

EXAMINING DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY TRAITS AS POSSIBLE
ANTECEDENTS OF TOXIC LEADERSHIP
IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY

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General Studies

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING DARK TRIAD PERSONALITY TRAITS AS POSSIBLE
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The purpose of this project addresses gaps in the literature regarding the antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within a military context specifically within the United States Navy. It looks to determine if dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents of a United States Navy toxic leader. This project employs a qualitative approach, and specifically uses Robert Yin's comparative multiple-case study methodology (2018, 62). The three selected case studies that this thesis examined involved: 1) The removal of Captain Holly Graf from her command of the United States Ship Cowpens due to toxic behaviors (Thompson 2010; Slavin 2010). 2) The resignation of former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano amid allegations of fostering a toxic workplace environment (Seck 2018; Faram 2018). 3) The suicide of Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco onboard United States Ship, James E. Williams in June 2014 due to a toxic climate (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014). The primary means to collect evidence involved documentation and archival records. The study's findings concluded that elements of dark triad traits were present in the case studies. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

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ACRONYMS

CO	Commanding Officer
CMC	Command Master Chief
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
MCPON	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
XO	Executive Officer

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Where the system is much less forgiving, where your troops will be much less forgiving, is if you demonstrate flaws in character, because then they won't trust you, and they won't trust their lives to you and you will be lost to them as a leader.

—ADM John M. Richardson, Remarks at Norte Dame Leadership Week

Media Reports on Military Toxic Leaders

The media continues to report on the failures of leaders (Allio 2007, 12). While what actually constitutes a leadership failure can encompass a wide range of actions, this paper primarily focuses on leadership failures that occur within the United States military. Reviewing news reports within the past four years from military news sources such as Army Times, Navy Times, Marine Corps Times, and Air Force Times illustrates a trend in headlines reporting on military leaders being fired or removed from their leadership positions for actions associated with the dark side of leadership, or more specifically, toxic leadership. For example, an article by the Navy Times issued in March 2019 reported on the firing of Navy Commander John House from his position as the commanding officer of Navy Recruiting District Michigan when a Navy Recruiting Command Inspector general report included comments from interviewed personnel that Commander House berated, belittled, threatened, and intimidated “officers and senior enlisted members in front of civilian and junior military personnel [that created] ...a hostile work environment” (Ziezulewicz 2019).

The Navy Recruiting Command inspector general investigation included interviews from the 28 staffers who worked for Commander House that comprised of “20

enlisted, five officers, and three civilian employees” who all corroborated separate but reoccurring instances where Commander House displayed and verbally stated his lack of concern and care for his subordinates (Ziezulewicz 2019). Those interviewed recalled Commander House verbally expressing his hatred towards certain types of officers because they lacked certain qualifications or belonged to a particular military occupational specialty (Ziezulewicz 2019). One of his civilian employees noted Commander House saying that he did not care about “contractors or the (General Service) civilian’s morale” (Ziezulewicz 2019).

Additionally the report included a conversation that hinted towards Commander House’s previous history of dark leadership and toxicity (Ziezulewicz 2019). When confronted by an employee regarding rumors of Commander House being fired from a previous position “because he was a tyrant and abusive towards his junior officers” (Ziezulewicz 2019) Commander House got angry with the comment and stated that ““those JOs’ [junior officers] were pieces of (expletive), got what they deserved, and he was only doing his job” (Ziezulewicz 2019). The report also included Commander House admitting to his consistent use of profanity and he did not deny the allegations of leadership misconduct made by his staffers, but Commander House stated that “he never intended to create a hostile working environment and believes his conduct and actions were misunderstood by command personnel” (Ziezulewicz 2019).

Another report published by the Air Force Times in October 2018 described the firing of Air Force Colonel David Owens from his position as the commander of the 317th Airlift Wing located at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas after an investigation concluded Colonel Owens’ actions consisted of “a repeated pattern of berating and

ridiculing airmen...and toxic leadership” (Losey 2018). The investigation also noted that Colonel Owens’ publically ridiculed subordinates and exhibited acts of anger and physical aggression towards them that left some airmen psychologically abused from the experience (Losey 2018).

Another example includes a report released by the Marine Corps Times in December 2017 that discussed the firing of Marine Corps Colonel Daniel O’Hora from his position as the “commanding officer of the Marine Corps Engineer School” (Schogol 2017). The command investigation that led to Colonel O’Hora’s removal from his position included interviews from different people who interacted with Colonel O’Hora while at the Marine Corps Engineer School who stated that Colonel O’Hora “belittled, demeaned or showed displeasure to...his staff either through comments, or minor physical actions, such as throwing a pen or papers on to a desk or table” (Schogol 2017). One person being interviewed even described Colonel O’Hora as “an abusive spouse” with “a volatile temper and was likely to lash out at subordinates for no reason” (Schogol 2017).

Other complaints included in the investigation noted that Colonel O’Hora did not trust his subordinates and became overly fixated with data analytics and research projects that did not contribute to the overall mission of the Marine Corps Engineer School and resulted in decreased unit cohesion and morale (Schogol 2017). Colonel O’Hora’s mood became so unpredictable that his staff went into work every day contemplating the strong possibility of being fired due to the erratic and severe fluctuations in Colonel O’Hora’s moods (Schogol 2017). Ultimately the investigation concluded that Colonel O’Hora’s

actions contributed to creating a toxic climate and workplace environment, which resulted in his firing from his position (Schogol 2017).

The Army Times in September 2015 reported on the firing of Army Colonel Chad McRee from his command of the 16th Military Police Brigade due to an investigation that “found he fostered a toxic work environment and exhibited unprofessional behavior” (Jahner 2015). The investigation substantiated the majority of the allegations against Colonel McRee that included “toxic leadership and undue Command influence...unrelenting negativity and iron-headed intractability...back-stabbing and intimidation” (Jahner 2015). Subordinates interviewed by investigators gave sworn testimonies that described instances of Colonel McRee making threats to damage their professional careers if they did not comply with his tasks to make negative comments about senior leaders who Colonel McRee perceived as trying to end his career (Jahner 2015).

The report indicated that Colonel McRee allegedly made comments to subordinates of ““you owe me, I write your OER [officer evaluation report], not [redacted]...Why are you afraid of [redacted]? He can’t hurt you, but I can!” (Jahner 2015). Additionally, the investigation report included comments from subordinates at the company commander level that indicated, ““(McRee) does not trust his subordinates”” (Jahner 2015). The report also included comments from a subordinate battalion commander who indicated that ““[McRee] has fostered an (sic) hostile work environment of intimidation, fear of reprisal, mistrust, negativity, unachievable standards, double standards, hypocrisy (sic) forced/coerced compliance, and unprofessional

conduct...There is only one way to do things in the 16th BDE [brigade] and that is [McRee's] way” (Jahner 2015).

The reported firings of these four senior military leaders across all four of the United States military services of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force hints towards a possible underlying organizational problem with military leaders engaging in tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic actions and behaviors that embody the dark side of leadership phenomenon (Conger 1990, 44; Mathieu, Neumann, Hare, and Babiak 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87). However, despite the observation made by leadership author Robert Allio who indicated that society remains riddled with an epidemic of leader misbehaviors (2007, 12), it becomes inappropriate to generalize the firings of Navy Commander John House, Air Force Colonel David Owens, Marine Corps Colonel Daniel O’Hora, and Army Colonel Chad McRee and make the broad claim that United States military as a whole becomes plagued with problematic, tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic leaders.

This assertion becomes supported by United States Representative Mike Coffman, chair of the military personnel subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, who while overseeing a hearing on senior leader misconduct in the Department of Defense in February 2018 stated that the Department of Defense as a whole still comprised of good senior military and civilian officials who serve with honor and dignity (Brook 2018). However, Representative Coffman continued his comment indicating that due to the responsibility and trust placed upon these senior officials these misconducts still yielded great negative impact (Brook 2018). Therefore, even though the actions by these four individuals do not represent all military leaders within the United States

Department of Defense the similarities shared among these separate cases warrant further examination due to the severe, enduring, and negative impact that these military leaders inflicted upon individual members and their military units (Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29).

The shared behaviors perceived by the followers or subordinates of the four fired military leaders described earlier that became corroborated and substantiated in the separate investigation reports included these leaders berating, belittling, and ridiculing subordinates (Jahner 2015; Schogol 2017; Losey 2018; Ziezulewicz 2019). Additionally, the four fired military leaders all became described by their subordinates as abusive, displaying a lack of trust in others, and creating a toxic and hostile workplace environment (Jahner 2015; Schogol 2017; Losey 2018; Ziezulewicz 2019). All of these shared behaviors and actions by Commander House, Colonel Owens, Colonel O'Hara, and Colonel McRee illustrated the tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic components that comprise the dark side of leadership (Conger 1990, 44; Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87).

However, a deeper examination of these behaviors by these fired military leaders can lead one to consider and relate these dark side of leadership behaviors to leadership derailers or personality traits that help increase the likelihood of leadership failures (Burke 2006, 93). Examples of these derailers include narcissism or the personality trait that demonstrates arrogance, entitlement, and the need to lord one's powers and authorities over others (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). Machiavellianism or the personality trait that seeks to manipulate others (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556), and psychopathy, a personality trait that becomes associated with unpredictability, erratic behaviors, and coldness (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557).

For example, the testimonies made by Commander House's subordinates that he showed a lack of concern and care for their well-being aligns with the coldness and lack of empathy associated with psychopathy (Ziezulewicz 2019; Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). Additionally, the over-fixation with details and erratic behavior described by Marine Corps Colonel O'Hora's subordinates also aligns with the psychopathy derailers (Schogol 2017; Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). While the actions by Army Colonel McRee requiring his subordinates to make false reports about senior leaders aligns with the manipulation involved with Machiavellianism (Jahner 2015; Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). Also, the comment by Colonel McRee's subordinate battalion commander stating that "There is only one way to do things in the 16th BDE [brigade] and that is [McRee's] way" (Jahner 2015) relates to the arrogance and self-centeredness associated with narcissism (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557).

The tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic actions exhibited by Commander House, Colonel Owens, Colonel O'Hora, and Colonel McRee that resulted in their terminations from their military leadership positions relating to the leadership derailleurs and personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy offer an opportunity for further study and exploration. These leadership derailleurs can possibly serve as antecedents or causes to the dark side of leadership behaviors exhibited by these four military leaders. Additionally, the negative impact caused by these four military leaders support the consideration to further examine the dark side of leadership. The next section of this chapter describes the need to study the dark side of leadership and provides a more detailed description of this phenomenon.

Consideration for Examining the Dark Side of Leadership

Despite these real world examples of leader misconduct conducted by military leaders the literature and research studies regarding leadership consistently emphasize its positive impacts (McCleskey 2013, 35). This assertion becomes supported by the fact that the topic of leadership encompasses over 50 years of studies, books, and published articles where the majority of the leadership literature helps explain the success and positive value that leadership brings to organizations (Burke 2006, 91). Therefore, one can argue that there exists a large amount of knowledge and information regarding the elements and characteristics that comprise right and good leadership. However, despite the leadership literature's copious amount of studies regarding good leadership there still exists flawed leaders (McCleskey 2013, 35).

This disparity between the amount of research discussing good leadership in the literature not accurately reflecting the reality of ineffective and bad leadership supports the assertion by leadership author Barbara Kellerman who argued that there exists a positive bias regarding the approach that researchers and writers take regarding the topic of leadership (2004, 41). This positively skewed perspective leads to an inaccurate and one sided understanding of leadership and short changes researchers and practitioners from gaining insight and viewing the whole leadership picture (Kellerman 2004, 41; Burke 2006, 92). Additionally, professors Clive Boddy, Richard Ladyschewsky, and Peter Galvin expanded on Kellerman's argument writing that, "Leadership tends to be written about as if it were always positive, ethical and good [and] ignores the dark side of leadership" (2010, 125).

The commentary by leadership critics on the perceived overemphasis placed on approaching the topic of leadership from mostly a positive perspective offers opportunities for future research and study to explore and examine the dark side of leadership or dark leadership. Studying the negative consequences associated with bad and/or ineffective leadership helps provide a more accurate and complete view of leadership and attempts to counterbalance the existing positive perspective/approach that dominates the leadership literature (Burke 2006, 92). Also, the additional benefit of studying the dark side of leadership or dark leadership results in gaining a better understanding and more of an appreciation regarding the previous studies that highlight the positive impacts of leadership (Kellerman 2004, 41; Burke 2006, 92).

Dark Leadership Overview

The literature defines the dark side of leadership or dark leadership as the negative actions, behaviors, traits, and personalities of abusive, tyrannical, destructive, and/or toxic leaders that cause organizational dysfunction, poor workplace performance, and employee deviant behaviors (Conger 1990, 44; Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87). For the purposes of this paper, dark side of leadership and dark leadership serve as interchangeable terms sharing the same description and definition. Therefore, the remainder of the paper refers to the dark side of leadership as dark leadership.

Dark leadership encompasses the concept of derailment and becomes associated with the dark triad traits of psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism (McCleskey 2013, 35; Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 855; Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, and Meijer 2017, 183; Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). According to Canadian University

of Toronto Professor, Ronald Burke, the concept of derailment in the context of dark leadership involves certain factors known as derailers that serve as “deeply ingrained personality traits that affect...leadership styles and behaviors” that derail the success of the leader (2006, 93). The poor identification and mismanagement of these leader derailers result in leadership derailment where leaders become removed from their position, demoted, or succumb to any other imposed adverse action that ends their professional careers (Burke 2006, 92; Cote 2018, 43).

Burke references the work of authors David Dotlich and Peter Cairo in their book *Why CEOs Fail: The 11 Behaviors that Can Derail Your Climb to the Top – And How to Manage Them* regarding the 11 leadership derailers. Dotlich and Cairo’s book dedicates a chapter to each of the 11 derailers that include arrogance, melodrama, volatility, excessive caution, habitual distrust, aloofness, mischievousness, eccentricity, passive resistance, perfectionism, and eagerness to please (2003, xxii; Burke 2006, 93). These derailment personality traits encompass and draw similarities to the aversive personalities that Canadian professors from the University of British Columbia Delroy Paulhus and Kevin Williams refer to as the dark triad traits of personality construct that include narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (2002, 556).

Narcissism involves feelings of entitlement, superiority over others, pompousness, and arrogance (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). Machiavellianism as a personality trait relates to the manipulation of others (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). Whereas psychopathy deals with central elements regarding the lack of empathy coupled with high levels of impulsiveness (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). The concept of derailment and the dark triad personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and

psychopathy become further discussed in the literature review section of this paper. But these concepts become included in this section to introduce and highlight the negative personalities associated with dark leadership (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87).

As described earlier, dark leadership stems from abusive, tyrannical, destructive, and/or toxic leaders (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87). These dark leaders both come from the private and public sectors of society (Allio 2007, 12). However, case studies on these abusive, tyrannical, destructive, and toxic leaders primarily cite leaders within the private sector (Ashforth 1994, 1; Tepper 2000, 178; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208; Lipmen-Blumen 2005, 29). Although Dr. George Reed, a retired Colonel from the United States Army, conducted a study among United States Army officers regarding the topic of toxic leadership, overall the literature lacks case studies of dark leaders within the United States military (Reed 2015, 39).

This gap in the leadership literature becomes troubling because the recent firings and removals of military leaders across all United States military services due to investigations that substantiated behaviors of dark leadership described at the beginning of this chapter can serve as case studies to further examine the phenomenon of dark leadership. Although these recent military news reports of fired military leaders due to dark leadership behaviors serve as suitable case studies each worthy of further exploration, this paper seeks to understand dark leadership behaviors in the United States Navy. Therefore, in order to further explore the negative impact of dark leadership in the United States military from the perspective of its maritime service component, the next section describes three cases of dark leadership in the United States Navy.

Background

On June 21, 2018, Steven Giordano the 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the United States Navy's most senior enlisted leader, unexpectedly and abruptly resigned amid allegations of toxicity and fostering a hostile work environment (Seck 2018). Giordano took over as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy in September 2016 and during his tenure a high volume of employee turnover occurred (Faram 2018). Speculations regarding the high turnover rate included claims that the turnover resulted from individual employee personal reasons for voluntary transfer or separation (Faram 2018). But others claimed that it stemmed from Giordano's abusive and toxic leadership.

The Navy's office of the inspector general recently concluded its investigation (not publically released) into these allegations and complaints, and found that Giordano "failed to exhibit exemplary conduct" (Faram 2019). The inspector general report also included the testimonies of active duty Navy members (also known as Sailors) who worked for and knew Giordano characterized him as an individual with an uncontrollable temper who bullied, belittled, and berated his subordinates (Faram, 2018; 2019; Harkin 2019). Additionally, while Giordano filled the position of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, his subordinates noticed that Giordano began to overly fixate and obsess over the perquisites that came with his position to the point that he believed and insisted that he receive the same level of privileges given to a three-star flag (i.e. admiral)/general officer (Faram 2018).

The controversy surrounding Giordano and his eventual resignation as the United States Navy's most senior enlisted leader due to complaints of abuse, hostility, toxicity, and other destructive behaviors provides an illustration of dark leadership in action within

the United States military. Unfortunately, dark leadership does not solely reside in the United States military's senior enlisted ranks, but occurs within its officer corps as well. For example, in 2010, the Navy inspector general concluded in their investigation report that Navy Captain Holly Graf consistently verbally abused her crew while serving in the position as the Commanding Officer of the United States Ship Cowpens, a United States warship stationed in Yokosuka, Japan (Thompson 2010; Slavin 2010).

The Navy inspector general report (not publically released) included accounts from Sailors onboard Cowpens who claimed that Graf created an environment based on tyranny, fear, and abuse (Thompson 2010). Sailors made statements in the report indicating that Graf belittled subordinates, constantly screamed, used an obscene and unnecessary amount of profanity, and showed no regard for her subordinates (Thompson 2010). One Sailor even went so far to report that Graf's actions not only showed a complete disregard for her subordinates, but Graf vocalized such sentiments and told her subordinates that she hated them (Thompson 2010). The report exposed Graf and her toxicity, which eventually led to her removal from command and the ending of her naval career.

Additionally, the consequences associated with dark leadership not only result in decreased employee morale and performance, but it can even lead to deadly outcomes such as the June 2014 suicide of 23 year old female Sailor, Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87; Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 008). An investigation conducted by the United States Navy determined that the abusive supervision, destructive behaviors, and toxic leadership by the ship's Chief Petty Officers enabled by the lack of involvement and disregard from the

ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief (i.e. ship's senior enlisted advisor) created a toxic command culture and climate based on "fear and intimidation" (Simmons 2014, 003) onboard the Norfolk, Virginia, based destroyer, the United States Ship James E. Williams (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002).

