

Exploring the Applications of US Army Leader Development Model in Nonmilitary Organizations: Implications for Training

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Introduction

Leadership development (LD) traditionally has remained within the context of private-sector organizations and little attention was given to LD efforts of government-sponsored agencies—particularly the armed forces. Without question, many of the most recognizable leaders in the United States have served in the military, though their leadership development experience has been under-explored. One plausible reason for the lack of exploration is context of the mission. The US Army’s mission is to fight, win wars, and protect the nation, whereas the mission of nonmilitary organizations can be generalized toward generating profits that allow the organization to endure. Additionally, the limited amount of research may be influenced by the relatively small percentage of people who have served and can access to necessary data. Still, the US armed forces often are credited for their ability to develop service members and has made great advancements in their leadership programs. The US Army remains the largest military branch and has been developing soldier’s leadership for decades. In fact, two of the top reasons employers hire veterans are their leadership competencies

and teamwork skills.¹ These attributes are likely a direct result of the US military—and in the context of this paper—US Army values which provide specific principles for leadership behavior.

Leadership competencies tend to remain with former service members after their military duties have ended. As Benmelech and Frydman (2015) noted, CEOs with military service may perform under pressure better than chief executives without military service, while also being nearly 70% less likely to commit fraud.² Though a portion of organizations are still led by military veterans, the percentage of Fortune 500 CEOs with military experience has dropped at an alarming rate since the 1980's (59% to 6% of today's CEOs). Some of the drop can be attributed to troop reductions, and the percentage may again increase as the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to expire. Even still, recent CEOs with prior service in the US Army, Sumner Redstone (Viacom), Robert McDonald (Proctor & Gamble), Robert Myers (Casey's General Store), and Josue Robles (USAA) represent the possible impact military service has had on leader development. This paper explores the approaches used by the US Army to develop soldier leadership competencies and offers three propositions for practice in nonmilitary organizations.

Globally, companies are heavily investing in LD and succession planning as a result of pressing leadership shortages and rapidly changing organizations. Ringo and MacDonald conducted the IBM Global Human Capital Study which surveyed more than 2,000 senior HR executives across the world for five different sectors: industrial, distribution, financial services, communications, and public.³ Their findings indicated that more than 75% of survey respondents identified building leadership talent as their current and most significant challenge—a higher percentage than all other concerns, including fostering a culture that is supportive of learning and development, leadership talent rotations across business units, and forecasting skills needed in the future. Several years later, the data changed very little, as managing human capital was identified as

¹ Margaret C. Harrell, M. C., Nancy Berglass, "Employing America's Veterans: Perspectives from Businesses," *Center for a New American Society*, (2012),

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW/docs/EmployingAmericasVeterans.pdf>, accessed 11 June 2017.

² Efraim Benmelech, Carola Frydman, "Military CEOs," *Journal of Financial Economics*, 117, no. 1 (2014).

³ Tim Ringo and Randy MacDonald, "The IBM Global Human Capital Study," *IBM Global Business Services*, accessed 15 June 2017, <http://www.935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/prd/g510-6647-00.pdf>

the top challenge by organization leaders.⁴ In fact, only 27% of organization leaders reported being “very prepared” to create a workplace where employees deliver their best. More specifically, four of the top ten strategies selected by CEOs directly related to developing leadership within their organizations. Today’s businesses face challenges that continue to be difficult for organization leadership to overcome. Civilian and military organizations seem to develop strong leaders, and a great deal can be learned from both sectors. Thus, exploration in LD approaches in various contexts and industries is necessary.

The US Army offers soldiers an exhaustive list of training and development programs that include basic training, advanced individual training, Ranger School, Air Assault School, and Jumpmaster School, and leader development is one of the most frequently incorporated training components, as all service members are expected to participate. However, civilian and employer perceptions about veterans can be stereotypical and simplified in that veterans have solely learned to: follow orders, shoot weapons, and kill the enemy. While soldiers are indeed trained to fight, follow specific orders, and achieve military targets, the soldier development process is far more comprehensive, extending beyond these simplified outcomes of military behavior, and results in many transferable workplace skills which are highly-sought by companies today. Furthermore, with the Combined Arms Center for Army Leadership and at least seven manuals on developing leadership competencies, the US Army has invested significant resources into its leader development programs.

