beginning of the job satisfaction section to the beginning of the each question as follows: *"Considering your job to include all of the roles you hold as a cadet (i.e., student, athlete, military member)."*

 d) Change #4 – Added four questions to the 6-item Proactive Personality measure, for a total of 10 items. This 10-item measure has increased reliability over the 6-item measure, as cited by Fuller and Marler (2009). All 10 items came from Bateman and Crant's (1993) original 17-item Proactive Personality Scale. By using the additional four items, the reliability of the measure is increased.

The amendment and any required changes were approved. This amendment does not change the risk to subjects. Please note that the USAFA Authorized Institutional Official, HQ USAFA/CV and the Surgeon General's Research Oversight & Compliance Division, AFMSA/SGE-C review all USAFA IRB actions and may amend this decision or identify additional requirements.

2. If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at 333-6593 or the IRB Chair, Dr. Silz-Carson at 333-2597.

LAURA J. NEAL
HQ USAFA IRB Administrator

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Appendix D

USAFA Survey Control Approval Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

MEMORANDUM FOR HQ USAFA/CWC   13 Nov 14

FROM: HQ USAFA/A9A

SUBJECT: *An Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed Methods Study*

1. We have received and reviewed your recent submittal of *An Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed Methods Study* in accordance with *AFI 38-501 Survey Program.*

2. The following USAFA Survey Control Number (USAFA SCN) has been assigned to your instrument: **USAFA SCN15-01.** This control number expires on 13 Nov 15. Please obtain a new SCN from HQ USAFA/A9A if you revise the current instrument in any way before this date. Additionally, if the instrument has not been revised, and you plan to administer it after the expiration date, you must request a new survey control number. The entire control number and expiration date must be centered beneath the title on the first page of your instrument.

3. Be aware that based on the Superintendent's guidance, proper approval procedures must be followed if you pursue release of any results associated with this instrument, in a public forum (e.g., journal articles, symposium proceedings). Please be advised that members of the general public may obtain these survey results via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

4. Per *AFI38-501_USAFASUP_1*, all survey materials (survey instrument, data elements, feedback measures, reports/briefings) must be maintained for a period of 3 years. Additionally, please ensure copies of all these materials are forwarded to A9A.

5. We suggest you keep this memo on file to show that this instrument has been through the proper approval process. Should you require additional assistance regarding this approval, please contact A9A at extension 333-6481.

//signed//
Nancy Bogenrief
Survey Control Officer

1ˢᵗ Ind, HQ USAFA/A9A

Approved/ Disapproved

KATHLEEN A. O'DONNELL, PhD
Acting Chief, Institutional Assessment

Golden Legacy, Boundless Future... Your Nation's Air Force

Appendix E

Human Research Protection Official Review Concurrence

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

NOV 20 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ATTN: MICHELE E. JOHNSON, LT COL, USAF

FROM: AFMSA/SGE-C
Research Oversight & Compliance Division
7700 Arlington Blvd. Ste. 5151
Falls Church, VA 22042-5151

SUBJECT: Human Research Protection Official (HRPO) Review of **FAC20150003E**

References: (a) 32 CFR 219, Protection of Human Subjects
(b) 10 USC 980, Limitation on Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects
(c) DoDI3216.02_AFI40-402, Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to
Ethical Standards in Air Force Supported Research

In accordance with HRPO review requirements of Reference (c), the following protocol has been
reviewed and HRPO concurs with the exempt determination:

**FAC20150003E, "The Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets:
A Mixed Methods Study".**

Please ensure this research is conducted in compliance with the References, including Reference
(c), as it pertains to submission of continuing review reports, proper maintenance of records, and
the application of written informed consent to all study participants, as required by the IRB.

If there are any questions about this determination, my point of contact is Monique Hawkins
at usaf.pentagon.af-sg.mbx.afmsa-sge-c@mail.mil.

Please refer to the Terms of Air Force HRPO Approval (attached) regarding reporting
requirements and responsibilities of the Principal Investigator to the HRPO. Failure to comply
could result in suspension of funding.