The Chief Petty Officers targeted junior Sailors like Seaman Villot-Carrasco and bullied, belittled, demeaned, abused, assaulted, and demoralized them (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002). Specifically, Seaman Villot-Carrasco before taking her own life by overdosing with Unisom sleep aid medication reached out for help for feelings of being singled out, being treated unfairly, and difficulties integrating with the ship's crew due to rumors being spread about her being romantically involved with another crewmember (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 008). However, her plea for help received disciplinary action when Villot-Carrasco's supervisor learned that "she wanted to file an equal opportunity (EO) complaint" (Simmons 2014, 009). This toxic workplace environment coupled with the perceived unfair treatment by Seaman Villot-Carrasco's immediate supervisors drove her to commit suicide during the first month of the ship's eight month deployment (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 010).

Statement of the Problem

Giordano's resignation from his position as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Graf's removal from her command at sea, and the suicide of Seaman Villot-Carrasco highlight the negative impact associated with dark leadership. However, as mentioned earlier, despite these negative outcomes leadership studies continue to study the positive aspects of leadership and the successes associated with it (Kellerman 2004, 41; Burke 2006, 92; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 207; Schyns and Schilling

2013, 138). However, Giordano, Graf, and the leadership aboard the James E. Williams who caused pain and suffering to their subordinates justify the need to further study and explore the dark leadership phenomenon (Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 207; Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 176; Pelletier 2010, 374).

Psychology researchers Roy Baumeister, Ellen Bratlavsky, Catrin Finkenauer, and Kathleen Vohs (2001, 323-324) in their article “Bad is Stronger than Good”, argued that negative events leave a lasting and more powerful impact than positive events. This assertion highlights the importance and need for additional emphasis for leadership studies to examine abusive, destructive, toxic, and overall harmful leadership behaviors and actions that comprise dark leadership (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 207; Schyns and Schilling 2013, 138; Morh 2013, 18).

Additionally, the terminations of Navy Commander House, Air Force Colonel Owens, Marine Corps Colonel O’Hora, and Army Colonel McRee due to substantiated allegations of creating a toxic and hostile workplace environments that left an enduring and negative impact on their subordinates and units further justify the need for more studies regarding dark leadership in the context of the United States military. Although, the existing studies involving dark leadership in the United States military focus on toxic and destructive leadership, its focus stems from the perspectives of United States Army Soldiers and senior military leaders (Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Williams 2005, 1; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, Steele 2010, 8; 58; Hannah, Schaubroeck, Peng, Lord, Trevino, Kozlowski, Avolio, Dimotakis, and Doty, 584; Reed 2014, 4). While it appears possible to generalize the findings conducted from studies that focused on the United States Army the differences in military service cultures and the

few studies that delve into the dark leadership phenomenon support exploring this topic in greater detail from the perspective of the United States Navy.

Additionally, the continued need to study dark leadership within the context of the United States military becomes justified because the American people revere and respect its military and places much trust and faith in them to continue to protect the American people and the nation's interests (Reed 2015, 3). But leadership failures as exhibited by the four terminated military leaders described earlier in addition to the Navy military cases involving Giordano and Graf and the suicide of Seaman Villot-Carrasco call into question this trust. The negative impact of military leadership failures resulting in the erosion of trust from the American people further supports the importance for continued study regarding dark leadership and its harmful leadership behaviors in the United States military. Additional studies on this phenomenon help to better identify and understand these behaviors associated with dark leadership, which can offer insight to provide recommendations on ways to manage and mitigate these types of behaviors.

Purpose of this Study

As defined earlier, dark leadership serves as a broad and all-encompassing phrase that can consist of a number of various leadership theories and concepts. Previous research efforts regarding dark leadership focus on “understanding the dark traits, causes, and solutions for minimizing...toxic behaviors in leaders” (Cote 2018, 43). Therefore, this thesis focuses specifically on one form of dark leadership, the toxic leadership concept and the potential dark personality traits associated with it. Due to the work conducted by Dr. George Reed, regarding toxic leadership in the context of the United States military, this thesis uses Dr. Reed's definition of toxic leadership.

Previous studies regarding toxic leadership in the United States military explored the negative impact, consequences, and outcomes that toxic leaders impose on organizations and followers (Di Geno 2002, 14; Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy 2002, 1070; Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Schmidt 2008, 14; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, 58; Steele 2011, 8; Aubrey 2012, 1; Mueller 2012, 251; Gallus, Walsh, van Driel, Gouge, and Antolic 590; Hannah et al. 2013, 584; Schmidt 2014, 2; Johnson 2018, 3). Although, studying the negative outcomes associated with toxic leadership serves an important purpose, approaching the topic of toxic leadership from an outcome and consequence orientation serves as a reactionary perspective to this topic. In order to better identify and recommend possible ways to mitigate the negative impact of toxic leadership in the United States military additional studies need to take a proactive approach to this phenomenon of interest. In an attempt to fill this gap in the literature, this thesis investigates the antecedents of toxic leadership within a military context. Specifically, it focuses on toxic leaders in the United States Navy and argues that dark personality traits exhibited by these United States Navy individuals can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership.

Nature of the Study

In order to gain deeper understanding regarding toxic leadership within the context of the United States Navy a qualitative inquiry serves as the appropriate approach to achieve this objective. Qualitative research helps provide and draw out rich meaning from understanding conceptual relationships regarding the phenomenon of interest and its associated context (Patton 2015, 8). Qualitative researchers define context as to “what’s going on around the people, groups, organizations, communities, or systems of interest”

(Patton 2015, 9). While quantitative studies that focus on statistical inferences and data can offer valuable trends it cannot capture the stories behind the numbers or help understand the context surrounding the statistics (Patton 2015, 12).

The contributions of greater contextual understanding and the highlighting of meaning that a qualitative inquiry provides justify its use. Additionally, qualitative research can aid with discovering patterns of new and important information through the cross comparison of cases (Patton 2015, 13). Therefore, qualitative methodology aligns with this study's purpose to investigate the antecedents of toxic leadership within the United States Navy through the examination of dark personality traits. More specifically, in order to discover these important patterns a qualitative case study methodology becomes employed. Research case studies serve as a formal qualitative research method that helps deeply investigate a current phenomenon (i.e. the case) within its real-world context (Yin 2018, 15). The use of the qualitative research case study method aligns well with this study's purpose that seeks to understand how dark personality traits can serve as indicators to toxic leadership within the context of the United States Navy.

Also, in order to seek greater understanding and meaning regarding this study's investigation into the dark leadership element of toxic leadership in the United States Navy the study employs the multiple case studies approach and specifically uses a comparative case method (Yin 2018, 17). The comparative case method serves as a type of multiple case studies that allows for cross-case analysis (Yin 2018, 17). Comparisons among case studies offer an opportunity to analyze similarities and differences that help develop deeper understanding regarding the phenomenon of interest and help aid with discovering new patterns of information based on the commonalities and differences

among the cases (Patton 2015, 13). Based on this definition and the outcomes produced by employing a comparative case study method it serves as the most appropriate research methodology for this study.

Significance of the Study

The conduct of this study offers a number of contributions and highlights its significance. First, the study's emphasis on examining the dark leadership element of toxic leadership helps counter the perceived positive bias that Kellerman described regarding the majority of researchers emphasizing the positive aspects of leadership and overlooking its negative elements (2004, 41). Therefore, this study adds to the growing dark leadership literature and helps provide a more holistic view regarding the topic of leadership. Second, it further provides specificity and focus by exploring the dark leadership component of toxic leadership from the perspective of the United States Navy.

Dr. Reed's study conducted on toxic leadership within the United States military used data from United States Army officers (Bulls and Reed 2003, 4; Reed 2004, 67). However, a scarcity exists regarding studies that look at toxic leadership from the context of the United States Navy. Therefore this study builds on Dr. Reed's research regarding toxic leadership in the United States military (2004, 67; Reed and Bullis 2009, 5; Reed and Olsen 2010, 58; Reed 2014, 3; Reed 2015, 5) and primarily explores the phenomenon of toxic leadership in more depth within the United States Navy context to help fill this gap.

Additionally, previous studies regarding toxic leadership primarily focuses on its negative consequences (Di Geno 2002, 14; Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy 2002, 1070; Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, 58;

Steele 2011, 8; Aubrey 2012, 1; Mueller 2012, 251; Gallus et al. 2013, 590; Hannah et al. 2013, 584; Schmidt 2014, 2; Johnson 2018, 3). Therefore, this study seeks to examine toxic leadership from an antecedent perspective that examines possible precursors to toxic leadership rather than exploring the negative consequences associated with this dark leadership component/construct.

Definition of Key Terms

Antecedent. A part of conditional reasoning which serves as a form of logical reasoning that uses if, then statements that include antecedents and consequents (Coleman 2015, sec. “conditional reasoning”). In the context of conditional reasoning, an antecedent becomes regarded as the cause that leads up to the consequent or the effect (Coleman 2015, sec. “conditional reasoning”).

Dark leadership. A form of leadership that describes the negative actions, behaviors, traits, and personalities of abusive, tyrannical, destructive, and/or toxic leaders that cause organizational dysfunction, poor workplace performance, and employee deviant behaviors (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87).

Dark triad personality traits. Personality construct comprised of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy dark personality traits (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557).

Derailers. Leader vulnerabilities that comprise of “deeply ingrained personality traits that affect their leadership style and actions” and result in leadership failures (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix).

Derailment. Leader derailment involves “being involuntarily plateaued, demoted, or fired below the level of expected achievement or reaching that level but unexpectedly failing” (Burke 2006, 92).

Machiavellianism. “A duplicitous interpersonal style, characterized by cynical disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and personal gain” (Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Narcissism. “The pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one’s own attributes...that negatively impacts relationships with other people” (Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Personality. “A relatively stable set of feelings and behaviors that have been significantly formed by genetic and environmental factors” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 67).

Psychopathy. “A personality trait characterized by enduring antisocial behavior, diminished empathy and remorse, and disinhibited or bold behavior” (Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Toxic leadership. Dark leadership construct characterized through the following elements: “1. an apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates; 2. a personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate; 3. a conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self- interest” (Reed 2004, 67; 2014, 4).

Trait. “A characteristic or quality distinguishing a person or thing, especially a pattern of behavior that a person would likely display in a relevant circumstance” (Coleman 2015, sec. Trait).

Summary

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the terminations of military leaders from their positions due to substantiated allegations of leader toxicity provide examples that highlight the existence of flawed and dark leaders (Allio 2007, 12). Although, these military leaders do not represent all military leadership within the Department of Defense (Brook 2018) their negative impact that leads to the deterioration of trust by the American people justify further examination regarding the possible causes to military leaders, primarily Navy military leaders, engaging in dark leadership behaviors. However, despite these real-world case studies of dark leadership there exists an overemphasis and bias towards studying the positive aspects of leadership where greater efforts in research need to explore leadership's negative elements (Kellerman 2004, 41). Additionally, exploring dark leadership within the context of the United States military by primarily focusing on toxic leaders in the United States Navy helps fill a number of gaps in the literature and provides a more holistic viewpoint on dark leadership beyond previous studies conducted in the private sector (Ashforth 1994, 1; Tepper 2000, 178; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208; Lipmen-Blumen 2005, 29).

As made evident by previously noted real world examples, the negative impact that dark leaders can cause their organizations and society as a whole such as the degradation of employee performance, loss of trust, the creation of a hostile workplace environment, and even the loss of life justify the importance and significance of this study. Therefore, understanding the possible connections of dark personality traits with particular emphasis on the dark triad traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557) functioning as antecedents to dark

leadership, more specifically toxic leadership, can inform researchers and practitioners of a way to identify the makings of a toxic leader. Proper identification of toxic leadership antecedents can then lead into the development of appropriate mitigation measures to reduce toxic leadership's negative impact and influence.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature regarding toxic leadership at times overlaps with other dark leadership constructs and terminologies such as petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership. Dr. Reed in his studies on toxic leadership within the United States military even regarded these other dark leadership constructs as interchangeable with toxic leadership (Reed and Bullis 2009, 6). The overlap regarding these dark leadership constructs can lead to confusion. Therefore, this literature review begins by continuing its discussion regarding dark leadership and provides details regarding the dark leadership components/constructs of petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership.

Building on the other dark leadership constructs this chapter then discusses the topic of toxic leadership, provides the various definitions of toxic leadership, and primarily focuses on Dr. Reed's three part definition of toxic leadership that emphasizes a leader's personality can negatively impact subordinates and the organization (2004, 67; 2014, 4). Based on Dr. Reed's toxic leadership definition, this chapter explores the connection between personality traits and leadership and includes what leadership traits the United States Navy considers important. The chapter continues by discussing how negative personality traits categorized as derailers result in leader derailment (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix).

The literature review then relates leader derailers to the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix;

Paulhus, Delroy, and Williams 2002, 556; Rauthmann and Kolar 2012, 885; Muris et al. 2017, 183). It also includes previous studies that relate dark personality traits to toxic leadership (Goldman 2006, 733; 2008, 226; Kusy and Holloway 2010, 7; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015, 165; Jonason, Slomski, and Partyka 2012, 449; Templer 2018, 209). The chapter concludes with a presentation of the thesis' research question that it seeks to answer.

Dark Leadership

Over the past two decades, research regarding dark leadership continues to grow (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Cote 2018, 43). Scholars add to the dark leadership literature describing and defining dark leadership in terms of petty tyranny (Ashforth 1994, 1), abusive supervision (Tepper 2000, 178), destructive leadership (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208), and toxic leadership (Lipmen-Blumen 2005, 29; Reed 2004, 67). In this context the literature defines dark leadership as a form of leadership that describes the negative actions, behaviors, traits, and personalities of abusive, tyrannical, destructive, and/or toxic leaders that cause organizational dysfunction, poor workplace performance, and employee deviant behaviors (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83; Khoo and Burch 2008, 87).

This definition of dark leadership aligns with researchers Cynthia Mathieu, Craig Neumann, Robert Hare, and Paul Babiak who posited that the similar and common behaviors shared among petty tyranny, abusive supervision, destructive leadership, and toxic leadership help comprise the all-encompassing term of dark leadership (2014, 83). Short definitions of these concepts that refer to and comprise the term dark leadership become provided in table 1.

Table 1. Constructs that Define Dark Leadership		
Dark Leadership Construct	Reference	Definition
Petty Tyranny	Ashforth 1994, 755	“A person who lords his or her power over others.”
Abusive Supervision	Tepper 2000, 178	“The sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact.”
Destructive Leadership	Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208	“The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation’s goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates.”
Toxic Leadership	Various	Intentionally left blank. Refer to table 2.

Source: Yavas 2016, 268.

American leadership professor and researcher, Dr. Kathie Pelletier, noted that overlaps do exist among the dark leadership constructs listed in table 1 (2010, 375). Primarily that tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic leadership theories all share common behaviors and actions of demeaning/marginalizing, or degrading; ridiculing/mock; exhibiting favoritism; being deceptive/lying; and blaming others for the leader’s mistakes (Pelletier 2010, 375; Yavas 2016, 269). Although this study focuses primarily on the dark leadership component of toxic leadership, defining the other dark leadership constructs will further build on the commonalities found by Dr. Pelletier and illustrates how the dark leadership construct of toxic leadership incorporates elements of petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership. The subsequent paragraphs in this section

provide further details regarding the other dark leadership components and begins with a discussion of petty tyranny.

Petty Tyranny

Dr. Blake Ashforth in his 1994 article coined the term petty tyranny and defined it as “a person who lords his or her power over others” (755). Terms associated with petty tyranny include bully and dictator (Ashforth 1994, 756). Common themes found among these terms include actions of coercion, micromanagement, distrust, emphasizing on the unequal distribution of status and power, rigidity, rudeness, and a lack of concern for subordinates (Ashforth 1994, 756; 1997, 128). Empirical studies conducted by Dr. Ashforth identified six behaviors associated with petty tyranny which include “arbitrariness and self-aggrandizement, belittling subordinates, lack of consideration, forcing style of conflict resolution, discourages initiative, and noncontingent punishment” (1994, 756).

Additionally, Dr. Ashforth posited that the causes of petty tyranny involve a combination of individual and situational factors (1997, 127). Individual factors consist of taking on a bureaucratic focus where formal work relationships and compliance to rules become emphasized (Ashforth 1997, 127). Also, the factor of being bureaucratically oriented also involves a leader’s low level of self-confidence and developing low expectations of subordinates and others (Ashforth 1997, 127). This bureaucratic orientation results in a person being perceived as cold, not approachable, and filled with insecurities that justifies the person trying to exert power over others (Ashforth 1997, 127). Situational factors that influence petty tyranny include organizational structures and values that encourage subordinates feeling helpless (Ashforth 1994, 759). These

situational factors solidify positional authority to certain individuals that facilitates the rise of petty tyranny and a power distance that further divides superiors from subordinates (Ashforth 1994, 759).

Leaders and managers perceived as exhibiting behaviors and actions associated with petty tyranny result in being viewed negatively by followers (Ashforth 1994, 762). Additional consequences of petty tyranny include an increase in subordinate anger and stress; increased subordinate feelings of isolation and alienation; and decreased subordinate self-esteem, performance, and unit cohesion (Ashforth 1994, 762). Dr. Bennett Tepper builds on the work conducted by Dr. Ashforth, and provides a definition of abusive supervision that focuses on the hostility element petty tyranny.

Abusive Supervision

Dr. Tepper defined abusive supervision as “the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (2000, 178). Similar to petty tyranny the impact of abusive supervision depends on the perspectives of subordinates (Ashforth 1994, 761; Tepper 2000, 178; Martinko et al. 2013, 120). The subjectivity associated with viewing a leader, manager, and/or supervisor indicates that one person can consider someone abusive while another person does not view those same actions as abusive (Tepper 2000; 178). This subjectivity makes it difficult to identify abusive supervision, but in general abusive supervision becomes associated with visible actions of “public criticism, loud and angry tantrums, rudeness, inconsiderate actions, and coercion” (Tepper 2000, 179).

Actions such as a lack of concern for others and coercion used to describe abusive supervision align with actions associated with petty tyranny (Ashforth 1994, 756; Tepper

2000, 179). Also, the consequences of helplessness, increased levels of stress, job dissatisfaction, and poor performance result in shared similarities between abusive supervision and petty tyranny (Ashforth 1994, 763; Tepper 2000, 179; Martinko et al. 2013, 137; Atwater, Kim, Witt, Latheef, Callison, Elkins, and Zheng 2016, 1876; Chen and Wang 2017, 848; Qian, Song, and Wang 2017, 4). Although many similarities between petty tyranny and abusive supervision exist, abusive supervision emphasizes its element of subordinates' perceptions of prolonged nonphysical hostility more than petty tyranny (Tepper 2000, 178; 2007, 264).

While petty tyranny includes in its construct behaviors non-hostile behaviors such as not being approachable, abusive supervision focuses its construct only on hostile acts (Tepper 2007, 264). A noteworthy element of abusive supervision involves the requirement of sustained hostility to characterize an action and/or behavior as abusive supervision (Tepper 2007, 264). For example, yelling at a subordinate one time does not meet the definition of abusive supervision (Tepper 2007, 265). According to Dr. Tepper's definition, actions characterized as abusive supervisor can only occur if the yelling becomes perceived by the employee as hostile, occurs regularly, and becomes a part of the employee's routine (2007, 265). Examples of perceived and sustained hostility such as berating, belittling, embarrassing, etc. help comprise the abusive supervision construct (Tepper 2007, 265).