This paper presents an integrated process used to develop soldiers into leaders, beginning in basic training and lasting until the soldiers’ first experience with the formal Army leader development program (ALDP), otherwise known as the warrior leader course (WLC). In addition, the paper compares ALDP with respect to traditional LD approaches in nonmilitary settings. Furthermore, the paper provides a critique of potential challenges organizations may face when considering the U.S. Army’s leader development program for possible implementation within their organization. It is important to note this paper explores the leader development experienced by enlisted

⁴ Development Dimensions International, “Ready-now Leaders: 25 Findings to Meet Tomorrow’s Business Challenges,” accessed 12 June 2017, http://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/global-leadership-forecast-2014-2015_tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf

soldiers, thus removing officer training from discussion. Army officers immediately fill leadership roles soon after commissioning, and participate in their own leader development during officer candidate school. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the model for organizational training. For purposes of this paper, the term “the Army” is used interchangeably when discussing the U.S. Army.

Significance

The US Army’s emphasis on leader development, which includes preparing soldiers to be ready for any given military situation, should be explored as a potentially transferable approach in today’s workforce. Few studies have attempted to align leadership styles with distinguishable situations, though much of the literature seeks to improve leadership competencies in non-military organizations. Early research has suggested veterans outperform their civilian counterparts in the workplace, and employers identify the former service members’ leadership and teamwork abilities as qualities that make them most employable.⁵ Today’s workplace is rapidly changing, and leaders need to be prepared to lead during these evolving times. The Army acronym, “VUCA”, used by both the Army and nonmilitary organizations, describes today’s work environment: volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. All soldiers, regardless of rank or situation, are expected to demonstrate leadership behaviors as they engage in their work.⁶ Soldiers are expected to be competent, committed professional leaders of character.⁷ Considering the work environment soldiers are trained to perform, it should not be surprising that many successfully transition into non-military organizations with similar VUCA levels.

While organizational management and leadership practices often overlap or support each other, managers are not the only ones interested in LD. For example, employees have been measure receiving a monthly average of 5.4 hours of LD but

⁵ Harrell and Berglass, *Employing Americas Veterans*.

⁶ Department of the Army, “FM 6-22 US Army Leadership Handbook”. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012).

⁷ Department of the Army, “*Army Leader Development Strategy*,”. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2013).

afterwards expressed interest in increasing to an average of 8.1 hours per month.⁸ The roughly 50 percent increase equates to one full workday of LD per employee each month and suggests the challenges associated with improving LD are not for a lack of interest by either organization leadership or their employees, and instead may have more to do with how to properly implement LD in non-military organizations. The propositions presented in this paper are significant in demonstrating a shared value placed on leaders by both management and subordinate. The relationship between the amount of time spent on LD programs by soldiers and the increased desire from employees suggests incorporating elements of ALDP may be possible.

Army Leader Development

The development of soldier leadership attributes has been an integral component of Army training since its first leadership program in 1962. Leader development is fundamental to the overarching success of the Army and is integrated into the daily training regimen.⁹ It is a process that aligns training, education, and experience with the goal of preparing leaders capable of exercising command to prevail during operations. The Army's leader development program is sorted into three training domains: (a) an institutional domain or training offered by the organization; (b) an operational domain or learning that occurs while actively performing one's job; and (c) the self-development domain or education received by an individual through their own initiative and efforts. The three training domains are an integral aspect of training, while peer and developmental relationships contribute to the development of an Army leader.