JAMES BENJACK, Lt Col, USAF, BSC
Director, Research Oversight & Compliance Division

Attachment(s):
Terms of AF HRPO Approval

TERMS OF AIR FORCE HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION OFFICIAL (HRPO) APPROVAL

1. By virtue of the Air Force (AF) support (see definition in DoDI 3216.02_AFI 40-402) provided to the non- Department of Defense (DoD) institution performing the activity identified herein, this activity must comply with all applicable federal, DoD, and AF human research protection requirements. In addition to the requirements identified in the conducting non-DoD institution's Federalwide Assurance, compliance with the following laws, regulations, and guidance is required:

- Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 219 (32 CFR 219), Department of Defense Regulations, "Protection of Human Subjects"
- Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46, (45 CFR 46) Department of Health and Human Services Regulations, "Protection of Human Subjects," Subparts B, C, D, and E as made applicable by DoD Instruction (DoDI) 3216.02
- Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations 50, 56, 312, and 812, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Regulations
- DoDI 3216.02, "Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD-supported Research"
- Title 10 United States Code Section 980 (10 USC 980), "Limitation on Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects"
- DoDI 3210.7, "Research Integrity and Misconduct"
- DoDI 6200.02, "Application of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Rules to Department of Defense Force Health Protection Programs"
- DoDI 3216.02_AFI 40-402, "Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in Air Force Supported Research"

2. Below is a select list of requirements from the regulations and guidance listed above. The non-DoD institution should communicate with the supporting AF institution to ensure compliance.

- Ensure all DoD supported activities have DoD Human Research Protection Official (HRPO) review to ensure compliance prior to start
- Conduct initial and continuing research ethics education for personnel who are engaged in the research
- Ensure IRB consideration of scientific merit of new research and any substantive amendments thereto
- Ensure additional protections for military research subjects to minimize undue influence
- Explain to subjects any provisions for medical care for research-related injury
- Report continuing review documentation, unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others, serious or continuing non-compliance, adverse events, research-related injury, and suspensions or terminations of research
- Appoint a research monitor, when necessary
- Safeguard for research conducted with international populations
- Protect pregnant women, prisoners, and children
- Comply with DoD limitations on research where consent by legally authorized representatives is proposed
- Comply with DoD limitation on exceptions from informed consent (e.g., 10 USC 980, 45 CFR 46, and 21 CFR 50)
- Comply with limitations on dual compensation for U. S. military personnel
- Follow DoD requirements for additional review for DoD-sponsored survey research or survey research within DoD
- Address and report allegations of non-compliance with human research protections
- Address and report allegations of research misconduct
- Follow procedures for addressing financial and other conflicts of interest
- Prohibit research with prisoners of war (POW)

2

- Comply with requirements for investigations of Food and Drug Administration regulated products (drugs, devices, and biologics)
- Follow recordkeeping requirements
- Support oversight by the supporting DoD Component (which may include DoD Component review of the research, requests for documentation such as Institutional Review Board (IRB) membership rosters, and site visits)

3. Please contact the supporting AF institution (e.g., via the Program Manager responsible for oversight of the relevant activity) with any questions for the AF HRPO.

Appendix F

UCCS IRB Exemption Approval Letter

UCCS University of Colorado Colorado Springs

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects

Date: 11/14/2014

IRB Review

IRB PROTOCOL NO.: 15-066

Protocol Title: An Analysis of Proactive Personality in U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets: A Mixed Methods Study

Principal Investigator: Michele E. Johnson

Faculty Advisor if Applicable: Sylvia Martinez

Application: New Application

Type of Review: Exempt Category 2

Risk Level: No more than Minimal Risk

APPROVED

Review Level Report of Change or Renewal Review Level (if Applicable): Exempt Category 2

This Protocol involves a Vulnerable Population: N/A (No Vulnerable Population)

Expires: *

*Note, if exempt: If there are no major changes in the research, protocol does not require review on a continuing basis by the IRB. In addition, the protocol may match more than one review category not listed.

Externally funded: ☒ No ☐ Yes

OSP #: Sponsor:

Thank you for submitting your Request for IRB Review. The protocol identified above has been reviewed according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations. The review category is noted above, along with the expiration date, if applicable.

Once human participant research has been approved, it is the Principal Investigator's (PI) responsibility to report any changes in research activity related to the project:

- The PI must provide the IRB with all protocol and consent form amendments and revisions.
  - The IRB must approve these changes prior to implementation.
- All advertisements recruiting study subjects must also receive prior approval by the IRB.
- The PI must promptly inform the IRB of all unanticipated serious adverse (within 24 hours). All unanticipated adverse events must be reported to the IRB within 1 week (see 45CFR46.103(b)(5). Failure to comply with these federally mandated responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of the project.
- Renew study with the IRB *prior to expiration.*
- Notify the IRB when the study is complete

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Sanderson in the Office of Sponsored Programs at 719-255-3903 or irb@uccs.edu

Thank you for your concern about human subject protection issues, and good luck with your research.
Sincerely yours,

Deborah J. Kenny
UCCS IRB Chair