Petty tyranny's inclusion of non-hostile behaviors in its construct results in it being considered a broader concept than abusive supervision (Tepper 2007, 266). Since abusive supervision only focuses on hostile acts, the factors that foster abusive supervision by managers and leaders differ from the factors that influence petty tyranny

(Tepper 2007, 266). The categorical factors that contribute to the emergence of abusive supervision focus on the supervisor, the organization, the subordinate, and specific demographic characteristics such as age and tenure that subordinates and supervisors identify with (Tepper 2007, 269; Martinko et al. 2013, 129; Zhang and Bednall 2016, 456-9).

The supervisor related factors that give rise to abusive supervision consist of a lack of self-control, narcissism, and a history of family violence and aggression (Tepper 2007, 269; Martinko et al. 2013, 129; Zhang and Bednall 2016, 456-7). Organizational factors consist of structures such as highly centralized and hierarchical organizations that overemphasize a top-down communication and leadership style, which allows for leaders and managers to engage in abusive supervision (Martinko et al. 2013, 126). Also, if organizations turn a blind eye and tolerate supervisor aggression and violence towards subordinates the organization's inaction results in normative deviance or the accepting and establishing of a new standard and norm. This again encourages abusive supervision actions and behaviors by organizational leaders (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 458).

The subordinate related factors relate to the abusive supervision construct that emphasizes subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' behaviors (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 458). Subordinate traits help shape the perceptions they make of their supervisors (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 458). For instance, subordinates with a very negative perspective about others and life in general typically view other people's behaviors as negative and with malice (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 458). Additionally, subordinates who identify with high external locus of control generally blame failures on external factors

and more than likely consider their supervisors as abusive (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 458).

The demographic factors of supervisors and subordinates' age, years of work experience, and overall considerations of similarities and dissimilarities also influence the likelihood of emergence of abusive supervision (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459). Studies show that younger supervisors tend to exhibit more aggressive behaviors (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459). Also, subordinates with more work experience and tenure in an organization tend to experience less abusive supervision because, generally speaking, older and more experienced people receive better treatment and respect for their years of service (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459).

Also, the longer a subordinate works for a supervisor the more accustomed the subordinate becomes to the supervisor's actions, which can lead to the subordinate not considering the supervisor's behavior abusive (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459). Studies also found that supervisors' perceptions of how similar or dissimilar they liken their subordinates to themselves impact the likelihood of abusive supervision (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459). In other words, supervisors treat people better based on who they view as similar to them and treat people poorly who they view as dissimilar to them (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 459). The destructive leadership construct further explores the factors and associated consequences to abusive supervision and its similarities to petty tyranny.

Destructive Leadership

Researchers Stale Einarsen, Merethe Aasland, and Anders Skogstad in their article asserted that their definition of destructive leadership captures elements of the petty tyranny and abusive supervision constructs and provided the following definition of

destructive leadership, “The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation’s goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates” (2007, 208). Based on this definition of destructive leadership it shares similarities to petty tyranny and abusive supervision constructs regarding its focus on repeated, persistent, and enduring behavior (Ashforth 1994, 755; Tepper 2000, 178; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208).

However, destructive leadership differs from petty tyranny and abusive supervision in its categorization of behaviors that undermine, sabotage, and goes against the interests of the organization (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208). In other words, destructive leadership goes beyond the behaviors and actions previously included in the petty tyranny and abusive supervision constructs, and includes behaviors that deviate from organizational rules and norms such as theft, lying, fraud, etc. (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208). Another aspect where destructive leadership differs from petty tyranny and abusive supervision involves the aspect of physical violence (Pelletier 2010, 375).

Petty tyranny and abusive supervision both emphasize non-physical behaviors in their constructs (Ashforth 1994, 755; Tepper 2000, 178). Whereas, destructive leadership does include in its definition physical violence and force to include but not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault, punching, inappropriate contact, etc. (Pelletier 2010, 375). Additionally, where petty tyranny and abusive supervision only focuses on negative outcomes that impact subordinates, destructive leadership further explores the impact of

destructive leaders not only on subordinates but on the greater organization (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208; Schyns and Schilling 2013, 140).

Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad's definition of destructive leadership provides a broad an all-encompassing concept that not only aligns and includes the elements of petty tyranny and abusive supervision but also incorporates and categorizes other types of behaviors and actions such as physical violence and force (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208; Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, and Jacobs 2012, 235). The broad and inclusive definition of destructive leadership results in a number of factors that contribute to its emergence (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 177). Specifically, destructive leadership categorizes its causal factors in the same way as petty tyranny and abusive supervision and accounts for the interactions among subordinates, supervisors, the organization, and the greater environment (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 178).

Researchers Anthony Erickson, James Shaw, Jane Murray, and Sara Branch established the connection between destructive leadership and toxic leadership when they cited "the case of the toxic leaders in the U.S. military is a classic example of what is more commonly known as 'destructive leadership'" (2015, 266). Erickson, Shaw, Murray, and Branch's statement builds on the earlier works of Dr. Craig Bullis and Dr. George Reed's studies conducted in 2003 and 2009 and Dr. Reed's 2004 article where selected study participants included in their definition of toxic leadership the term destructive leaders (Bullis and Reed 2003, 2; Reed 2004, 67; Bullis and Reed 2009, 6).

The research and definitions presented regarding petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership show how these concepts build upon one another and share a number of similarities, which further provides support to the assertion that

petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership help define dark leadership (Mathieu et al. 2014, 83). Additionally, the overlap among these three dark leadership constructs supports Dr. Bullis and Dr. Reed's assertion of the interchangeable use of these constructs with toxic leadership (2009, 6). However, in an effort to ensure clarity regarding the focus of this thesis, the next section of this chapter defines and explores the toxic leadership construct that incorporates elements of petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership.

Toxic Leadership

Although, Dr. Pelletier discussed the commonalities shared among tyrannical, abusive, destructive, and toxic leadership styles there exists a number of definitions regarding toxic leadership (2010, 375). Table 2 provides the five most commonly cited definitions regarding the term toxic leadership as discussed in the literature (Schmidt 2008, 73). In general scholars and researchers regarding toxic leadership can agree that toxic leadership results in negative consequences (Yavas 2016, 268). However, the lack of consensus regarding the definition of toxic leadership leads to confusion regarding its meaning (Schmidt 2008, 2; Yavas 2016, 268). One reason that toxic leadership becomes difficult to define stems from the subjectivity associated with people's perceptions of this dark leadership construct that people attribute to leaders (Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29; Kusy and Holloway 2010, 22; Pelletier 2012, 412; Singh, Dev, and Sengupta 2017, 115).

A similarity that the toxic leadership construct shares with the other dark leadership constructs of petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership involves the subjective assessments made by others based on their perceptions of the leader that results in the leader being defined as tyrannical, abusive, destructive, or toxic

(Pelletier 2012, 412; Singh, Dev, and Sengupta 2017, 115). This subjectivity based on perceptions of the dark leader results in leaders looking different to different people and provides support to the difficulty for researchers to come to a consensus regarding the term toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29; Pelletier 2012, 412;). American author and professor, Jean Lipman-Blumen, summarized the subjectivity related to different people's perceptions of leaders and stated "To complicate matters, leaders look different depending upon one's relationship to them. Thus my toxic leader may be your hero and vice versa" (2005, 29).

Table 2. Most Commonly Cited Toxic Leadership Definitions	
Author	Definition
Whicker 1996, 12	"maladjusted, malcontent, and often malevolent even malicious. They succeed by tearing others down... With a deep-seated but well disguised sense of personal inadequacy, a focus on selfish values, and a cleverness at deception, these leaders are very toxic indeed."
Flynn 1999, 1	"The manager who bullies, threatens, yells. The manager whose mood swings determines the climate of the office on any given workday. Who forces employees to whisper in sympathy cubicles and hallways. The backbiting, belittling boss from hell."
Wilson-Starks 2003, 2	"an approach that harms people – and, eventually, the company as well – through the poisoning of enthusiasm, creativity, autonomy, and innovative expression. Toxic leaders disseminate their poison through over-control."
Reed 2004, 67	"Three key elements of the toxic leader syndrome are 1. An apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates. 2. A personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate. 3. A conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self-interest."
Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29	"toxic leaders are those individuals who by...their destructive behaviors and dysfunctional personal qualities generate a serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even entire societies they lead."

Source: Schmidt 2008, 73.

Lipman-Blumen's emphasis on perception and how an individual's relationship with the toxic leader influences how that person considers a leader toxic or not becomes supported by Dr. Reed and Dr. Olsen who posited that supervisors can tend to overlook their subordinates' toxic leadership tendencies and even consider their subordinates' behaviors and actions as effective (2010, 59). This perception from supervisors often occurs because toxic leaders tend to ingratiate or "kiss up" to their supervisors behaving differently than how they behave and treat their subordinates (Reed and Olson 2010, 59). Additionally, toxic leaders can mask their toxicity when it comes to their advantage to ensure they make a good impression for their bosses and supervisors (Kusy and Holloway 2010, 22).

Australian Army officer, Major Kane Wright, provided an example of toxic leaders painting themselves in a positive light with their supervisors when discussing a case study of a new combat engineer regiment commander named in the case study as Stoltz (2015, 36). Stoltz exhibited behaviors and actions that aligned with Dr. Reed's definition of toxic leadership i.e. lack of concern for subordinates and being driven primarily by self-interests (2004, 67). However, despite these toxic leadership behaviors Stoltz's senior leadership did not notice such toxicity because of Stoltz's "repeated attempts to ingratiate himself with superiors" (Wright 2015, 36). Stoltz's ingratiation tactics resulted in him being regarded in high standing with his superiors despite his subordinates perceiving him as a toxic leader (Wright 2015, 36).

The subjectivity associated with toxic leadership based on based on people's perceptions of leaders provide one reason for the lack of consensus and the various definitions regarding toxic leadership. Although it can become valuable to address the

lack of agreement regarding toxic leadership's formal definition by identifying the commonalities shared among the toxic leadership literature in order to develop a universally applicable toxic leadership definition this study does not choose to embark on such an endeavor. As mentioned in the introduction chapter of this paper, the nature of this study seeks to gain deeper contextual understanding regarding the topic of toxic leadership. Therefore, this study overcomes the challenge regarding the various definitions of toxic leadership and embraces the subjectivity based on different people's perceptions of leaders by choosing to approach, understand, and define toxic leadership within a specific sector and context.

Previous studies on toxic leadership address this phenomenon within a specific sector and context. For example, some researchers sought to understand the perceptions of leader toxicity within the context of the leader-follower relationship (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007; 176; Pelletier 2012, 413; Dorasamy 2018, 251). Other researchers studied toxic leaders within the context of workplace settings and corporations (Flynn 1999, 44; Goldman 2006, 733; Goldman 2008, 226; Kusy and Holloway 2010, 10; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 165; 2015b, 236; Singh, Dev, and Sengupta 2017, 116). Adem Yavas' research on toxic leadership explored the phenomenon from a country standpoint and sought to understand toxic leadership within the context of two different industrial sectors in the country of Turkey (2016, 270). Along the same lines, researchers Nivedita Singh, Santosh Dev, and Santoshi Sengupta examined subordinate perceptions of toxic leadership from information technology sector of the country of India (2017, 116). These previous studies that explored toxic leadership within different sectors and

contexts supports the nature of this study to address toxic leadership from the specific sector and context of the United States military.

While there exists a limited number of studies that address toxic leadership within the United States military (see Di Geno 2002, 14; Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy 2002, 1070; Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Williams 2005, 1; Schmidt 2008, 14; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, 58; Steele 2011, 8; Aubrey 2012, 1; Mueller 2012, 251; Gallus et al. 2013, 590; Hannah et al. 2013, 584; Schmidt 2014, 2; Johnson 2018, 3) Dr. Reed's work on toxic leadership within the United States military becomes most cited and serves as the foundational research that other researchers build upon when studying the topic of toxic leadership in the United States military (Johnson 2018, 23). As a result of a 2003 study conducted at the United States Army War College whose study participants comprised of United States Army officers, Dr. Reed summarized the participants' discussions regarding toxic leadership with the following description:

Destructive leaders are focused on the visible short-term mission accomplishment. They provide superiors with impressive, articulate presentations and enthusiastic responses to missions. But they are unconcerned about, or oblivious to, staff or troop morale and/or climate. They are seen by the majority of subordinates as arrogant, self-serving, inflexible, and petty. (2004, 67)

Dr. Reed's description of toxic leadership not only specifically aligns with the United States military context with its inclusion of military terms such as "staff" and "troop", but it appropriately brings together all the previous dark leadership concepts by including in his definition elements of destructive leadership, petty tyranny, and abusive supervision. Dr. Reed's toxic leadership description received support from Dr. Andrew Schmidt who posited that toxic leadership included additional dark leadership behaviors (2008, 5).

Also, Dr. Schmidt's assertion became supported by Dr. Pelletier's findings regarding the overlap among the dark leadership constructs (2010, 375).

Since Dr. Reed's description of toxic leadership accounts for, incorporates, and integrates the other dark leadership concepts of petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership it serves as the most suitable description of toxic leadership for this thesis. Additionally, because the focus of this thesis explores toxic leadership within the context of the United States Navy, Dr. Reed's definition and previous research studies on toxic leadership (see Reed and Bullis 2009, 5; Reed and Olsen 2010, 58; Reed 2014, 3; Reed 2015, 5) in the context of the United States military serves a foundation for this thesis to build upon.

Based on the description of toxic leadership, Dr. Reed developed a three part definition that states that toxic leadership consists of the following elements:

1. An apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates.
2. A personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate.
3. A conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self-interest. (2004, 67; 2014, 4)

These three elements of toxic leadership highlight the common elements that comprise petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership regarding the importance of subordinate perception in characterizing the leader as petty, abusive, destructive, and/or toxic; a leader's lack of concern for followers/subordinates; and a leader being perceived to possess qualities of arrogance and self-centeredness (Ashforth 1994, 755; Tepper 2000, 178; Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208). It also describes the petty

tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership's shared consequence of decreased morale and organizational climate. The following subsection further explores the consequences associated with toxic leadership.

Consequences of Toxic Leadership

As mentioned in the first chapter, the emphasis of this study does not focus on the outcomes and consequences associated with toxic leadership. However, it becomes important to discuss the impact and outcomes associated with toxic leadership to help support this study's purpose of seeking to understand and identify possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership (Green 2014, 23). Most toxic leadership scholars can agree that toxic leadership brings about destruction to both individuals and organizations (Wright 2015, 34). In this context the term destruction in relation to toxic leadership refers to the components of destructive leadership as defined by Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad (2007, 208). Specifically, the behavior and actions of a leader that violates, undermines, and sabotages the interests, goals, and effectiveness of organizations as well as "well-being or satisfaction" of individuals (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad 2007, 208).

Although, consensus appears to exist amongst scholars regarding the negative impact associated with toxic leadership, it becomes argued that toxic leadership can result in some unexpected positive outcomes as well (Wright 2015, 34). Major Wright argued that an unexpected positive outcome of toxic leadership involves an increase in organizational performance and unit cohesion as subordinates rally and work together to help mitigate the negative effects of the toxic leader (Wright 2015, 36). However, Major Wright's assertion regarding the unintended positive outcome of stronger unit cohesion and improved organizational performance as a result of toxic leadership becomes

considered more of an exception than the norm. Further research should explore the unintended positive outcomes associated with toxic leadership, but current literature highlights that typically toxic leadership results in negative outcomes. The following paragraphs discuss the negative outcomes associated with toxic leadership.

A meta-analysis of 57 leadership studies conducted by researchers Birgit Schyns and Jan Schilling concluded that correlations exist between toxic leadership and negative attitudes from followers towards the toxic leader, and that toxic leadership leads to an increase in counterproductive work behaviors to include low employee engagement, decreased employee morale, increased employee turnover, and decreased employee productivity and performance (2013, 147). Schyns and Schilling's findings align with the five commonly accepted definitions of toxic leadership that indicate that toxic leaders negatively impact individuals both physically and emotionally, poison organizational cultures and climates, and can harm societies as a whole (Whicker 1996, 12; Flynn 1999, 1; Wilson-Starks 2003, 2; Reed 2004, 67; Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29). Therefore, the effects and negative consequences associated with toxic leadership become felt and realized at multiple levels specifically at the individual and organizational levels (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard 2007, 18; Gallus et al. 2013, 3; Mehta and Maheshwari 2013, 1).

Toxic leadership at the organizational level results in the inability to accomplish organizational goals, tasks, and commitments; degraded internal communication; the creation of a culture dysfunction and mistrust; negative workplace environments; the implementation of problem-solving processes driven by fear and retribution; decision making based on personal agendas and manipulation; and increased waste due to poor

allocation of resources (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard 2007, 18). In addition to Schyns and Schilling's findings regarding the relationships between toxic leadership and employee negative attitudes toward toxic leaders and toxic leadership increasing employee counterproductive behaviors, toxic leadership at the individual level also results in encouraging employees to engage in deviant behaviors e.g. lying, cheating, stealing, etc.; it causes increases to employee job stress; lowers employee self-esteem and motivation; and increases employee insecurities, and causes employees to feel powerless (2013, 147; Appelbaum and Roy-Girard 2007, 22; Cote 2018, 44; Green 2014, 20).

The previous studies regarding the negative effects, consequences, and outcomes associated with toxic leadership can become summarized by generally stating that toxic leadership causes harm to organizations and its people (Green 2014, 19). However, since this study focuses on toxic leadership within the United States military it becomes beneficial to briefly review the outcomes of toxic leadership within the United States military context. For instance, John Di Genio, a management analyst working at Headquarters, Eight United States Army, discussed how toxic leadership can breed mistrust, anxiety, and an unhealthy amount of apprehension between United States Army Soldiers and their leaders (2002, 16). Di Genio described these United States Army toxic leaders as "turncoats, backstabbers, and accusers" because these toxic leaders looked out for their self-interests and became willing to promote their own personal agendas even at the cost of the Soldiers they led (2002, 16).

While Di Genio discussed the negative impacts of toxic leadership in the United States Army at the individual or Soldier level, the 2003 United States Army War College study conducted by Dr. Bullis and Dr. Reed concluded that toxic leadership negatively

impacts military unit organizational climate (2003, 8). Lieutenant Colonel Darrel Aubrey furthered Dr. Bullis and Dr. Reed's findings and indicated that toxic leadership negatively impacting climate results in degradations to military unit organizational culture (2012, 2). These research studies provided support to the claim that toxic leadership can also result in negative consequences at the organizational level within a United States military context. Dr. Reed and Dr. Bullis continued their study of toxic leadership in the United States military and decided to study toxic leadership's effects at the individual level that focused on military officers (2009, 5). Their study determined that toxic leadership negatively impacted military officer satisfaction and retention (Reed and Bullis 2009, 5). Dr. Schmidt in his empirical study that included over 5,000 United States military personnel participants also found a correlation between toxic leadership negatively impacting military job performance and satisfaction (2014, 30).