The institutional domain is the Army's first opportunity to train and develop personnel. Through education in schools and training centres, soldiers are introduced to tasks and challenged to begin developing individual skills and knowledge.¹⁰ The training often occurs for entire units beginning in basic training and continues periodically over the course of a soldier's enlistment. Examples of the institutional

⁸ Development Dimensions International, *Ready-now Leaders*.

⁹ Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*.

¹⁰ Department of the Army, "ADP 7-0 Training Units and Developing Leaders," (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012).

domain in practice include first-aid, unit readiness, safety, weapons operation, and equipment maintenance—all of which contribute toward a soldier's likelihood of success upon permanently transitioning into a leadership role. In order to be promoted or maintain good standing, institutionalized training must be completed by all members. Upon completing, soldiers are expected to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply their knowledge in the field.

Learning while performing as a soldier and leader is the second component of the ALDP. Whereas the institutional domain emphasizes classroom instruction, the operational domain builds off classroom training and acknowledges learning that occurs for soldiers while acting as a leader.¹¹ Army soldiers have argued extensively that the operational domain is the most influential method of learning.¹² Soldiers learn through performing as trainers, leading exercises, and coaching subordinates. For example, a unit leader empowers a subordinate to lead the unit for a training exercise or field experience. During that time, the subordinate becomes responsible for members of his/her unit and the mission. These instances depict forms of job enlargement, i.e. taking on greater responsibilities, or job enrichment, i.e. more horizontal in nature, each encouraging development of the leader. During these interactions with superiors, peers, and subordinates, soldiers are argued to develop wisdom and confidence in their ability to lead others effectively.

Self-development is the third of the three pillars of leader development and is the responsibility of the soldier. The Army may recommend opportunities which could help progress a soldier's career, or soldiers can take initiative to define what they seek to learn and the process to learning achievement. Whether reading books, watching films, or enrolling in college courses, self-development should enhance a soldier's qualifications. The domain serves a complementary and equal role, building off training provided by the Army and learning that occurs on the job. Being that self-development is self-directed, limited consequences exist for not participating; however, demonstration of the application of self-development learning in military-specific

¹¹ Department of the Army, *ADP 7-0 Training Units and Developing Leaders*.

¹² Ryan Riley, Josh Hatfield, Jon J. Fallesen, and Katie M Gunther, "2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership," (Center for Army Leadership, 2015),

<http://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/cal/2014%20CASAL%20Military%20Leader%20Findings%20Report.pdf>, accessed 15 July 2017

knowledge or practice can positively impact promotion potential. For self-development to be effective, soldiers must have an accurate assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. Each of the pillars exist in one form or another within non-military organizations.

Non-military Leadership Development

Consideration for the impact leaders have on their organizations' success began in the early 20th century when universities started incorporating leadership training in the classroom. However, robust empirical study of the field of leadership did not take off until the 1950s. Though empirical-based leadership programs are more common today, throughout the 20th century, universities generally had little research for supporting or improving their leadership programs. Fortunately, LD has been extensively-examined in the last two decades and an enormous number of leadership studies have been published. Despite the increased interest, the field of leadership continues to suffer from the lack of a universally-accepted definition of leadership and ambiguity in its constructs.

Though a universal definition of LD does not yet exist, there are commonalities associated with the training. First, LD seems to involve organized education and training for participants in which trainers analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate programs. Hart, Conklin, and Allen argued LD is about generating leadership capacity that contributes towards an organization's goals.¹³ DeRue and Myers added "leadership development refers to building the mutual commitments and interpersonal relationship that are necessary for leading-following processes to unfold effectively within a given social context" (p. 835).¹⁴ The definition suggests LD is also interpersonal between multiple individuals, focusing on the individual relationships between leaders and their followers. The many industries, cultures, and leadership approaches make generalizing all LD programs in nonmilitary organizations difficult. The Army's leader

¹³ Rama Hart, Thomas Conklin, and Scott Allen, "Individual Leader Development: An Appreciative Inquiry Approach," *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 10, no 5, (October 2008): pp. 632-650.