A technical report from the Center for Army Leadership written by John Steele builds on Dr. Reed and Dr. Bullis' findings by analyzing data from the Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey for Army Leadership that determined that toxic leadership related moderately to unit morale and individual morale (2011, 16). Steele's findings also indicated that toxic leadership correlated strongly with Soldiers perceiving their leaders to lack ethics, driven only by selfish and personal interests, possessing a lack of confidence and interpersonal skills, and the inability to create a positive environment (2011, 16). Steele's findings become supported by a study conducted by Dr. Robert Mueller who interviewed 27 United States Army Soldiers and based on the responses from the interviews concluded that toxic leadership resulted in decreased Soldier morale and welfare based on those participants' experiences (2012, 269).

Researchers Jessica Gallus, Benjamin Walsh, Marinus van Driel, Melissa Gouge, and Emily Antolic explored the impact of toxic leadership within military units through a multi-level lens and examined toxic leadership at the organizational/unit level, its impact on teams, and its effect at the individual level (2013, 3). Their findings supported previous studies of toxic leadership in the United States military primarily the existent literature regarding toxic leadership in the United States Army and how toxic leadership negatively impacted Army culture and unit morale and contributed to a climate that undervalued “civility and respect” (Gallus et al. 2013, 9). Gallus and her colleagues included in their study the impact of toxic leadership on teams and how toxic leadership encourages for unit members to treat each other poorly in an attempt to “level the playing field or ‘getting even’” with those toxic leaders (Gallus et al. 2013, 9). At the individual level the impact of toxic leadership supported previous findings regarding Soldier dissatisfaction, degradation in Soldier well-being, and negative attitudes about the unit (Gallus et al. 2013, 9).

Dr. Nikeisha Johnson’s qualitative study explored the phenomenological or lived experiences of United States Army Soldiers’ experiences with toxic leadership through the perspective of gender, race, and rank (2018, 1). Dr. Johnson’s findings from the 12 interviews indicated that demographics regarding race and rank do relate to the level of severity experienced by participants regarding toxic leadership and that participants reported mental health issues due to their experiences with United States Army toxic leaders (2018, 80). Dr. Johnson’s study confirms previous studies that discussed toxic leadership’s impact at the individual level and concluded psychological issues as a

negative outcome of toxic leadership (Schyns and Schilling 2013, 147; Appelbaum and Roy-Girard 2007, 22; Cote 2018, 44; Green 2014, 20).

The negative impact of toxic leadership in the United States military can be summarized from chapter 2 of Dr. Reed's book, "Tarnished: Toxic Leadership in the U.S. Military" when he quoted General David Perkins, former brigade commander during Operational Iraqi Freedom who stated,

If we don't do something about toxic leadership...not to be too dramatic, but it does have life or death consequences...I can just tell you from experience...that if you have toxic leadership, people will get sort of what we call the "foxhole mentality." They'll just hunker down and no one is taking what we call prudent risk...They're not being innovative, they're not being creative. And some people who are toxic leaders, they might be able to get some short-term results and get an immediate mission at hand done. But in the process, they are destroying the organization and destroying their people. (Reed 2015, 47)

General Perkins comments highlighted the negative consequences with toxic leadership in the United States military that become supported by the previous studies discussed earlier regarding the impact of toxic leadership on individuals and organizations (see Di Genio 2002, 16; Bullis and Reed 2003, 8; Aubrey 2012, 2; Reed and Bullis 2009, 5; Schmidt 2014, 30; Steele 2011, 16; Muller 2012, 269; Gallus et al. 2013, 9; Johnson 2018, 80). These studies indicate that toxic leadership becomes correlated with a number of military outcomes at both the individual and organizational levels to include burnout, dissatisfaction, decreased retention, poor motivation, increased retaliation and insubordination, mental health issues, feelings of helplessness, suicide, ineffective unit climate, and destructive organizational culture (Reed 2015, 47; Johnson 2018, 25).

Again, this study does not focus on the effects of toxic leadership but it becomes important to discuss toxic leadership's negative outcomes to gain greater understanding regarding the "full extent of the damage that toxic leaders can inflict upon organizations"

(Green 2014, 23). Understanding toxic leadership's negative impacts can help inform and educate individuals to recognize toxic behaviors and the existence of toxic leadership in their organizations (Green 2014, 23). After establishing this foundational knowledge regarding the impact of toxic leadership it becomes appropriate to address the focus of this study and explore the existing literature regarding the antecedents or causes of toxic leadership. This topic becomes further explored in the ensuing section.

Antecedents of Toxic Leadership

As evidenced in the previous section, toxic leadership's negative outcomes impact multiple levels i.e. individuals, teams, organizations, and whole societies (Lipman-Blumen, 2005, 29; Galus et al. 2013, 3). Toxic leadership's multi-level and far reaching effects illustrate the complexity associated with this construct. This assertion becomes supported by authors Mitchell Kusy and Elizabeth Holloway who approached toxic leadership from a systems perspective and argued the importance of strategies that address toxic leadership at the individual, team, and organizational levels (2010, 86). Dr. Reed provided support to Kusy and Holloway's systems approach regarding toxic leadership and indicated that in order to better understand toxic leadership researchers must explore the phenomenon at various levels i.e. individual and organization and take into consideration environmental and contextual factors that influence the creation and sustainment of toxic leadership (2015, 48).

Due to toxic leadership's impact and influence that results in negative outcomes and consequences at multiple levels i.e. individual, team, organization, and society (Lipman-Blumen, 2005, 29; Galus et al. 2013, 3) it becomes appropriate to examine the antecedents or causes of toxic leadership from a systems perspective (Padilla, Hogan, and

Kaiser 2007, 179; Kusy and Holloway 2010, 86; Reed 2015, 48; Thoroughgood, Sawyer, Padilla, and Lunsford 2018, 627). However, before describing these antecedents or causes of toxic leadership it first becomes necessary to define the term antecedent as it relates to its use in this paper.

According to psychology professor and author, Andrew Coleman, he describes the word antecedent as a part of conditional reasoning which serves as a form of logical reasoning that uses if, then statements that include antecedents and consequents (2015, sec. “conditional reasoning”). In the context of conditional reasoning, an antecedent becomes regarded as the cause that leads up to the consequent or the effect (Coleman 2015, sec. “conditional reasoning”). Using this definition it becomes appropriate for this paper to use interchangeably the terms antecedent and cause. Therefore, the term antecedent becomes used when describing the causes of toxic leadership. These antecedents or causes of toxic leadership as described in the literature become discussed below.

Approaching toxic leadership from a systems perspective allows researchers to look beyond just the individual characteristics of toxic leaders and offers an opportunity to examine other contributing factors that lead to toxic leadership (Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 627). Studies regarding the causes of toxic leadership categorize the main factors based on supervisor related causes, follower related causes, and organizational related causes (Zhang and Bednall 2016, 456). Researchers Art Padilla, Robert Hogan, and Robert Kaiser coined the term toxic triangle to help explain the interdependent factors that cause toxic leadership that include toxic leaders, susceptible subordinates, and conducive environments/circumstances (2007, 179).

Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's toxic triangle construct (2007, 179) regarding the causes of toxic leadership aligns with the Kusy and Holloway's systems approach to toxic leadership (2010, 86) and provides a framework to explore these main factors in more depth in order to gain a more holistic perspective of the antecedents of toxic leadership (Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 627). Therefore this section describes how toxic leadership stems from the influence and interaction between toxic leaders and their environment; the relationship and exchange between toxic leaders and followers; and toxic leadership at the individual level described through running themes found from the toxic leader's innate elements of personality, characteristics, behaviors, and nature (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 179; Steele 2011, 22; Aubrey 2012, 2; Gallus et al. 2013, 7; Green 2014, 20; Davis 2016, 10; Vreja, Balan, and Bosca 2016, 224; Karthikeyan 2017, 33; Johnson 2018, 26; Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 627).

Antecedent of Toxic Leadership: Environmental Factors

One element of Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's toxic triangle involves environmental factors that become conducive for the creation and sustainment of toxic leadership (2007, 185). Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser characterize the environment that influences toxic leadership through four factors: "instability, perceived threat, cultural values, and absence of checks and balances and institutionalization" (2007, 185). Instable environments can encourage the emergence of toxic leadership because during conditions of instability it becomes common for those in positions of power to receive more decision making control and power to help counter, combat, and bring order to the chaos associated with the unstable environment (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185).

However, once the additional power and decision making control becomes given to an individual it often becomes difficult to curtail and take back, which promotes the authoritative and tyrannical characteristics associated with toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185). Additionally, related to the idea of instability involves the concept of stable social structures, hierarchies, and/or chains of command that help provide stability to instable situations but can also promote the emergence of toxic leadership as power differentials among various positions become normalized and accepted, which can provide opportunities for those in power to abuse it and can lead to destructive behaviors that negatively impact individuals and organizations (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185; Gallus et al. 2013, 7).

The environmental element of perceived threat relates to the factor of instability in that “when people feel threatened, they are more willing to accept assertive leadership” (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185). It becomes important to point out that the reality or objectivity associated with the threat does not become of grave concern, but instead the perception of a threat alone can foster and influence follower and subordinate behaviors to give up certain powers, authorities, and freedoms to a leader in exchange for security against the perceived threat (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185). This environmental element becomes very applicable in the context of the United States military because of the inherent danger associated with a military member’s work and the number of perceived threats that can arise when military members deploy to combat zones. Therefore, it becomes possible for military members who perceive threats to allow themselves to accept orders from supervisors blindly to receive a feeling of psychological safety from the perceived threats.

Culture contributes to the rise of dark leadership (Luthans, Peterson, and Ibrayeva 1998, 185; Aubrey 2012, 2). Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's cultural values component of the environmental domain associated with the toxic triangle builds on this assertion and applies the national cultural dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism originally presented by researcher Geert Hofstede (1980, 45). Uncertainty avoidance "indicates the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater...stability" (Hofstede 1980, 45). This cultural dimension aligns with the previous environmental elements of instability and perceived threat and culturally explains why individuals in unstable and threatening environments choose to give up power and decision making to a leader in exchange for more stability (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185; Hofstede 1980, 45).

Power distance involves "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede 1980, 45). Organizations characterized as being high in power distance become comfortable with the unequal distribution of power (Hofstede 1980, 45). Therefore, it becomes acceptable for power and decision-making within these cultures to remain with one or few individuals/positions (Hofstede 1980, 45). Due to the mechanistic and hierarchical nature and rank structure of the United States military one can argue that the military values high power distance. The military being high in power distance due to its military hierarchy and chain of command increases the likelihood for leader toxicity because "in high power-distance cultures...followers are more tolerant of the power asymmetries that characterize tyranny and despotism" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185).

Collectivism becomes “characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-group (relatives, clan, organizations) to look after them, and in exchange for that they feel they owe absolutely loyalty...” (Hofstede 1980, 45). This cultural value in the context of the toxic triangle helps explain why subordinates blindly follow orders from supervisors because they feel obligated to give them their “absolutely loyalty” because their supervisors as part of their in-group supposedly will care for them (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186; Hofstede 1980, 45). Subordinates blindly following and remaining loyal to leaders contributes to the emergence of toxic leadership because it degrades any organizational checks and balances and when power goes unchecked it increases the likelihood for corruption and abuse (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186).

The absence of lack of institutional checks and balances serves as the fourth environmental component of the toxic triangle (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186). When organizations do not include processes or mechanisms that provide oversight to help mitigate the abuse of power it increases the likelihood of toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186). Without such checks and balances leader toxicity becomes promoted and encouraged as toxic leaders can continue their poisonous tendencies without fear of retribution or being held accountable for their destructive actions. The lack of checks and balances further becomes amplified when taking into consideration the other environmental components of instability, perceived threat, and cultural values of blind loyalty that centralize power into one person (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186). Although, the centralization of power in certain chaotic or emergent circumstances can become justified and necessary, the absence of institutional checks and

balances increases the likelihood that power remains centralized, which most likely results in abuse, tyranny, destruction, and corruption (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 186).

The environmental element of the toxic triangle described through its four components of “instability, perceived threat, cultural values, and absence of checks and balances and institutionalization” help provide for the conducive environment, situation, and circumstance that supports the emergence of toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185). However, this environmental element only becomes one of the three domains that comprises the toxic triangle (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 179). The next section describes the second element which involves the relationship between leaders and followers that contribute to the rise of toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182).

Antecedent of Toxic Leadership: Relationship with Followers/Subordinates

The second element of Padilla, Hogan, and Kasier’s toxic triangle involves the relationship between the leader and follower that contributes to the emergence of toxic leadership (2007, 182). Pelletier argued that applying leader-member exchange theory can aid in explaining the emergence of leader toxicity based on the “expectations and obligations derived from the quality of the exchange” between the leader and the follower (2012, 413). In this leader and follower exchange the expectations and obligations involve a fulfillment of needs. In other words, followers will follow a leader, even a bad one, in exchange for that leader fulfilling the followers’ individual and group needs (Kellerman 2004, 42).

Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser build on this assertion and include in their toxic triangle an element that focuses on the follower's need "to accept a leader's authority" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183). The follower's need to accept authority relates to the environmental element of the toxic triangle and how followers require safety, security, stability, protection, and self-assurance to combat the instability and perceived threat of the environment (Padilla, Hogan, Kaiser 2007, 185; Allio 2007, 15; Kellerman 2004, 42). The "complicity of followers" (Allio 2007, 15) willing "to accept a leader's authority" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183) and follow bad leaders become defined by Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser as "susceptible followers" (2007, 182).

"Susceptible followers" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182) fall into two categories: conformers and colluders (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34; Dorasamy 2018, 253). Conformers become described as followers who "have unmet needs, low maturity, and/or low core self-evaluation" (Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34). As a result of these characteristics, conformers tolerate the behavior of toxic leaders typically because they fear the retaliation and backlash that comes from opposing the toxic leader (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Green 2014, 20). Colluders include followers who "are ambitious, selfish, and share the destructive leader's world views" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183). These type of followers actively work with the toxic leader to take advantage of and manipulate the toxic situation in their favor to reap benefits and rewards (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34).

United States Army Command General Staff College instructors, Dr. Ted Thomas, Kevin Gentlzer, and Robert Salvatorelli, furthered Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's

“susceptible followers” (2007, 182) concept with their typologies of toxic followers (2016, 62) that complement the “susceptible followers” categories of colluder and conformer (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183). Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli described toxic followers into four types: “survivors, sheep, alienated, and yes-people” (2016, 62). Survivors describe followers who constantly adapt to their environment and primarily become driven by self-interests which makes them toxic (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 62). Survivors become similar to colluders based on their ambitions and self-interests, but survivors actively influence and work with the toxic leader to keep them in power in order to survive (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34; Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 62).

Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli describe alienated followers as “good critical thinkers who can act independently without being told what to do, but are disgruntled and have lost faith in their leaders or the system. They bring negative energy to their organization and quietly go along with the leader’s guidance” (2016, 63). Applying Carnegie Mellon University professor, Robert Kelley’s definition of alienated followers characterizes this toxic follower type as being passive (1988, sec. Role of the Follower para. 10).

Alienated followers being passive and tolerating the actions and behaviors of the toxic leader shares similarities to conformers who do nothing and say nothing to oppose the toxic leader (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34). The difference between colluders and alienated followers involves colluders not opposing out of fear of retribution by the toxic leader, whereas alienated followers do not oppose because they have given up on the leader, the organization, and the system and purposely

distance themselves from these individuals and entities (Kelley 1988, sec. Role of the Follower para. 10; Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34; Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63).

The term sheep describes another toxic follower typology (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). A sheep type follower “is uncritical, lacks initiative, and will not take responsibility. Sheep only do what they are told, and are dependent on the leader” (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). The emergence of sheep followership behaviors can stem from Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser’s environmental/circumstance element of the toxic triangle where instability, perceived threat, and cultural values such as high power distance and high collectivism encourage and promote the creation of followers who blindly follow and trust and overly depend on the leader (2007, 186). Sheep followers align with the behaviors of conformers because of their passive nature and simply going along with the actions of the toxic leader (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34; Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63).

The last type of toxic follower involves yes-people (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). Yes-people share similarities to the sheep follower typology “in that they blindly follow and execute whatever the boss wants” (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). However, unlike the sheep who passively goes along with the toxic leader, yes-people actively try to emulate and become like the toxic leader (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). Yes-people driven by self-interests will take note of the rewards, accolades, praise, and promotion bestowed on the toxic leader which encourages them to emulate the toxic leader’s behaviors to also receive those rewards and become promoted in leadership roles (Wilson-Starks 2003, 2; Thomas,

Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). The yes-people followership behavior supports the assertion that one cause of toxic leadership stems from “poor role models. Since they [followers] were mentored by toxic leaders” (Wilson-Starks 2003, 3).

Additionally, as Pelletier noted when applying leader-member exchange theory to understanding the relationship between leaders and followers, those leaders who find their followers similar to them received additional perks and benefits (2012, 413). This observation further encourages yes-people followership behaviors because toxic leaders “may reward those who are most like themselves” (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 63). As a result of the active actions by yes-people to emulate their toxic leaders they share similarities with colluders who share the same world-view and goals as the toxic leader (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 183; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34).

Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli included in their article one more type of follower originally described by Kelley as effective (1988 sec. Role of the Follower para. 11; 2016, 62). Effective followers do not become susceptible to toxic followership because they are described as,

thinkers who are active and provide positive energy for their leaders and organization. Effective followers are self-managing, committed to an organization and its purpose, competent, courageous, honest, and credible. They are the go-getters, risk takers, and problem solvers. Effective followers can succeed without strong leadership, and as such are not prone to toxic followership. (Thomas, Gentlzer, and Salvatorelli 2016, 62)

Effective followers can serve as a way to combat the negative impact associated with the toxicity that emerges from leader-follower relations, but environmental situations and circumstances as characterized by “instability, perceived threat, cultural values, and the absence of checks and balances and institutionalization” can result in even effective followers becoming toxic, susceptible, and complicit to the actions and behaviors of the

toxic leader (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 185; Allio 2007, 15; Thomas, Gentzler, and Salvatorelli 2016, 62).

“Susceptible followers” (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182) categorized by passive conformers who accept, tolerate, and allow the actions of toxic leaders; and active colluders who willingly work with toxic leaders to take advantage of and gain the benefits from the toxic situation contribute to the emergence of toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, Kaiser 2007, 185). Additionally, taking into consideration Thomas, Gentzler, and Salvatorelli’s toxic follower typologies of “survivors, sheep, alienated, and yes-people” (2016, 62) helps further understand the susceptible and complicit behaviors of colluders and conformers. Since the previous two sections examined the environmental and follower elements of the toxic triangle, it now becomes appropriate to discuss the third contributing factor of the toxic triangle that involves the individual leader factors that result in the emergence of toxic leadership.

Antecedent of Toxic Leadership: Individual Level Factors

Dr. Reed posited that those who study leadership become familiar with the leadership attribution bias where failures and success of an organization become attributed solely to the leader (2015, 9). This attribution bias results in overlooking the other factors that can lead to organizational success or failure (Reed 2015, 9; Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 628). Despite this leadership attribution bias, leaders do make a difference that can result in organizational success or failure (Reed 2015, 9). Therefore, it becomes appropriate that Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser include the individual leader as the third element of their toxic triangle (2007, 180).

Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser referred to the leader element of the toxic triangle as destructive and discussed the following associated characteristics: “charisma, personalized use of power, narcissism, negative life themes, and an ideology of hate” (2007, 180). Charisma becomes generally defined as “a form of influence based not on tradition or formal authority but rather on follower perceptions that the leader is endowed with exceptional qualities” (Yukl 2013, 317). Although, charisma itself does not result in destructive or bad leaders, however, they point out that “not all charismatic leaders are destructive, but most destructive leaders are charismatic” (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 180).

This assertion becomes supported by the claim that “research indicates that destructive leadership and charisma are empirically linked” (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 180). Leadership researcher, Gary Yukl, provided support to this claim and discussed the “dark side of charisma” and the negative consequences associated with charismatic leaders to include excessive confidence that blinds the leader, denial of problems, taking credit for the work of others, followers being awestruck by leaders increasing the likelihood of blind trust and loyalty, and failure to develop subordinates (2013, 326-7). Based on the research regarding charisma and destructive leaders most scholars “identify charisma as a central characteristic” of destructive leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 180).

In the context of the toxic triangle, Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser describe charisma by destructive leaders as the ability to communicate a vision, great self-presentation skills, and high levels of personal energy (2007, 180). Charismatic leaders contain qualities that allow them to properly articulate, communicate, and gain buy in for their

vision typically using rhetoric that emphasizes dangers that threaten the security of followers (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181). Associated with this charisma comes the talent to self-promote and present themselves in such a way that followers perceive them as holding exceptional qualities that increases the likelihood for followers to blindly follow and trust them (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181; Yukl 2013, 326).

Additionally, the high levels of personal energy affords destructive leaders to continue pursuing their personal agendas and self-interests without growing tired and with great stamina and endurance (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181).

The second characteristic that Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser uses to describe the leader element associated with their toxic triangle involves the personalized need for power (2007, 181). Leaders become characterized as destructive when they use their position of power for personal gain to fulfill personal needs and to further pursue their own self-interests over the needs of their subordinates and at the detriment of the organization (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181). Leaders display their personalized need for power through coercion and excessive control (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181). These leaders consolidate their personalized need for power bases by devaluing and isolating individuals who oppose them through coercive actions such as threats, imprisonment, verbal and/or physical abuse, and even death (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181).

Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser use the term narcissism to describe the third characteristic of their toxic triangle's leader element (2007, 181). Narcissism becomes "closely linked to charisma and the personalized need for power, and involves dominance, grandiosity, arrogance, entitlement, and the selfish pursuit of pleasure"

(Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181). Narcissistic leaders become described as having an over inflated sense of self and being entitled that results in disillusion of grand dreams and visions that distance themselves from reality (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 181; Dorasamy 2018, 251). Due to being self-absorbed they overlook and/or ignore the needs of their subordinates and others and demand and expect absolute loyalty and obedience (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007; Dorasamy 2018, 251).

The fourth characteristic involves negative life themes that become defined as the early experiences that shaped and formed the leader's destructive view of the world (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182). Examples of early experiences that can lead to a destructive world view include "parental discord, low socioeconomic status, parental criminality, maternal psychiatric disorder, and child abuse" to name a few (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182). All of these negative early experiences influence the development of leader's destructive world view and justify their role in bring that destruction to fruition (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182).

The last characteristic that Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser described with regard to the leader element of their toxic triangle involves the concept of ideology of hate (2007, 182). Ideology of hate relates to the negative life themes characteristic and becomes defined as "the rhetoric, vision, and worldview of destructive leaders [containing] images of hate – vanquishing rivals and destroying despised enemies" (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182). This characteristic helps explain the likelihood of leaders perceived as destructive and toxic to use violence and physical aggression and actions to subdue those that oppose them and to coerce followers to blindly follow and pledge absolute obedience and loyalty (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 182).

Although Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser use the five characteristics of “charisma, personalized needs for power, narcissism, negative life history, and an ideology of hate” (2007, 182) to describe the leader element associated with their toxic triangle construct the literature regarding toxic leaders provides additional factors (see Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41; Wilson-Starks 2003, 3; Reed 2004, 67; Allio 2007, 14; Steele 2011, Reed 2014, 4; 22; Singh, Dev, and Sengupta 2017, 115; Cote 2018, 44), behaviors (see Kusy and Holloway 2009, 25-6; Pelletier 2010, 375; Green 2014, 21), characteristics (see Williams 2005, 2-6; Chua and Murray 2015, 293; Davis 2016, 5), and traits (see Kellerman 2004, 43; Karthikeyan 2017, 346) to describe this phenomenon.

The literature when describing toxic leadership interchangeably uses the terms factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits. Table 3 provides a summary of these additional items that describe toxic leaders and provide definitions of the terms factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits per the Oxford dictionary of psychology (Coleman 2015). When reviewing the contents of table 3 one notices reoccurring and overlapping items or themes that researchers consider as factors, behaviors, characteristics, or traits that describe toxic leaders. The use of the word themes to group the factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits associated with toxic leaders becomes supported by scholars Robert Hogan and Joyce Hogan who identified seven themes that resulted in leadership failures as a result of “undesirable qualities” (2001, 41). Therefore, despite the differences between the terms and due to the commonalities shared with how the literature describes toxic leaders this paper groups the factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits and refers to them collectively as toxic leader themes.

Table 3. Toxic Leader Themes	
Toxic Leader Factors	
<i>Factors</i> – anything that contributes to an outcome or result (Coleman 2015, sec. Factor)	Source
- Unable to delegate or prioritize - Being reactive rather than proactive - Unable to maintain relationships - Unable to build teams - Poor judgement - Having an overriding personality defect	Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41
- Over-controlling - Fear of the unknown - Fear of failure - Mistrust in people - Feelings of inadequacy - Lack of confidence - Extreme overconfidence - Failure to appreciate the unique humanity of being human i.e. treats people like robots	Wilson-Starks 2003, 3
- Lack of concern for subordinates - Personality that negatively impacts organization - Driven primarily by self-interest	Reed 2004, 67, 2014, 4
- Narcissism - Lack of conscience - Inability to experience the feelings of others - Weakness of will to do the right thing - Self-serving misguided values - Avoids reality, in denial	Allio 2007, 14
- Self-serving - Arrogant - Rigid - Unwilling to admit mistakes - Unwilling to develop others - Micromanagers	Steele 2011, 22
- Destructiveness - Neglect for well-being of subordinate - Harmful or abusive - Micromanaging - Authoritarianism - Commandeering - Narcissistic - Lack of integrity - Divisiveness - Unpredictability - Self-promoting	Singh, Dev, and Sengupta 2017, 115
- Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion - Problems with relationships due to insensitivity, being overly critical, manipulative, and dominant - Not willing to change or adapt - Unable to build successful teams - Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture	Cote 2018, 44
Toxic Leader Behaviors	
<i>Behaviors</i> – physical and psychological activities and processes constituting a response to the environment (Coleman 2015, sec. Behaviour)	Source
- Shaming - Passive hostility - Team sabotage	Kusy and Holloway 2009, 26; Green 2014, 21
- Humiliates others - Uses sarcastic remarks - Takes potshots at others ins public - Distrusts opinions of others - Monitors team behaviors to the point of surveillance - Meddles in teamwork - Uses authority to punish others - Demonstrates passive-aggressive behaviors - Protects one's own territory - Has difficulty accepting negative feedback - Is clueless that they are toxic to others - Points out the mistakes of others	Kusy and Holloway 2009, 25
- Demeaning/marginalizing, or degrading - Ridiculing/mockng - Social exclusion - Ostracizing/disenfranchising employee - Inciting employee to chastise another - Exhibiting favoritism - Coercion - Using physical acts of aggression - Threatening employees' jobs security - Forcing people to endure hardships - Blaming others for mistakes - Pitting in-group members against out-group members - Ignoring comments/ideas - Stifling dissent - Being rigid - Presenting toxic agendas as noble visions - Deliberately lies and distorts facts	Pelletier 2010, 375
Toxic Leadership Characteristics	
<i>Characteristics</i> – features or attributes of a concept or member of a category share by many or most providing a basis for assigning meaning to the concept or category (Coleman 2015, sec. Characteristic features)	Source
- Charisma - Personalized power - Narcissism - Negative life themes - Ideology of hate	Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 180
- Incompetence - Malfunctioning - Maladjusted - Sense of inadequacy - Malcontent - Irresponsible - Amoral - Cowardice - Insatiable ambition - Egotism - Arrogance - Selfish values - Avarice and greed - Lack of integrity - Deception - Malevolent - Malicious - Malfeasance	Williams 2005, 2-6; Davis 2016, 5
- Predisposed ideology of hate - High levels of narcissism/charisma - Personalized need for power - Negative life themes	Chua and Murray 2015, 293
Toxic Leadership Traits	
<i>Traits</i> – a characteristic or quality distinguishing a person or thing, especially a pattern of behavior that a person would likely display in a relevant circumstance (Coleman 2015, sec. Trait)	Source
- Ineffective - Unethical	Kellerman 2004, 43
- Incompetent - Insular - Intemperate - Rigid - Callous - Corrupt - Evil	Karthikeyan 2017, 346

Source: Created by author.

As stated earlier, some scholars indicated that there exists an overemphasis in the literature that examines the individual level factors that contribute to toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 178; Aubrey 2012, 2; Rybacki and Cook 2016, 34; Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 627). The literature being leader-centric coupled with leadership attribution bias often results in overlooking the other factors regarding the environment and role of followers contributing to the creation of toxic leadership (Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 628; Reed 2015, 9). But as described above, environmental factors, followers/subordinates, and the individual leader all do contribute, lead up to, and cause toxic leadership (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 179). Table 4 provides a summary of these causes of toxic leadership.

Table 4. Causes of Toxic Leadership		
Leader	Followers	Environment
Factors: (refer to table 3 for complete list) - overriding personality defect that negatively impacts the organization - Narcissism - Lack of concern for subordinates - Problems with relationships due to insensitivity, being overly critical, manipulative, and dominant - Lacks integrity	Conformers as a result of unmet needs, low maturity, and low core self-evaluation	Instability
Behaviors: (refer to table 3 for complete list) - Shaming - Humiliates others - Deliberately lies and distorts facts - Clueless that they are toxic to others - Using physical acts of aggression	Colluders as a result of ambition, selfishness, and sharing the destructive world views of the leader	Perceived threat
Characteristics: (refer to table 3 for complete list) - Predisposed ideology of hate - High levels of narcissism/charisma - Personalized need for power - Negative life themes - Incompetence	Toxic followership types: survivors, alienated, sheep, and yes-people	Cultural values: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism
Traits: (refer to table 3 for complete list) - Ineffective - Unethical - Rigid - Callous - Corrupt	Poor role models, mentored by toxic leaders	Absence of checks and balances, and institutionalization

Source: Davis 2016, 10.

However, the literature's emphasis regarding the individual level factors that cause toxic leadership stem from the various perspectives associated when defining the leadership construct (Cote 2018, 42). Specifically, Stogdill and Bass argued that "the definition of leadership has many different meanings based on many classification systems, including focus on group processes, personality perspectives, behaviors, power influence, skills approach, and many more reasons" (1974, as cited in Cote 2018, 42). Therefore, one can argue that viewing toxic leadership through a systems perspective (Kusy and Holloway 2010, 86) that includes the interactions and interplay among leaders, followers, and the environment focuses on studying the topic of toxic leadership from a group processes point of view or examining the relationship between how a leader leads a group and the group's performance (Cote 2018, 42; Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 628). On the other hand, one can conclude that the emphasis of studying leader-centric themes as illustrated in table 3 and table 4 regarding toxic leadership stems from focusing on the study of toxic leadership through factors, behaviors, characteristics, traits, personalities, and how leaders behave and act (Cote 2018, 42; Thoroughgood et al. 2018, 628).

Each approach i.e. leader's impact on group processes or leader-centric themes focusing on individual leader personality/behavior both serve as valid ways to study the toxic leadership phenomenon (Cote 2018, 42). Based on the focus of this study regarding gaining deeper, contextual understanding of toxic leadership in the United States Navy this paper applies the leader-centric approach that explores individual toxic leaders' themes i.e. factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits. Since this paper applies Dr. Reed's definition of toxic leadership and focuses on its second element that defines toxic leadership as "a personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects

organizational climate” (Reed 2004, 67; 2014, 4) it approaches this toxic leadership phenomenon from the personality trait perspective (Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt 2002, 765). Dr. Reed’s inclusion of personality to define toxic leadership warrants further exploration as a possible antecedent or cause of toxic leadership (Reed 2004, 67; 2014, 4). Delving deeper into the relationship between personality traits and toxic leadership the next section explores the general relationship between personality and leadership.

Personality Traits and Leadership

Approaching the topic of leadership from a leader-centric point of view accepts “the centrality of leadership to the success or failure of organizations and even societies” (Judge and Bono 2000, 751). The association of organizational and societal success or failure and its association to leadership elevates its importance and justifies why researchers continue to study the leadership phenomenon as they seek to understand what contributes to successful leadership i.e. leadership effectiveness and what factors result in leadership failures i.e. leadership ineffectiveness (Judge and Bono 2000, 751). To identify the determinants that constitute leadership effectiveness or ineffectiveness “social scientists have attempted to discover what traits, abilities, behaviors, sources of power, or aspects of the situation determine how well a leader is able to influence followers and accomplish task objectives” (Yukl 2013, 2).

Therefore, this section explores the personality trait perspective of studying leadership and first discusses the literature regarding the relationship between personality and leadership (Judge, et al. 2002, 767; Kornor and Nordvik 2004, 49; Langford, Dougall, and Parkes 2017, 128). Since this paper examines dark leadership from a United States military perspective it includes the leadership traits that the United States Navy

deems as important to serve as a comparison that helps explain what determinants the United States Navy as an organization considers as contributing to successful Navy leaders or leadership effectiveness. It then transitions to discussing personality traits that result in leadership failure or leadership ineffectiveness by defining the concept of leader derailment (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xxii; Burke 2006, 92; Cote 2018, 43) and including studies that explore personality disorders in leaders (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 43; Goldman 2006a, 773; Goldman 2006b, 392; Allio 2007, 13).

The term personality becomes defined as “a relatively stable set of feelings and behaviors that have been significantly formed by genetic and environmental factors” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 67). Authors Robert Konopaske, John Ivancevich, and Michael Matteson in the eleventh edition of their book, *Organizational Behavior & Management*, noted that a lack of agreement and understanding exists among scholars regarding personality development, formation, and expression (2018, 67). However, scholars can agree on certain principles regarding personality which include:

1. [Personality] appears to be organized into patterns that are, to some degree observable and measureable.
2. Has superficial aspects, such as attitudes toward being a team leader, and a deeper core, such as sentiments about authority or a strong work ethic.
3. Involves both common and unique characteristics. Every person is different from every other person in some respects and similar to other persons in other respects.

(Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 67)

These general personality principles led scholars and researchers to consider personality as an antecedent or cause to employee behaviors (Barrick and Mount 2005, 359;

Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) to include leadership behaviors (Judge, et al. 2002, 767; Kornor and Nordvik 2004, 49; Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, and Nissinen 2006, 475; Harms, Spain, and Hannah 2011, 495; Langford, Dougall, and Parkes 2017, 128). Some researchers even argued the predictive power associated with personality traits and how certain personality traits can predict employee job performance (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Beidel, Frueh, and Hersen 2014, 741; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). The likelihood of relating certain personality traits to serve as causes for certain work behaviors and the potential to use personality traits to predict job performance helped increase the interest in the study of personality and led to the creation of hundreds of personality traits or dimensions (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68).

Although there exists hundreds of personality traits or dimensions, personality scholars and researchers agree with the “five-factor model of personality” (Judge and Bono 2000, 752) also known as the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). The premise regarding the “Big five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) involves a consensus by most personality scholars and researchers that people’s personalities become described through five broad personality dimensions or traits that include: “extroversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). These five broad personality traits serve as a construct or framework to help organize the hundreds of personality dimensions that align to and comprise the five broad personality traits or dimensions (Judge and Bono

2000, 752). These “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) become briefly described below.

Extroversion as a broad personality trait describes a person’s sociable outgoing behaviors (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). It includes more specific personality traits of positivity, being assertive and active, and excitement seeking (Judge and Bono 2000, 752). Emotional stability also called emotional adjustment (Judge and Bono 2000, 752) involves “the ability to be calm, relaxed, and secure” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). Emotional stability or adjustment also becomes referred to by its opposite personality dimension of Neuroticism, which involves “the tendency to be anxious, fearful, depressed, and moody” (Judge and Bono 2000, 752).

Agreeableness involves tendencies of being warm, kind hearted, trusting of others, trustworthy, forgiving, courteous, and tolerant (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69). The broad personality trait of conscientiousness includes the main traits of achievement and dependability (Judge and Bono 2000, 752). People described as conscientious become considered as hard-working, reliable, detail-oriented, thorough, responsible, organized, and “enjoy achieving and accomplishing things” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69). Research shows that the personality trait of conscientiousness correlates most with job performance (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69). The fifth dimension, openness to experience, involves creativity, curiosity, being open-minded, thoughtful, and perceptive (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69).

As mentioned earlier, research shows linkages between personality trait and work behaviors (Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68). Specifically, research on the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) indicated that people high in extroversion and openness to experience tend to exhibit better levels of training proficiency. Emotional stability or adjustment correlates with job satisfaction and motivation (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69). The personality trait of agreeableness becomes associated with people with better interpersonal skills, and as explained earlier conscientiousness correlates with job performance (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 69). However, research regarding personality not only correlates with work behaviors, but also shows relationships to leadership (Judge et al. 2002, 767; Kornor and Nordvik 2004, 49; Langford, Dougall, and Parkes 2017, 128).

Researchers Timothy Judge, Joyce Bono, Remus Ilies, and Megan Gerhardt in their qualitative and quantitative study considered the “possible linkages between personality and leadership” (767) specifically examining how the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) related to leadership effectiveness. Through their qualitative study and review of the literature Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt found that certain personality traits helped contribute to the emergence of leadership and leadership effectiveness (2002, 766). Table 5 illustrates these findings between personality traits and leadership based on the literature that the researchers reviewed.