¹⁴ D Scott DeRue and Christopher G Myers, "Leadership Development: A Review and Agenda for Future Research," in *The Oxford Handbook of Leadership and Organizations*, ed. David Day (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 835.

development model highlights three learning domains whereas non-military LD has a broader range of tactics and considerations. Curry identified eight LD categories: aligning efforts with business strategy and providing real world opportunities; integrating LD into overall talent management strategies; obtaining executive support; obtaining manager involvement, buy-in, and accountability; identification of relevant leadership competencies; tailored efforts to targeted audience; measurements and evaluation of program effectiveness; and utilization of various learning formats.¹⁵ The categories represent the many stakeholders and factors employers must consider when designing LD programs.

Training environments vary greatly in their delivery (i.e., traditional classroom, teams, on-the-job, online, hybrid, or immersive) and are impacted by the type of learner, experience and effectiveness of the trainer, funding levels, and length of training. Some procedures and applications have been identified as more effective than others. Some of the best practices for leadership development include job shadowing, mentoring, 360-degree feedback, action-based learning, challenging job assignments, skills development, and simulations. These best practices offer facilitators the opportunity to expose their employees to a series of impactful interventions. Still, they are often complementary to time spent in the classroom with a trainer.

Unlike Army leader development, LD in nonmilitary organizations may be structured as a single-intervention with an identified endpoint. For organizations that provide LD through a short-term program, participants know the start date and day of completion. Trainers provide a program outline that details learning outcomes and a set of objectives. Whether to ensure high completion rates, immediate returns on investment, or other reasons, organizations offering LD through single interventions likely limit the total growth possible. Alternatively, companies that recognize LD also occurs on the job may not be allocating the necessary time or resources to ensure employees can develop to their fullest potential.

¹⁵ Curtis Curry, "Best Practices in Leadership Development," in *The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management*, ed. William Rothwell and George Bencoter (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2012): pp.3-32.

Similarities

Development of leadership capacities within the Army and non-military organizations is similar in many regards. Each entity views LD as a contributing factor to the organization's success and wellbeing. As the Department of the Army argued, leader development is part of the organization's life-blood.¹⁶ Considering the substantial investment in LD, non-military organizations reflect similar beliefs. Leadership development programs (LDPs) in non-military organizations could be clustered using the Army's three leader development-training domains.

Regardless of the organization, the most impactful LD occurs over time. In fact, LD is not a single intervention but rather a long-term continuous process. The Army's incorporation of leader development into daily training corresponds with interventions for employees at all levels in the organization. At each level, representatives interact with different unit members, and receive distinct leadership training. Participants must be offered the opportunity to examine and practice leadership in a range of settings and with an assorted set of people.

One of the Army's approaches to leader development—incorporating realistic opportunities for growth—complements the goals of nonmilitary organizations, where leaders are expected to guide the companies to complete their missions.¹⁷ Whether being put in charge of a team, a training mission, or a component related to soldier development, realistic opportunities expose service members to growth experiences that extend beyond day-to-day responsibilities. The adaptability soldiers demonstrate in seemingly any environment suggests their training may be transferred to other settings, including the traditional workplace. Though underutilized in the contemporary workforce, developmental assignments were the top-rated method for growing leadership capacities, as rated by organizational leaders. Research on this topic remains scanty with potential financial implications for organizations where often

¹⁶ Department of the Army, "ADP 7-0 Training Units and Developing Leaders,"

http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/adrp7_0.pdf, accessed 16 June 2017.

¹⁷ Michael James Kirchner and Mesut Akdere, "Examining Leadership Development in the U.S. Army Within the Human Resource Development Context," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 26, no. 3 (2014): pp. 351-369.

leadership development programs are implemented in a poor or ineffective manner. Specifically, training expenditures in LD among US organizations are substantial and the costs appear to be rising. For example, in 2009 almost a quarter of the \$50 billion spent on training programs in the US was related to LD, and over the last five years, the amount spent on training by US organizations reached \$15 billion annually.¹⁸ During this time, company training budgets for LD have been reallocated and comprising 34% of training dollars spent. The expenditures demonstrate the value organizations place on developing leadership—an area of agreement for employees.

Utilizing prior experiences of more-senior representatives is a training method shared by both the Army and non-military organizations. At some point, all leaders are challenged when the response received from subordinates does not match the desired request. In fact, leadership, at times, can appear disorganized as things which may have been going smoothly cross paths with an unanticipated change, interrupting the organizational system's flow. Critiquing and analyzing responses or reactions from past situations better prepares LD participants to be effective in future similar instances. Additional similarities include (a) a need to define a goal for LD programming; (b) acknowledgement that the supervisor is responsible for guiding leadership development efforts and the organization should foster a culture conducive to learning and development; (c) LD must be part of the continuous improvement process in order to be successful; (d) leadership must be practiced; (e) an effective feedback system must be in place; and (f) effective leadership must be highlighted.

Distinctions

Through this examination, the participants and environment became distinguishing factors between the leader development program of the Army and LD in nonmilitary organizations, as did one of the Army's areas of emphasis. All soldiers enlisted in the Army are exposed to LD opportunities—an uncommon practice in other industries. The soldier training environment is also distinct in that it often takes place

¹⁸ Bersin by Deloitte, "Leadership Development Factbook 2014: Benchmarks and Trends in US Leadership Development. (2014). http://www.bersin.com/uploadedFiles/063014_WWB_LD-Factbook_KOL_Final.pdf, accessed 17 July 2017.

outdoors and engages participants in physical activity. Finally, the Army states that leader development is a deliberate, continuous, and progressive process achieved through the career-long synthesis of training, education and experiences.¹⁹

Leadership development in nonmilitary settings has traditionally been offered through a structured training approach provided either by the organization itself or outsourced to a consultant company. Development Dimensions International suggested 60 percent of organizational leaders believe formal workshops, training courses, and seminars are among the most effective methods of leadership development; only developmental assignments, at 70 percent, had a higher score.²⁰ Hay Group corroborated the findings in their own study with over 75 percent of the top 20 performing organizations use classroom-based leadership training.²¹ Bill Pelster, Principal with Deloitte Consulting, reported from clients an overriding theme that current leadership development programs such as content-heavy training are not meeting the needs of their businesses.²² Petrie went on to note LD trainings have become dated and redundant, with an unrealistic expectation that participants will simply become good leaders by being told how to lead. There is a growing body of literature arguing for the ineffectiveness of traditional classroom-based training approaches.

All soldiers enlisted in the Army are expected to be leaders regardless of rank or length of service. Employees of nonmilitary organizations, on the other hand, rarely are held to such expectations even though there has been a growing emphasis on leadership by the civilian organizations. A study by Hay Group (2014) found 64 percent of the top 20 companies for leadership reported that all employees within the organization are expected to be leaders regardless of their formal authority. Although typical LD programs are offered to employees who are: new to their roles, underperforming, or prescribed as having 'high potential', the distinction between LD

¹⁹ Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*.

²⁰ Development Dimension International, *Ready-now Leaders*.

²¹ Hay Group, "Best Companies for Leadership 2014 Executive Summary," (2014). Accessed 21 March 2019

http://www.haygroup.com/bestcompaniesforleadership/downloads/Best_Companies_for_Leadership_2014_Executive_summary.pdf

²² Nick Petrie, "Future Trends in Leadership Development," *Center for Creative Leadership* (2014). Accessed

approaches of the Army versus nonmilitary organizations is important and highlights the strong emphasis placed by the Army on leadership in general and LD in particular. As such, though unlikely all soldiers believe Army leader development is effective, each is afforded the opportunity to participate in an LD program.

Perhaps the most significant distinction between leader and leadership development in the two sectors relates to the instance individuals are first exposed to the training. Employers often will provide LD only when they recognize a concern for performance improvement of underperforming managers. Thus, employees begin learning their position and slowly become proficient before being exposed to any LD opportunities. Unlike the traditional workplace, soldiers in the US Army begin receiving leader development training prior to completing their basic training encompassing both classroom and field.