Table 5. Summary of Personality Traits that Comprise Leadership Effectiveness and Emergence	
Source	Traits
Daft 1999	alertness, originality, creativity, personal integrity, self-confidence
Stogdill 1948	dependability, sociability, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, alertness, cooperativeness, adaptability
R. Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan 1994	urgency, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability
House and Aditya 1997	achievement motivation, prosocial influence motivation, adjustment, self-confidence
Mann 1959	adjustment, extroversion, dominance, masculinity, conservatism
Northouse 1997	self-confidence, determination, integrity, sociability
Bass 1990	adjustment, adaptability, aggressiveness, alertness, ascendance, dominance, emotional balance, control, independence, nonconformity, originality, creativity, integrity, self-confidence
Yukl 1998	energy level and stress tolerance, self-confidence, internal locus of control, emotional maturity, personality integrity, socialized power motivation, achievement orientation, low need for affiliation
Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991	drive (achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity, initiative), honesty/integrity, self-confidence (emotional stability)
Yukl and Van Fleet 1992	emotional maturity, integrity, self-confidence, high energy level, stress tolerance

Source: Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt 2002, 766.

As illustrated in table 5 some personality traits that researchers claimed to contribute to the emergence of leadership and leadership effectiveness directly aligned to or comprised the “Big five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) described earlier such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional adjustment (Judge et al 2002, 766). In order to infer a stronger relationship

between the “Big five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) and leadership effectiveness, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt conducted a quantitative meta-analysis i.e. a study that reviews and analyzes the results from a number of previous studies and concluded that all five broad personality traits of “extroversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) positively correlated to leadership (Judge et al. 2002, 771).

To gain deeper understanding regarding the positive correlation between the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) and leadership (Harms, Spain, and Hannah 2011, 495) Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt conducted additional analysis on this relationship in specific settings and contexts (2002, 771). One of the settings that the researchers included in their meta-analysis involved the government or military settings comprised of studies that involved “military officers or enlisted personnel, or students at military academies; studies of government employees; studies of political leaders” (Judge et al. 2002, 771). Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt found from their meta-analysis of “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) in relation to leadership in a government or military setting that the broad personality traits of emotional stability, extroversion, and agreeableness demonstrated the most correlations to leadership in that context and setting (2002, 773). This finding became supported through a quantitative study that included a sample of over 34,000 Canadian military members that indicated a correlation between emotional stability and leadership and also concluded that the broad personality of conscientiousness correlated to leadership in a military context (Darr 2011, 288-9).

Accounting for the impact of various settings on the relationship between personality and leadership serves as a best practice because as stated earlier, personality becomes formed not only by genetic or hereditary factors but also by environmental factors (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 67). This assertion “reemphasizes and builds upon a long tradition in personality and clinical psychology that emphasizes the moderation of trait-relevant behavior by situational contingencies” (Beidel, Frueh, and Hersen 2014, 742). Specifically, considering how the military context impacts the relationship between personality and leadership becomes supported by Canadian Director of General-Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Wendy Darr, who posited that generally speaking military contexts differ from civilian settings where military circumstances require “demanding flexibility and continuous costly training, which are gained at the personal cost of disruptions in family life and career plans” (2011, 278). Additionally, military situations typically involve greater physical and psychological demands on its military members in comparison to civilian counterparts filling civilian positions (Darr 2011, 278).

Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt’s study determined correlations between personality and leadership behaviors, and how context or various settings can serve to moderate the connections between the five broad personality traits and leadership (2002, 772). The importance of context became expanded by Darr who argued that differences between military and civilian contexts can influence the relationship between personality and leadership behaviors (2011, 288). Therefore, these studies justify further exploration regarding personality and leadership in the military context. Since this paper examines

the toxic leadership phenomenon within the context of the United States Navy it defines the leadership traits that the United States Navy considers important.

Inclusion of these United States Navy leadership traits helps illustrate what the United States Navy as an organization identifies as aspects that contribute to successful Navy leaders. Discussing some of the determinants that results in leadership effectiveness in the United States Navy can help with understanding leader toxicity in the United States Navy because these leadership traits provide a model or standard of naval leadership. Providing this standard helps increase the likelihood of identifying toxic leadership in the United States Navy when individuals deviate from or go against these United States Navy leadership traits.

United States Navy Leadership Traits

On April 6, 2018, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral John Richardson, as the most senior military member in the United States Navy, signed and distributed the *Navy Leader Development Framework (Version 2.0)*, which offers a guide to developing effective Navy leaders. Admiral Richardson defines effective Navy leaders in the following way,

Effective Navy leaders demonstrate a deliberate commitment to grow personally and professionally throughout their careers. They work from a foundation of humility, embracing our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. They pursue excellence in accordance with our core attributes of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness. They commit to improving competence and character in themselves and in their teams. (CNO 2018b, 2)

Admiral Richardson in his definition of effective Navy leaders emphasizes the importance of competence and character and claims that Navy leader development occurs through developing “operational and warfighting competence” (2018b, 4) and the

development of one's character that includes consistently behaving with the Navy's core values of "honor, courage, and commitment" (2018b, 4).

While professional competence involving warfighting capabilities in the maritime operational domain serves as an important contributing factor to effective naval leadership, due to the focus of this paper it instead further explores the character component that contributes to effective Navy leaders. To better explain "the standard for personal character" (CNO 2018b, 4) Admiral Richardson refers to the four "core attributes of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness" (CNO 2018b, 2). These core attributes serve as the leadership traits that comprise "the standard for personal character" (CNO 2018b, 4) that contribute to effective Navy leaders.

In 2016 Admiral Richardson's first issued out *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority 1.0* with the purpose to provide the United States Navy a mission in the context of its current strategic environment (CNO 2016, 3). Admiral Richardson justified the use of a design vice conventional military campaign guidance to offer flexibility and the ability to continually assess and adapt to the dynamic and complex challenges that become associated with the strategic environment that the United States Navy must navigate and operate in (CNO 2016, 5).

In 2018, Admiral Richardson, issued *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority 2.0* as an update to verify the guidance initially set regarding the mission, security environment, and the Navy's response in Design 1.0 (CNO 2018a, 2). Admiral Richardson in Design 2.0 of his guidance discussed how, "overall, the structure of Design 1.0 proved sound: the characterization of the security environment, the Core Attributes, and the Lines of Effort (LOEs) remain valid and relevant." (2018a, 2). Essentially, as

mentioned regarding the purpose of using a design framework, Design 2.0 serves as a continuation to Design 1.0 (CNO 2018a, 2). This information regarding the Navy's Design 1.0 and Design 2.0 is presented to emphasize Admiral Richardson's point regarding the validation and accuracy of the Navy's core attributes. It also further reinforces the value and importance that the Navy places in its core attributes as leadership traits that help contribute to the development of effective Navy leaders.

Additionally, these Navy core attributes received support from the literature regarding personality traits that contributed to the emergence of leaders and leadership effectiveness as described earlier in table 5 (Judge et al. 2002, 766). Specifically, the majority of the literature regarding personality and leadership cited integrity being an important personality trait that contributed to leadership effectiveness (Judge et al. 2002, 766), which directly aligns with the Navy's core attribute of integrity (CNO 2016, 5; 2018a, 7; 2018b, 2). Some of the literature also correlated the personality trait of initiative to leadership effectiveness (Judge et al. 2002, 766) and supports the inclusion of initiative as a Navy core attribute (CNO 2016, 5; 2018a, 7; 2018b, 2).

One can also argue that the broad personality traits of conscientiousness can include the Navy's core attribute of accountability and that emotional stability or adjustment includes the Navy's core attribute of toughness (Judge et al. 2002, 766; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68-9; CNO 2016, 5; 2018a, 7; 2018b, 2). The literature regarding personality and leadership including the Navy's four core attributes of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness helps provide further justification as to why these four attributes serve as leadership traits and "the standard for

personal character” (CNO 2018b, 4) that helps develop and result in effective Navy leaders. These four Navy core attributes/leadership traits become briefly described below.

The core attribute of integrity becomes defined as Navy military members actively and consistently aligning their actions and conduct in accordance with the organization’s values while always being “upright and honorable both in public and when nobody’s looking” (CNO 2016, 6). Accountability involves being mission-focused and achieving high standards (CNO 2016, 6). It also consists of honestly assessing progress and being one’s “own toughest critic” (CNO 2018a, 7). Also, accountability helps promote trust and confidence that allows Navy military members to operate independently and in a decentralized manner (CNO 2018a, 7).

Initiative becomes described as all Navy members at all levels being empowered to continually strive to become the best versions of themselves; to take ownership of their situations and act within the “limit of their authorities” (CNO 2016, 6; 2018a, 7); and to develop a questioning attitude that provides forceful backup to the chain of command while helping seek new, creative, and innovative solutions to problem sets (CNO 2016, 6). The core attribute of toughness refers to developing and maintaining a fighting spirit as well as resilience, strength, and endurance (CNO 2016, 6; 2018a, 7). Admiral Richardson best described the core attribute of toughness in his statement, “We can take a hit and keep going... We don’t give up the ship, we never give up on our shipmates, and we never give up on ourselves. We are never out of the fight.” (2018a, 7).

Again, the Navy’s core attributes of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness serve as a guide to the actions and conducts of Navy military members and become recognized as leadership traits that help provide “the standard for personal

character” (CNO 2018b, 4) that contributes to the development of effective Navy leaders. An understanding of the Navy’s core attributes as leadership traits coupled with how these Navy core attributes align with the literature regarding personality and leadership (see Judge et al. 2002, 766) helps provide a standard of what becomes necessary and required to become an effective Navy leader. It also serves as a source of comparison to help Navy military members identify when individuals deviate from this standard that can possibly lead to leadership failures and ineffectiveness.

However, despite the importance placed on these Navy core attributes as leadership traits contributing to effective Navy leaders it does not guarantee leadership effectiveness. In other words, one can argue that although Navy leaders become perceived to possess the leadership traits of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness leadership ineffectiveness or failures can still occur. This assertion becomes supported by research that indicates that leader personality traits come with tradeoffs that can result in both positive and negative outcomes (Judge and LePine 2007, 333; Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857; Volmer, Koch, and Goritz 2016, 413). The literature refers to these positive and negative aspects associated with leadership personality traits as “the bright and dark sides of leader traits” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 855) and they become discussed next.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Leader Traits

The research conducted by Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt provided evidence to the relationship between personality and leadership (2002, 766; Harms, Spain, and Hannah 2011, 495)) and becomes supported by researchers who claimed that personality traits do matter as they serve as relevant factors that influence individual attitudes and can

help explain work behaviors (Barrick and Mount 2005, 359; Judge and LePine 2007, 332). Although consensus exists regarding the relationship among personality traits, behaviors, and leadership (see Judge and Bono 2000, 752; Judge, et al. 2002, 767; Kornor and Nordvik 2004, 49; Langford, Dougall, and Parkes 2017, 128; Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) an understudied aspect regarding this relation involves recognizing “that all traits may have both upsides and downsides” (Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333).

These upsides and downsides associated with personality traits become categorized into four circumstances:

1. Socially desirable traits that, in certain situations, have positive implications;
2. Socially desirable traits that, in certain situations, have negative implications;
3. Socially undesirable traits that, in certain situations, have positive implications;
4. Socially undesirable traits that, in certain situations, have negative implications.

(Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333)

In this context socially desirability refers to “how the traits are generally viewed” (Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333). Specifically, a trait considered socially desirable becomes generally viewed by a society as positive, and a trait considered socially undesirable becomes generally viewed by a society as negative (Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333). These positive and negative aspects of traits also become referred to as “bright side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits i.e. socially desirable and positive, and “dark side” traits (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) i.e. socially undesirable and negative.

The four conditions that describe the “bright side” and “dark side” of personality traits find support from the earlier findings of Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt who

studied how context, settings, and situations moderated the relationship between personality and leadership (2002, 773). Researchers Timothy Judge, Ronald Piccolo, and Tomek Kosalka build on the observation regarding context moderating the influence of personality and argued the “paradox of traits” (2009, 859) that when applied to leadership personality traits result in three observations:

1. The salutary effects of a trait at one time or in one context may be reversed when times or situations change.
2. Traits rarely have unalloyed advantages (or disadvantages) even in a single context at a single point in time; and
3. Non-linearities in the effect of a trait on fitness or leadership outcomes. (Judge, Piccolo, Kosalka 2009, 859)

In other words, the first observation points out that the impact of a personality trait depends on changes in the situation and context (Judge et al. 2002, 766; Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859). The second observation describes how traits do not result in perfectly advantageous or disadvantageous outcomes, but results in a tradeoff of both positive and negative results (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859). The third observation provides support to the two previous observations indicating the non-linear relationship between personality traits and leadership (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859).

Therefore, these three observations regarding the “paradox of traits” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859) indicate that personality traits generally perceived as positive such as the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) and the traits listed in table 5 that summarized the research by Judge,

Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002, 766) can result in both advantageous results such as leadership effectiveness, but can also result in negative outcomes (Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333). In the same way, personality traits perceived as negative such as the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556) can result in both positive and negative outcomes (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857; Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2012, 908). Since an earlier section discussed the positive outcomes associated with “bright side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits, the focus in this section seeks to explore the disadvantages associated with positive or “bright side” traits (Judge and LePine 2007, 336; Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) as well as discussing the advantages and disadvantages associated with “dark side” (Judge and LePine 2007, Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits.

For consistency purposes, this section explores the “dark side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) or disadvantages and negative consequences associated with the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) discussed earlier. Specifically, the disadvantages associated with extroversion involve increased likelihood of absenteeism due to the adventure seeking nature can result in taking more risks that can lead to accidents and results in being unable to report to work (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). Another disadvantage associated with extroversion involves the inability to stay focused for long periods of time due to the desire to socialize, which can result in decreased work productivity (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). A negative aspect associated with emotional stability deals with people being less likely to take risks that can result in missed opportunities (Judge and LePine 2007, 337).

A disadvantage associated with the personality trait of agreeableness involves an increased likelihood for groupthink behaviors because individuals who score high on the personality trait of agreeableness find conflict and disagreements stressing (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). Also agreeableness can result in a lack of organizational discipline and enforcement of standards to avoid confrontation with offenders (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). One disadvantage associated with conscientiousness involves the inability to learn because people who score high in conscientiousness become too performance driven, which “detracts from learning” (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). Another disadvantage with the conscientiousness personality trait deals with a lack of adaptability to change (Judge and LePine 2007, 336). Lastly, due to the free-thinking and curiosity associated with the openness to experience personality trait some disadvantages that come with this trait include increased likelihood of engaging in counterproductive workplace behaviors, difficulty working in a hierarchical organizational structure, lower levels of organizational commitment, and increased likelihood of being involved in a workplace accident (Judge and LePine 2007, 337).

Similar to studies in leadership, researchers tend to approach personality from a positive perspective focusing on the positive benefits associated with traits generally viewed as positive by society (Judge and LePine 2007, 337). Although studies in “dark side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits continue to grow (Harms, Spain, and Hannah 2011, 495) this paper adds to the growing literature regarding “character flaws as determinants of...leader performance” (Harms, Spain, and Hannah 2011, 495) and focuses on the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). A detailed discussion regarding the dark triad traits of

Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556) becomes provided in subsequent sections. However, the purpose in this section involves discussing the advantages and disadvantages associated with these dark triad traits.

The “dark side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) of Machiavellianism becomes commonly referred to as the “the manipulative personality” (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). This common description regarding Machiavellianism helps support its categorization as a “dark side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) or negatively, socially undesirable personality trait (Judge and Piccolo 2007, 333). However, some scholars argued that Machiavellianism “might not necessarily be an entirely negative construct” (Kessler, Bandelli, Spector, Borman, Nelson, and Penney 2010, 1870). This assertion supports Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka’s “paradox of traits” (2009, 859) observation number two stating that “Traits rarely have unalloyed advantages (or disadvantages) even in a single context at a single point in time” (2009, 859). Therefore, while the negatives or disadvantages associated with Machiavellianism of manipulation and deceit become fairly established (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556) some positives associated with Machiavellianism include the ability to skillfully wield power and influence (Deluga 2001, 340) being perceived as accommodating and respectful (Kessler et al. 2010, 1871), and increased people interactions and social skills (Kessler et al. 2010, 1876).

Narcissism as a dark trait becomes characterized by behaviors of “grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority” (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). However, out of the three dark triad traits it becomes considered the “brightest Dark Triad trait” (Volmer, Koch, and Goritz 2016, 416) with the most positive aspects associated with it

when compared to Machiavellianism and psychopathy (Judge and LePine 2007, 339). Some of the negatives or disadvantages associated with narcissism involve being perceived as self-centered and feeling entitled (Paunonen et al. 2006, 476). In addition to engaging in actions that exploit others to pursue one's own selfish, self-interests and personal gain (Paunonen et al. 2006, 476). However, some of the positives associated with narcissism include increased self-confidence and self-esteem (Paunonen et al. 2006, 476); leader emergence and volunteering for positions of leadership (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, and Fraley 2015, 1); and "high levels of life satisfaction, lower levels of stress and anxiety, and are less likely to be depressed" (Judge and LePine 2007, 339).

The dark triad trait of psychopathy becomes described as "high impulsivity and thrill-seeking along with low empathy and anxiety" (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 557). The negative aspects associated with psychopathy include inability to follow social norms and respect established laws, engages in deceit and a pattern of lying, prone to aggressive behaviors and physical altercations, increased reckless behaviors, irresponsible, manipulative, and a lack of remorse (Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168). Some positives and advantages associated with psychopathy include high levels of intelligence; being perceived as charming, friendly and pleasant; decreased likelihood of suicidal tendencies; and higher interpersonal skills (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206-7; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 169).

As discussed above, it becomes inappropriate to characterize the influence of personality traits in relationship to work behaviors and leadership as an absolute dichotomy (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859). In other words, people incorrectly assume that the positive or "bright side" (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits

such as the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) only result in positive or advantageous outcomes, and the negative or “dark side” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 857) traits such as the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556) only result in negative or disadvantageous outcomes.

However, as Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka described regarding their three observations associated with the “paradox of traits” (2009, 859) when applied in a leadership context personality traits contain within them tradeoffs that result in both positive and negative outcomes regardless of the context. These observations provide support to the non-linear relationship between personality traits and leadership outcomes and debunk the common misconception regarding the false dichotomy involving personality traits that positive personality traits only produce positive outcomes and negative personality traits only result in negative outcomes (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859). Table 6 provides a summary of the positive and negative sides of bright and dark personality traits previously discussed.

Table 6. Summary of Bright and Dark Sides of Personality Traits		
Positive Traits		
Trait	Bright Side (Advantages)	Dark Side (Disadvantages)
Extroversion	Higher levels of well- being, increased likelihood of leadership emergence	Increased absenteeism, inability to stay focused for long periods of time
Emotional Stability	Improved job satisfaction	Less likely to take risks
Agreeableness	Increased organizational citizenship or helping behaviors, decreased conflict	Can promote groupthink and leniency in enforcing organizational standards
Conscientiousness	Improved job performance	Overly performance driven that results in the inability to learn, less adaptable to change
Openness to experience	Increased creativity	Increased likelihood to engage in counterproductive workplace behaviors, can find difficulty in working in highly structured settings, lower levels of commitment, accident prone
Negative Traits		
Trait	Bright Side (Advantages)	Dark Side (Disadvantages)
Machiavellianism	Accommodating and respectful, high social skills, skillful use of power and influence	Engage in manipulative and deceitful behaviors, exploits interactions involving trust
Narcissism	High self-confidence, high self-esteem, high levels of life satisfaction, leader emergence lower levels of stress and anxiety, decreased likelihood of depression	Self-centered, feelings of entitlement, exploits others to advance self-interests and personal gain
Psychopathy	Higher levels of intelligence, charming, friendly, pleasant, higher interpersonal skills	Lack of empathy and remorse, reckless and irresponsible behavior, aggressive, repeated lying, inability to conform to social norms and obey established laws, manipulative

Source: Created by author.