Nonmilitary organizations also invest significantly in external organizations and consultants to provide leadership development to their employees. The utilization of leaders and educators from outside the organization is a common practice within nonmilitary organizations, though less utilized by the Army. The Army is dependent on itself to develop leaders. Though the Army does learn from external organizations, the primary mode of LD delivery is through service members. The Army begins development of a senior leader 20 years prior to the soldier's attainment of a distinguished ranking through sustained leader development and disciplined recruitment practices. Operating within a non-defined parameter for standards and quality of training, organizations jeopardize the success of their investments in their future leaders.²³ Without the immediate and continuous development of soldier leadership competencies, the Army risks operational competence in a complex and uncertain environment.

The Army's hierarchical structure regularly exposes soldiers to many other non-commissioned officers and officers serving in leadership roles. Soldiers learn to lead by example through continuous exposure with their own leaders. New soldiers are introduced to officers, noncommissioned officers, and peers being offered their first

²³ Mesut Akdere, Ross Azevedo, and Barbara Daley, "Healthcare Training Expenditures in the US Between 1982 and 1997: What do They Mean for Today's Organisations?" *International Journal of Healthcare Technology and Management* 9, no. 2 (2008): pp. 198-209.

leadership roles over the course of basic training. After boot camp, service members transition to their units where they meet and begin working with an entirely new set of leaders. The constant exposure to new leaders and diverse styles allows each individual to experience, interpret, and reflect on, and process their beliefs about effective leadership, which subsequently presents application opportunities. Unlike their soldier counterparts, employees in nonmilitary often find themselves experiencing minimal interaction with other organization leaders and their leadership styles. These experiences limit the number of leaders and styles an employee may witness, which can ultimately impede the leadership development process.

The LD of soldiers also may be distinct because of the immense turnover experienced by the Army. Soldiers are expected to continue developing their practice and learning to perform their supervisors' jobs in order to be mission-prepared, as part of acknowledgement for the frequent leadership changes within units. Unlike the nonmilitary sector, where employees may not be expected to learn the work of their supervisors, soldiers are often thrust into more-expansive leadership roles and are even challenged to lead training on topics unfamiliar to them. The constant turnover creates opportunities for development that may not be available to employees in nonmilitary organizations.

One final distinction is the purpose and goal of developing leadership competencies. Research from Ken Blanchard Companies noted LD can impact retention, productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction.²⁴ These workplace competencies are critical in private industry but are less applicable in the Army where soldiers are developed to be more competent experts in their profession; demonstrate heightened character, presence, and intellect; and improve as leaders through all stages of service.²⁵ In essence, the Army's mission is to train, educate, and provide experiences to progressively develop leaders to prevail in land operations and advance the

²⁴ Ken Blanchard Companies, "Making the Business Case for Leadership Development," <https://resources.kenblanchard.com/whitepapers/making-the-business-case-for-leadership-development>, accessed 28 March 2019.

²⁵ Department of the Army, "FM 6-22 Leader Development," http://www.milsci.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.mili.d7/files/sitefiles/fm6_22.pdf, accessed 28 March 2019.

organization.²⁶ The strategy distinguishes the Army leader development model because of its focus on security and prevailing over opposition during operations. Each of these distinctions may present unique challenges for organizations attempting to integrate ALDP; however, assimilating individual components of the training in nonmilitary organizations may be plausible.

Integrating the Army Leader Development Program

LDPs in general are composed of at least three elements similar to the ALDP including the establishment of leadership development opportunities for all employees; immediate introducing leadership development for new employees; and creation a learning environment where managers are expected to empower subordinates to lead tasks, programs, and trainings. It is important to note that each of these components are critical and distinct features of the Army's leader development programs which are immediately applicable to nonmilitary organizational settings. The following section further outlines the three components of leadership development.

Participants

Historically, organizations have targeted LDPs at three types of employees: new managers, executives, and those employees identified as 'high-potential', negating the majority of recently-hired, mid-level, or established senior leaders who are excluded from participation. Companies the likes of NBC Universal, Harley-Davidson, General Electric and Boeing offer a rotational leadership development program for new employees who are selected through an application process. On the other hand, Whirlpool, PayPal, and 3M, among others, provide various LDPs to their high potential employees within their individual units. Each of these companies are industry leaders not only in their respective markets but also for their focus on LDPs with specific criteria for inclusion and participation. Similarly, top ranking managers and senior leaders often go through an executive development program.

²⁶ Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*.

Companies are often quick to identify LD as one of, if not the most important of all training and development initiatives. The annual expenditure is significant evidence of how companies value these programs in their efforts to achieve their visions and missions. Incorporating and articulating the value an organization places on leadership is critical for employees.

Proposition I: Utilizing ALDP perspectives, nonmilitary companies may consider adopting ALDP approaches to extend their existing LDPs to further include employees from all levels. The approach will help employers to be more-inclusive at all levels of the organization.

Introduction to Leadership Development

Long-term behavioral changes and expert competence in leadership for employees can take ten years or more, though few employers begin developing employees before they have moved into leadership roles. Outside of rotational programs, leadership development for new employees is uncommon. New employee orientations are designed to socialize newcomers and increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities upon completion. These programs represent a deliberate attempt to introduce employees to an organization's culture by providing structured training related to a company's history, goals, and values.²⁷ Orientation programs can directly contribute to an employee's job satisfaction, commitment, and retention, yet they lack a leadership development component. New employee orientations highlight the factors most valued by employers, whereas the ALDP introduces the concept of leadership to soldiers at the beginning of their enlistment.

Proposition II: Nonmilitary organizations can significantly benefit from introducing leadership as a critical area for development to their new employees starting at orientation programs. This may further help employees develop a future with the company as well as impact their job motivation, loyalty, and satisfaction.

²⁷ Howard Klein and Natasha Weaver, "The Effectiveness of an Organizational-level Orientation Training Program in the Socialization of New Hires," *Personnel Psychology* 53, no. 1 (2000): pp. 47-66.

Vertical Development

Petrie identified two types of leadership development—horizontal and vertical, and argued “a great deal of time has been spent on ‘horizontal’ development (competencies) but very little time on ‘vertical’ development, (stages)”.²⁸ The Army challenges senior leaders to empower their subordinates by making calculated risk versus reward decisions designed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of the institution, while also offering experiential learning opportunities. A key distinction from nonmilitary LD is the Army’s expectation that all soldiers, regardless of rank, learn their superiors’ jobs and train subordinates to perform their own responsibilities. Army leaders prepare soldiers to assume greater responsibility in their units and in future assignments.²⁹ It is the responsibility of Army leaders to develop others for better performance in both current and future positions. Personal development through learning the role of superiors is more-heavily emphasized by the Army than many other organizations. Though there is a lack of emphasis in nonmilitary organizations about learning roles of superiors, one could argue the resources that would need to be committed could reduce the likelihood of this particular developmental tactic. Although learning from experience is not always possible, it is often the most effective method of development.

Experiential learning was supported by Petrie’s findings from interviews with 30 field experts in LD.³⁰ Whereas horizontal development historically has been the primary method of LD, vertical development—where employees progress up successive ‘levels’—increases learning ability, complex problem-solving, and the ability to set direction and lead change. Learners who have been empowered to progress through advanced stages learn to react faster and can make sense of situations because they have ‘bigger’ minds.³¹ Due to technological advances, globalization, and increased competition, rapidly evolving workplaces challenge leaders to be agile and respond to complex issues that do not have ‘correct’ answers, thus establishing a third and final proposition.

²⁸ Petrie, “Future Trends.”

²⁹ Department of the Army, “Leader Development.”

³⁰ Petrie, “Future Trends.”

³¹ Petrie, “Future Trends.”