Discussing the positives and negatives associated with personality traits highlights that people who possess these traits can cause both positive and negative outcomes with regard to work and leadership behaviors. Again, as previously mentioned the research on personality tends to focus on the positive aspects of personality (Judge and LePine 2007, 337). However, seeking to advance the literature regarding dark personality traits and to achieve deeper understanding regarding the dark personality trait phenomenon the next part of this section explores the concepts of leader derailment (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xxii; Burke 2006, 92; Cote 2018, 43) and personality disorders in leaders (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 43; Goldman 2006a, 392; Allio 2007, 13).

Leader Derailment and Personality Disorders in Leaders

Jon Bentz, former head of Psychological Research for the company Sears, becomes associated as the “forerunner of management derailment” (Cote 2018, 43). The general concept of derailment involves “a phenomenon in organizations when leaders fail at being effective and tend to fall [off] course” (Cote 2018, 43) and results in a leader “being involuntarily plateaued, demoted or fired below the level of expected achievement or reaching that level but unexpectedly failing” (Burke 2006, 92). Previous studies (see Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix; Burke 2006, 93) argued that leaders fail not due to technical incompetence, but due to a lacking or inability to perform interpersonal skills (Cote 2018, 43). This assertion received support from Canadian researcher, Ronald Burke, who posited that “leadership failure is primarily a behavioral issue” (2006, 93).

Authors David Dotlich and Peter Cairo in their book, *Why CEOs Fail: The 11 Behaviors that Can Derail Your Climb to the Top – And How to Manage Them*, discussed

these behavioral issues that contribute to leadership failures and focused on the concept of derailers or “deeply ingrained personality traits that affect [one’s] leadership style and actions” (2003, xix). According to Dolitch and Cairo these derailers serve as the primary factor that leads to leadership failure and derailment (2003, xix). The eleven derailers become summarized below:

1. Arrogance – you think you’re right and everyone else is wrong;
2. Melodrama – you need to be the center of attention;
3. Volatility – you are subject to mood swings;
4. Excessive caution – you are afraid to make decisions;
5. Habitual distrust – you focus on the negative;
6. Aloofness – you are disengaged and disconnected;
7. Mischievousness – you believe that rules are made to be broken;
8. Eccentricity – you try to be different just for the sake of it;
9. Passive resistance – what you say is not what you believe;
10. Perfectionism – you get the little things right and the big things wrong; and
11. Eagerness to please – you try to win the popularity contest. (Burke 2006, 93)

One can notice some overlap between the eleven derailers and the characteristics that define the dark personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy discussed earlier. For instance, the derailers of arrogance and melodrama align with the dark personality trait of narcissism. While the derailer of mischievousness relates to the dark personality traits of Machiavellianism and psychopathy. The shared commonalities between derailers and the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy does not come as a surprise when considering again the definition of a

derailer as a personality trait (Dolitch and Cairo 2003, xix; Burke 2006, 93). Some scholars even characterized these derailers and dark personality traits as personality disorders (see Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41; Goldman 2006a, 392; Goldman 2006b, 733; Allio 2007, 13).

A personality disorder in the context of studying organizations and leadership in a workplace setting becomes defined as the “dysfunctional dispositions...which are associated with poor social and organizational performance” (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41). Some personality researchers noted that personality disorders stem from variations of the “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) discussed earlier (Lynam and Miller 2015, 611). Additionally, to provide a distinction between a personality disorder and a personality trait, the American Psychiatric Association stated that “personality traits are diagnosed as a Personality Disorder only when they are inflexible, maladaptive, persisting, and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress” (as cited in Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2012, 908).

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* provides a consensus among psychiatric scholars and researchers regarding the range of various personality disorders (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41). Table 7 provides a list of these personality disorders and how they relate to Dolitch and Cairo’ (2003, xxii) leadership derailers and how they can also describe some of the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). The commonalities among personality disorders, derailers, and the dark triad traits help support the relationship among these three concepts.

Table 7. Overlapping Themes: Personality Disorder, Leadership Derailers, and Dark Triad Traits		
Personality Disorder	Leadership Derailers	Dark Triad Traits
Borderline: Inappropriate anger; unstable and intense relationships alternating between idealization and devaluation.	Volatility	Psychopathy
Paranoid: Distrustful and suspicious of others; motives are interpreted as malevolent.	Habitual distrust	Machiavellianism
Avoidant: Social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hyper-sensitivity to criticism or rejection.	Excessive caution	Narcissism
Schizoid: Emotional coldness and detachment from social relationships; indifferent to praise and criticism.	Aloofness	Psychopathy
Passive-aggressive: Passive resistance to adequate social and occupational performance; irritated when asked to do something he/she does not want to do.	Passive resistance	Psychopathy
Narcissistic: arrogant and haughty behaviors or attitudes; grandiose sense of self-importance and entitlement.	Arrogance	Narcissism
Antisocial: Disregard for the truth; impulsivity and failure to plan ahead; failure to conform with social norms.	Mischievousness	Machiavellianism Psychopathy
Histrionic: Excessive emotionality and attention seeking; self-dramatizing, theatrical, and exaggerated emotional expression.	Melodrama	Narcissism
Schizotypal: Odd beliefs or magical thinking; behavior or speech that is odd, eccentric, or peculiar.	Eccentricity	N/A
Obsessive-compulsive: Preoccupation with orderliness, rules, perfectionism, and control; overconscientious and inflexible	Perfectionism	Machiavellianism
Dependent: Difficult making everyday decisions without excessive advice and reassurance, difficulty expressing disagreement out of fear of loss of support or approval.	Eagerness to please	N/A

Source: Modified by author using data from Adrian Furnham, Geoff Trickey, and Gillian Hyde, *Bright Aspects to Dark Side Traits: Dark Side Traits Associated with Work Success* (Personality and Individual Differences, 2012), 909.

Due to this author's limited knowledge and lack of professional expertise regarding the clinical application of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

Disorders it only becomes referenced and not employed for the purpose of this study. Referencing the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* but not using it as a measure of assessment becomes supported by researcher Alan Goldman who stated that “personality disorders and their organizational contexts...generally fall outside of the expertise area of leadership scholars and management consultants” (2006a, 393). Goldman’s statement holds true in the case of this study, so this author does not attempt to use the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to measure or assess personality disorders or evaluate mental health issues (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41).

However, despite Goldman’s assertion that the use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* falls outside the area of expertise for leadership researchers (2006a, 393), Robert Allio, a leadership author, argued that “one need not be a trained psychiatrist to recognize the manifestation of personality disorder in many leaders” (2007, 13). Therefore, this author builds on previous studies (see Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41; Goldman 2006a, 395; 2006b, 733; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168; Grigoras and Wille 2017, 516) that employed the use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to help define and explain the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556). These dark triad traits become discussed in more detail below.

Dark Triad Traits

Delroy Paulhus and Kevin Williams, faculty members in the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, stated that from the personality disorder or dark personality trait literature the three dark traits that received the most attention with empirical studies consisted of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and

psychopathy (2002, 556). The literature commonly refers to these three dark traits as the dark triad (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556; Medeovic and Petrovic 2015, 228). Despite the popularity of the dark triad construct that describes Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy as containing overlapping and related characteristics but overall remain three distinct and separate constructs (see Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560); some researchers argued the combination of the three traits into a single dark core trait (Bertl, Pietschnig, Tran, Stieger, and Voracek 2017, 140).

However, other researchers argued theoretical issues with combining the three dark personality traits into one claiming that the dark trait of psychopathy as a broader construct itself encompasses and can represent the other dark triad traits of Machiavellianism and narcissism (Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 362-3). Also, some personality researchers posited the addition of sadism i.e. a personality trait that finds pleasure in inflicting pain and suffering whether emotional or physical onto others as a fourth dark personality trait and the creation of the dark tetrad construct (Medeovic and Petrovic 2015, 228).

Researchers claimed that sadism correlated with the dark traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, which justified the creation of a new dark tetrad construct (Medeovic and Petrovic 2015, 228; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365). But just because similarities and correlations exist among the three dark triad traits does not mean that they should become considered as on single dark core trait (Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 364). In the same way, just because sadism correlated to Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy does not necessarily justify and provide strong support for the creation of a new construct (Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365). Rather

researchers should provide a theoretical justification as a solid basis for merging the three traits into one or the addition of another trait or traits to the existing dark triad construct (Glenn and Selbom 2015, 365).

Although, competing constructs such as the dark tetrad (Medeovic and Petrovic 2015, 228) and the use of a single dark core trait (Bertl et al. 2017, 140) exist in the literature that challenge the validity of the dark triad trait construct, the emphasis on the creation of these competing constructs based on similarities coupled with the lack of theoretical justification provide a compelling argument for the continued relevance of the dark triad trait construct (Glenn and Selbom 2015, 365). Therefore, the focus of this study remains on examining the dark triad through the perspective of its original definition that Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy share similarities amongst each other but enough differences among the traits exist that make each trait worthy to become considered as separate and distinct constructs (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140). The next sections provide definitions and describe the characteristics of each of the three dark personality traits.

Machiavellianism

The dark personality trait of Machiavellianism receives its name from Italian Renaissance theorist Niccolo Machiavelli's book, *The Prince*, which provided leaders advice and guidance for navigating the politics involved in their positions (Deluga 2001, 341; Muris et al. 2017, 184). Machiavelli "advocated an extreme prescription for acquiring and maintaining power in socially competitive situations" (Deluga 2001, 341). The tactics and actions that Machiavelli endorsed and recommended leaders to use included manipulation, exploitation, and deceitful behaviors (Deluga 2001, 341).

Additionally, Machiavellianism as a dark personality trait becomes characterized as “mistrust in human nature” (Drory and Gluskinos 1980, 81). Machiavellianism also becomes comprised of four components which include:

1. A relative lack of affect in interpersonal relationships (others are viewed entirely as objects or as means to personal ends);
2. A lack of concern with conventional morality (people who manipulate others have a utilitarian, rather than a moral view of their interactions with others);
3. A lack of a gross psychopathology (individuals who manipulate must hold a rational view of others that is not based on distortions of reality);
4. A low ideological commitment (manipulators are focused on accomplishing tasks in the present and give little regard to the long-range ramifications of their actions). (Kesler et al 2010, 1870)

However, among these various characteristics and components that describe Machiavellianism most researchers associate the dark personality trait with manipulative behaviors (Kessler et al. 2010, 1868). Based on these characteristics and components, the literature defines Machiavellianism “as a duplicitous interpersonal style, characterized by cynical disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and personal gain” (Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Narcissism

Narcissism stems from Greek mythology about a hunter named Narcissus who became infatuated and “consumed by his own beauty and greatness that he arrogantly despised the attention and love of others” (Muris et al. 2017, 184). This Greek myth provides the foundation regarding the dark personality trait of narcissism and becomes

further defined by psychiatrists in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* as a personality disorder with diagnostic criteria that include, “‘has a grandiose sense of self-importance’; ‘has a sense of entitlement’; ‘has a lack of empathy’; ‘tends to be exploitive, manipulative, and arrogant’” (as cited in Grijalva et al. 2015, 2). Based on the descriptions from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* a working definition regarding narcissism includes “the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one’s own attributes...that negatively impacts relationships with other people” (Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Psychopathy

Ever since the year 2000 the construct of psychopathy received a lot of attention in the personality literature resulting in psychopathy being a topic of study for over 1,500 published, peer-reviewed journal articles that does not account for studies that include the construct of psychopathy when studying the dark triad trait concept (Miller and Lynam 2015, 585). The growing and continued interest in the construct of psychopathy can stem from an outcome and consequence perspective where psychopathy becomes considered one of the largest threats to organizational and business ethics (Boddy 2015, 2408). Additionally, as discussed earlier, from a theoretical perspective some researchers argued that psychopathy’s characteristics represent and encompass that of Machiavellianism and narcissism (Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 362-3).

Due to the popularity and interest regarding the study of psychopathy there exists a number of competing conceptualizations regarding this construct (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206). Some researchers characterize psychopaths as “violent, manipulative, and cold” (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206). Other scholars describe psychopathy through two

factors where the first factor includes “the affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy, such as guiltlessness, lack of empathy, grandiosity, egocentricity, and superficial charm, whereas Factor 2 consists largely of such traits as impulsivity, irresponsibility, and lack of behavioral controls” (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206).

The clinical definition of psychopathy as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* includes the following:

1. Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors
2. Deceitfulness
3. Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead
4. Irritability and aggressiveness
5. Reckless disregard for safety of self or others
6. Consistent irresponsibility
7. Lack of remorse (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206; Strickland, Drislane, Lucy,

Krueger, and Patrick 2013, 328; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168)

Using these various descriptions the dark personality trait of psychopathy becomes defined as “a personality trait characterized by enduring antisocial behavior, diminished empathy and remorse, and disinhibited or bold behavior” (Muris et al. 2017, 184). Table 8 provides a summary of the dark triad traits’ definitions and characteristics as described in the literature.

Table 8. Dark Triad Traits' Definitions and Characteristics			
Dark Triad Trait	Definition	Characteristics	Source
Machiavellianism	A duplicitous interpersonal style, characterized by cynical disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and personal gain.	manipulative, harsh, deceitful, controlling, lack of affect in interpersonal relationships, lack of concern for conventional morality, short-sighted, distrustful, self-interest	Drory and Gluskinos 1980, 81; Deluga 2001, 341; Kessler et al. 2010, 1869-70; Muris et al. 2017, 184
Narcissism	The pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one's own attributes...that negatively impacts relationships with other people.	grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, superiority, self-centeredness, lack of empathy, arrogant, requires excessive admiration, exploitive, manipulative	Grijalva et al. 2015, 2; Muris et al 2017, 184
Psychopathy	A personality trait characterized by enduring antisocial behavior, diminished empathy and remorse, and disinhibited or bold behavior.	highly impulsive, lack of empathy/remorse, failure to conform to social norms and laws, deceitful, fails to plan ahead, irritable, aggressive, lack of concern for others, irresponsible, inconsistent	Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206; Strickland et al. 2013, 328; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168; Muris et al. 2017, 184

Source: Modified by author using data from by Peter Muris, Harald Merckelbach, Henry Otgaar, and Ewout Meijer, *The Malevolent Side of Human Nature: A Meta-Analysis and Critical Review of the Literature on the Dark Triad (Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy)* (Perspectives on Psychological Science, 2017), 184

As mentioned in an earlier section, the “paradox of traits” (Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka 2009, 859) described that personality traits whether positive and considered socially desirable e.g. “Big Five personality dimensions” (Konopaske, Ivancevich, and Matteson 2018, 68) or negative and considered socially undesirable e.g. dark triad traits all contain within them tradeoffs that result in both positive and negative outcomes.

Therefore, as indicated in table 6, there exists advantages and positive outcomes related to the dark triad traits and times where these dark triad traits can result in leadership success (Judge and LePine 2007, 339; Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2013, 908; Volmer, Koch, and Goritz 2016, 413).

For example, a narcissist with its positive benefit of self-confidence will strive for greater levels of accomplishment, which can result in organizational success (Goldman 2006b, 400). Since individuals who possess or become perceived to possess one or more of the dark triad traits can result in both positive and negative outcomes it becomes more appropriate to consider these dark personality traits on a range with varying degrees of behaviors (Goldman 2006b, 400). The problem with viewing these dark personality traits on a range with varying degrees of behaviors involves the difficulty with distinguishing what behaviors become considered normal or abnormal (Furnham, Richards, and Paulhus 2013, 200). In other words, where does one draw the line where socially undesirable personality traits such as Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy no longer become considered as providing positive outcomes but transitions to negative outcomes?

To answer this question one returns to the discussion regarding when a personality trait transitions and becomes considered a personality disorder (Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2013, 908). Specifically “personality traits are diagnosed as a Personality Disorder only when they are inflexible, maladaptive, persisting, and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress” (Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2012, 908). Researcher Alan Goldman provided support to this assertion and included that one can determine the degree of how high or low an individual identifies with a dark triad personality trait by taking into consideration the number of symptoms that person

aligns with in accordance to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the persistence of those symptoms, and if those “significantly impair [one’s] personal, social and workplace functions” (2006b, 400).

The description of personality traits transitioning to personality disorders when the behaviors associated with the personality traits become characterized as persisting/enduring and resulting in distress and dysfunction draws similarities to the definitions of toxic leadership described earlier in table 2. Specifically, Lipman-Blumen’s definition that emphasized “toxic leaders are those individuals who by...their destructive behaviors and dysfunctional personal qualities generate a serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even entire societies they lead” (2005, 29). This definition of toxic leadership aligns with the condition that a negative behavior associated with a personality trait must become considered persistent and enduring to become considered a personality disorder (Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2012, 908). Additionally, the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy that become characterized as including a lack of concern for others and being primarily concerned with self-interests aligns with Dr. Reed’s three key elements that comprise the toxic leader syndrome (2004, 67). Due to the commonalities shared among the concepts of personality disorders, dark triad traits, and toxic leadership the next section explores the dark triad traits and their relationship with toxic leadership.

Dark Triad Traits and Toxic Leadership

In an earlier section of this chapter it discussed the antecedents or causes of toxic leadership and table 3 provides a summary of the factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits referred to in this paper as toxic leadership themes that describe and contribute to

the toxic leadership phenomenon from a leader-centric perspective. The relationship between personality traits serving as an antecedent or cause of toxic leadership becomes supported by researcher Alan Goldman who posited that borderline personality disorder described as “inappropriate anger; unstable and intense relationships alternating between idealization and devaluation” (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 42) becomes associated as a preexisting condition for toxic behavior (2006a, 733). Goldman’s assertion becomes supported by the claim made by United States Coast Guard officer, Lieutenant Commander Quincy Davis, in his paper regarding toxic leadership stating that “personality also plays a role in the cause of toxic leadership” (2016, 11). Some researchers even go as far to indicate “that toxic leadership is rooted in personality and not amendable to change and that this is more of an identification and selection challenge than a developmental change” (Steele 2011, 28).

The claims made by these researchers regarding personality contributing to toxic leadership become related to the dark triad traits through studies that specifically linked the dark triad trait of narcissism with the toxic leadership construct (see DiGenio 2002, 15; Doty and Fenlason 2013, 55; Boiselle and McDonnel 2014, 6-7; Fahy 2017, 147; Dorsamy 2018, 255). Also, other studies examined how dark triad traits contributed to employee toxicity and toxic behaviors in the context of a private sector workplace setting (Jonason, Slomski, and Partyka 2012, 452; Templer 2018, 212). Additionally, the similarities previously discussed regarding the overlap between some of the dark triad trait characteristics aligning with Dr. Reed’s components of toxic leadership (2004, 67) also helps provide support to the possibility that the dark triad traits serving as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership. This overlap becomes illustrated in figure 1.