Proposition III: Employees in nonmilitary organizations may benefit greatly from learning the role of their supervisors while also investing time to train their direct reports to effectively perform their jobs. Specifically, LDPs should include opportunities for employees to learn the job function, responsibilities, and strategies for successfully performing in the roles of their superiors.

Limitations

Although integrating the ALDP in nonmilitary organizations provides unique opportunities, there are multiple challenges and limitations for executives and managers to consider. Though not exhaustive, risks for integrating the ALDP in nonmilitary organizations include time invested in the program, as such programs are typically lengthy and everyday business demands may strain the number of employees available for participation and involvement; short-term financial risks associated with the cost as companies often focus on short term return-on-investment and it is a challenge to demonstrate leadership effectiveness in a short-term approach; a lack of buy-in from employees as not all employees may be enthusiastic or interested in developing leadership skills or becoming a leader; intervention for organizational change and culture shift as adopting ALDP may require a major transformation and change for the organization which may not be feasible; and dealing with perceptions of creating a militaristic environment based on public stereotypes of Army training as ALDP still has its roots in its core. Some of these limitations may be overcome by the nonmilitary organizations through integration of various aspects of the ALDP at varying degrees with strong support from top management and a culture shift putting leadership at the core of the organizational process.

Implications for Training

The potential of the ALDP has not been fully-explored for transferability and application into nonmilitary organizations within the context of training, even though the Army has demonstrated success at developing leaders. One of the factors contributing to this may be the small number of military veterans from any branch or

reserve component compared to the human resource development-related research or practice positions held by civilians. On a broader scale, the miniscule percentage of the US population who have served may be a contributing factor. According to the Pew Research Center, less than half of one percent of the US population has served on active duty since 9/11.³² Nonetheless, the years of leader development training soldiers receive should not be discounted. The leadership competencies and attributes developed through military experience are the result of purposeful training. An understanding of the ALDP can assist human resource development (HRD) professionals in their transfer and integration of leader development program components.

Comparing the ALDP with those of nonmilitary organizations may lead human (HRD) researchers and practitioners to reconsider their existing approaches as well as discover new methods for developing leaders in the workplace. Nonmilitary organizations invest significant capital—financial, human, and social—into developing their leaders but lack an in-depth understanding of how to approach this challenge programmatically. Throughout history, US Army leaders have led soldiers in battle while leading by example. The leadership traits engrained in soldiers such as loyalty, respect, and integrity are desirable qualities of employees, regardless of employer. A greater understanding of the ALDP can assist HRD scholars in bridging the gap between LD research and related training and development programs in nonmilitary organizations. Lastly, the US Army may benefit from continuing to explore LD practices in nonmilitary organizations, as part of efforts to improve current offerings.

Conclusion

Though there is further need to empirically examine the effectiveness of LD programs, corporate investments in this area continue to show significant growth. Today's organizations are primarily concerned with succession planning and addressing their leadership shortages, which leads them to allocate substantial percentages of their training and development budgets to the topic. The US Army, on

³² Pew Research Center, "The Military-Civilian Gap: War and Sacrifice in the Post 9/11 Era," published October 6, 2011, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2011/10/06/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era-the-military-civilian-gap/>

the other hand, has managed to incorporate leadership training into daily exercises and work while avoiding major pitfalls despite their unique mission, personnel, and size. Veterans identify themselves as capable and confident leaders and attribute their time in service as the most significant factor for their professional development.³³ For companies needing improvement and enhancement of their existing programs, a consideration of the US Army's leader development program may prove to be a valuable step forward. Identifying the distinctions between developing leaders in the Army and private sector is critical for improving such programs in nonmilitary organizations. The Army's emphasis on how leader development is fundamental to its mission, as well as companies' concerns for developing effective leaders, warrants future research to study potentially successful utilization of this model.

³³ Michael Kirchner, "Veteran as Leader: The Lived Experience with Army Leader Development," *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2018): pp. 67-85.