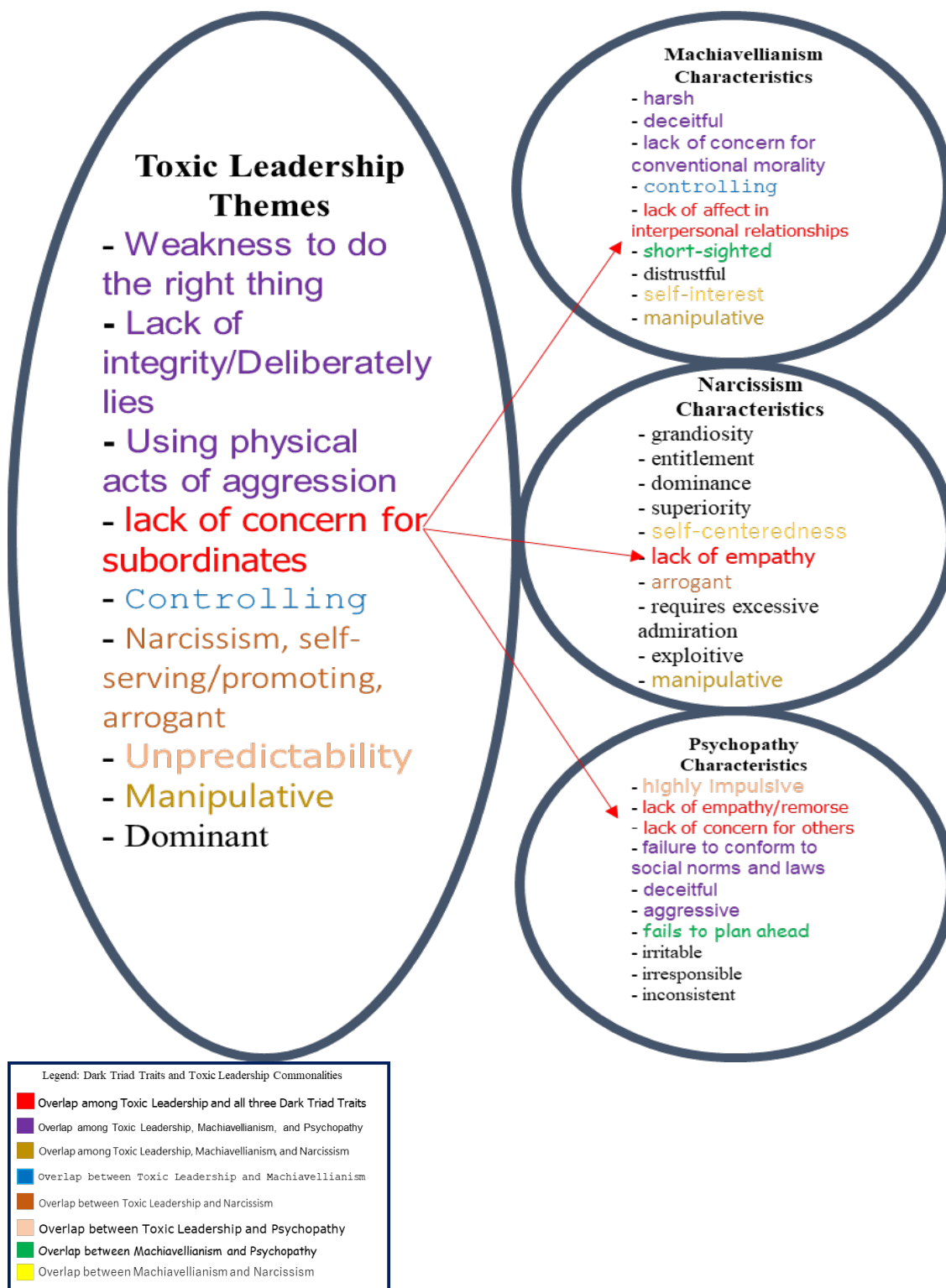


Figure 1. Dark Triad Traits and Toxic Leadership Commonalities

Source: Created by author.

Figure 1 shows the overlap between the toxic leadership themes i.e. factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits that describe toxic leadership from a leader-centric perspective and the characteristics that comprise the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Also, figure 1 provides visual support to previous studies indicating that commonalities exist among Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy but the distinctions among three dark personality traits justify their value as being considered separate constructs (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140).

When comparing the dark triad traits with the toxic leadership themes that describe the toxic leadership phenomenon from a leader-centric perspective similarities arise between the two constructs. The number of studies that link narcissism to toxic leadership (see DiGenio 2002, 15; Doty and Fenlason 2013, 55; Boisselle and McDonnell 2014, 6-7; Fahy 2017, 147; Dorsamy 2018, 255) becomes clear as the literature uses the personality trait of narcissism as a component that describes and contributes to toxic leadership. Additionally, the theme that becomes shared across toxic leadership and the three dark personality traits involves the lack of care and concern for others/subordinates. The linkages and shared commonalities between these two constructs and the support received by toxic leadership and dark personality studies helped inform the generation of this study's research question which becomes discussed next.

Research Question

Based on this literature review and the need for additional studies regarding toxic leadership in the context of the United States military, specifically focusing on the United States Navy, the primary research question becomes presented:

RQ: How do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy?

The word possible becomes included in the research question due to the limitations and delimitations involved that prevent this study from establishing or inferring a definitive causal relationship between the dark triad traits and toxic leadership constructs. These limitations and delimitations become further discussed in chapter 3 of this study.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed and exhaustive review of the literature and explained the concept of dark leadership and its associated constructs i.e. petty tyranny, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership and illustrated the overlap among these dark leadership constructs and how they become accounted for in Dr. Reed's description of toxic leadership (2004, 67). Again, Dr. Reed's description of toxic leadership serves as the primary definition of the toxic leadership construct due to the study's focus on exploring toxic leadership in a military or more specifically a United States Navy context; the fact that Dr. Reed's toxic leadership description encompasses the other dark leadership constructs; and because Dr. Reed specifically references how a leader's personality can result in negative organizational consequences (2004, 67; 2014, 4). These reasons justify the assertion that Dr. Reed's toxic leadership description serves as the most appropriate toxic leadership description for this study.

Additionally, this literature review provided the consequences associated with toxic leadership and the antecedents or causes to toxic leadership. But based on Dr. Reed's toxic leadership definition specifically emphasizing the negative impact of a

leader's personality, this chapter discussed the connection between personality traits and leadership. Since this study focuses on the United States Navy it included a discussion of the core leadership traits of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness (CNO 2018b, 2) that the United States Navy considers important that provides a standard for military members in the Navy to adhere to as well provide a guide to help identify when individuals deviate from or behave contrary to these leadership traits.

The chapter then examined how negative personality traits categorized as derailers contributed to the concept of leader derailment (Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix) and showed the commonalities between leader derailers; personality disorders; and the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 42; Dotlich and Cairo 2003, xix; Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556; Rauthmann and Kolar 2012, 885; Furnham, Trickey, and Hyde 2012, 909; Muris et al. 2017, 183). It then continued with a description of the dark triad construct and its three traits and helped explain previous research that studied the relationship between the dark triad traits and toxic leadership (see DiGenio 2002, 15; Goldman 2006b, 733; 2008, 226; Kusy and Holloway 2010, 7; Jonason, Slomski, and Partyka 2012, 449; Doty and Fenslason 2013, 55; Boiselle and McDonnell 2014, 6-7; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015, 165; Fahy 2017, 147; Dorsamy 2018, 255; Templer 2018, 209).

The literature regarding dark leadership, toxic leadership, and personalities helped inform the generation of this study's research question that consists of the following:

How do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United

States Navy? The next chapter provides a discussion of the selected qualitative methodology used to answer this research question.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to answer this study's research question (i.e. how do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy?) this study employs a qualitative approach and specifically uses Robert Yin's research design of comparative multiple-case study methodology (2018, 62). The three selected case studies that this thesis examines involve the following:

1. The removal of Captain Holly Graf from her command of the United States Ship Cowpens as a result of her destructive, abusive, and toxic behaviors (Thompson 2010; Slavin 2010).
2. The resignation of former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano amid allegations of fostering a toxic workplace environment (Seck 2018; Faram 2018; 2019; Harkins 2019).
3. The suicide of Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco while deployed onboard United States Ship, James E. Williams in June 2014 due to a toxic culture and climate created by senior enlisted leaders' unfair treatment of junior Sailors (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002).

This section provides an overview of qualitative research and the selected realism qualitative inquiry framework (Patton 2015, 112). It then discusses the application of the case study research design methodology and justifies the selection of Yin's case study method (2018, 62). It continues by defining and bounding the selected specific cases and

describes the study's data collection and analysis procedures. It also includes a discussion regarding the study's assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances.

Qualitative Research

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, this study's purpose seeks to understand the toxic leadership phenomenon within the context of the United States Navy. Based on this purpose it becomes appropriate for this study to approach the study's research question from a qualitative inquiry perspective. According to author and researcher, Michael Patton, "qualitative research inquires into, documents, and interprets the meaning-making process" (2015, 3). It serves as a process that studies how people and group's develop meaning of the systems that make up their environment in order to gain better understanding of the world (Patton 2015, 5). Conducting qualitative research produces a number of contributions which include the following:

1. Illuminating meanings
2. Studying how things work
3. Capturing stories to understand people's perspectives and experiences
4. Elucidating how systems function and their consequences for people's lives
5. Understanding context: how and why it matters
6. Identifying unanticipated consequences
7. Making case comparisons to discover important patterns and themes across cases.

(Patton 2015, 12-3)

Although all of these qualitative research contributions can support this study's purpose, the contributions regarding gaining deeper contextual understanding coupled with the opportunity to discover patterns and themes from selected cases serve as the two main

reasons why this study chooses to use a qualitative research approach to studying the possible relationship between dark triad traits and toxic leadership within the United States Navy context.

Selected Qualitative Inquiry Framework: Realism

Within qualitative research there exists a number of different approaches or frameworks that researchers can employ (Patton 2015, 96). These different approaches to qualitative research also referred to as qualitative inquiry frameworks stem from the various “philosophical and theoretical perspectives” that influence the qualitative study (Patton 2015, 97). This study applies the realism qualitative inquiry framework where realism becomes defined as “the idea that there is a real world with which we interact, and to which our concepts and theories refer” (Maxwell 2012, 78 as cited in Patton 2015, 111).

The realism perspective defines the world through three domains of empirical, actual, and real (Pawson 2013, 68 as cited in Patton 2015, 111-2). The empirical domain represents what an individual observes and experiences, the actual domain involves the patterns that develop from one’s observations and experiences, and the real domain becomes comprised of the level of understanding that an individual gains from the created “regular patterns of events” (Patton 2015, 112). Additionally, qualitative researcher Joseph Maxwell argued the difficulty in directly observing intangible “concepts, meanings, and intentions” (2012, 18 as cited in Patton 2015, 112) as real and emphasized the need to establish that pattern of understanding that makes them real through “a variety of sorts of indirect evidence” (Maxwell 2012, 18 as cited in Patton 2015, 112).

Realism's core inquiry question consists of "what are the casual mechanisms that explain how and why reality unfolds as it does in a particular context?" (Patton 2015, 111). This core inquiry question aligns with realism's main premise involving the concept of causality and causal mechanisms that help explain "how an effect is produced within a particular context" (Patton 2015, 112). In other words, realism as a qualitative inquiry framework helps with explaining and/or understanding of phenomena as they exist in the real-world (Patton 2015, 112). Although, this study does not intend to establish a direct and definitive cause and effect relationship between dark triad traits and toxic leadership due to the study's limitations which will be explained later in this chapter, the selection of the realism qualitative inquiry framework becomes justified for a number of reasons.

First, realism and its emphasis on the importance of context to understand truth (Patton 2015, 112) aligns well with the study's purpose to gain deeper contextual understanding to explore and explain how dark triad traits can serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership in the United States Navy. Additionally, approaching this qualitative research from a realism perspective becomes appropriate for this study because it examines real-world examples of the toxic leadership concept in order to establish a pattern of events that aids in creating understanding of this phenomenon (Patton 2015, 112) within the United States Navy context. Therefore, the realism qualitative inquiry framework helps best achieve this study's purpose and aids in answering the study's research question (Patton 2015, 111).

Also, as argued by Maxwell, one can consider toxic leadership as a concept that becomes difficult to observe directly and becomes better understood through "indirect

evidence” (2012, 18 as cited in Patton 2015, 112). Realism’s emphasis on using indirect evidence to understand intangible concepts such as toxic leadership helps justify the study’s use of documentation and archival records (Yin 2018, 114) as indirect evidence not directly observed by the author as the real-world examples of toxic leadership that this study examines. The use, examination, and analysis of documentation and archival records as evidence to understand phenomenon in a specific, real-world context aligns well with the case study methodology. The next section examines the case study research design in more detail.

Research Design: Case Study Methodology

Case study research serves as a popular qualitative research strategy (Yazan 2015, 134). Despite its popularity, social scientists and qualitative researchers question its legitimacy as a sound research method due to a number of critiques (Yin 2018, 18). One main critique regarding the use of case studies as a research method involves the lack of consensus regarding its definition (Patton 2015, 259; Yazan 2015, 134; Yin 2018, 13). Therefore, confusion exists regarding what actually constitutes as a case study (Yazan 2015, 134). A case can comprise of a unit, group, organization, an individual, an event, or a theory (Patton 2015, 259). How a case becomes defined depends on the perspective, approach, and purpose of the case study writer/producer (Patton 2015, 259). Therefore, the open-endedness and variation associated with the definition of a case adds to the difficulty in developing a consensus for an accepted case study definition (Patton 2015, 259; Yazan 2015, 134).

The second main critique of the case study method involves the perception that case study research lacks rigor because it does not apply systematic procedures or include

well-defined, structured protocols (Yazan 2015, 134; Yin 2018, 18). Due to this lack of rigor perception coupled with the lack of consensus in defining a case, case study research often times becomes confused with non-research case studies (Yin 2018, 19). Non-research case studies become categorized as non-research because the producers of these case studies do not formally describe their methodology or follow any research method procedures (Yin 2018, 19).

Also, writers/producers develop case studies for non-research purposes such as a teaching tool i.e. teaching-practice case study, to describe a story/vignette i.e. popular case study, or to record and document an event i.e. case record (Yin 2018, 19). To add to the confusion, the writers/producers of these types of documents still refer to these non-research works as case studies (Yin 2018, 19). However, since these writers developed these works for other purposes other than for research and because they did not apply or follow any systematic procedures in the creation of these works they do not count as research case studies (Yin 2018, 19).

Another critique or concern regarding the use of case studies as a research method involves the “inability to generalize from case studies” (Yin 2018, 20). The argument of not being able to generalize the findings from case study research receives support from the case study research criticism that case studies do not follow set procedures like in research experiments that include a study sample randomly selected from a population (Yin 2018, 21). The lack of a randomized sample and not using an intervention or treatment also supports the earlier criticism regarding the lack of rigor for case studies to be considered a research method, which further calls into question its legitimacy and downgrades the use of case studies as a research method (Yin 2018, 21). Also, another

concern regarding the use of case study research involves the perception that it potentially takes too long to conduct this type of research method because it requires the review and examination of massive amounts of documents and narratives (Yin 2018, 21).

Although there exists a lack of an agreed upon case study definition and consensus regarding systematic procedures when applying case studies as a research method, well-regarded case study methodologists Robert Stake, Sharan Merriam, and Robert Yin offer “procedures to follow when conducting case study research” (Yazan 2015, 134). In order to address the main criticisms regarding case study research described above, and to help better explain this qualitative methodology the next section discusses Stake, Merriam, and Yin’s approaches to case study research.

Three Approaches to Case Study Research

Stake, Merriam, and Yin’s case study definitions and procedures become selected and discussed because their procedures are recognized as the seminal and foundational works regarding case study research methodology (Yazan 2015, 134). As mentioned previously, the definition of a case depends on the researcher’s perspective and selected approach (Patton 2015, 259). Therefore, Stake, Merriam, and Yin’s case study definitions and procedures share similarities, but also differ in certain aspects based on their differing perspectives (Yazan 2015, 136).

Stake’s Approach to Case Study Research

Stake’s constructivism perspective influenced how he defined cases and informed his case study research procedures (Yazan 2015, 137). The constructivism perspective involves capturing “diverse understanding and multiple realities about people’s

definitions and experiences of [a] situation” (Patton 2015, 122). In other words, the constructivist perspective emphasizes and finds value regarding individual subjectivity and varying worldviews that help socially construct a meaningful reality (Patton 2015, 122). Therefore, Stake’s constructivist perspective argued knowledge being constructed rather than it being discovered (Yazan 2015, 137). Based on this perspective, Stake’s definition of a case involved a bounded system used to inquire or construct knowledge about an object and better applied to studying “programs and people and less beneficial to study events and processes” (Yazan 2015, 139). However, Stake also defended the lack of consensus regarding a case study definition because he believed that the users of case studies in other disciplines should be allowed to define case studies how they deem necessary (Yazan 2015, 139).

The autonomy and flexibility that Stake advocated for case study researchers in defining case study research continues with Stake’s approach to case study research design. Stake argued for a flexible design that does not require much design preparation and emphasized the researcher to first consider the issues (Yazan 2015, 139). Focusing on the issues helps the researcher understand context and ultimately helps determine and identify the problems, conflicts, complexities, and the background information associated with the case (Yazan 2015, 140). Also focusing on the issues helps the researcher generate the research questions that the study aims to answer (Yazan 2015, 141).

In regards to data collection Stake preferred the use of qualitative data (Yazan 2015, 142). Also, aligning to Stake’s flexible design approach he did not specify an exact time or period to begin or end collecting data (Yazan 2015, 143). Also Stake’s data collection protocol appeared more as broad guidelines rather than step by step procedures

(Yazan 2015, 143). These data collection guidelines recommended researchers to define the case, make available a list of research questions, identify any helpers that will aid in collecting data, identify the data sources, and the amount of time allotted for data collection (Yazan 2015, 143). Since Stake's case study research methodology exclusively only accounted for qualitative data Stake suggested the use of observations, interviews, and a review of documents as data sources (Yazan 2015, 143).

When it came to data analysis, Stake capitalized "on researchers' impressions as the main source of data and making sense of them as the analysis" (Yazan 2015, 145). Additionally, Stake prioritized researcher "intuition and impression" to guide analysis rather than systematic procedures (Yazan 2015, 145). Also, since Stake did not define when data collection ends and begins he argued for data collection and analysis to occur simultaneously (Yazan 2015, 145). Stake's emphasis on researcher experience to help guide data analysis helped form his two main data analysis strategies of "categorical aggregation and direct interpretation" (Yazan 2015, 145).

Regarding data validation, Stake advocated for data triangulation or the use of multiple methods to improve the credibility of the case study's findings (Yazan 2015, 146; Patton 2015, 316). Stake recommended four data triangulation strategies that include 1) data source triangulation or the use of multiple data sources e.g. observations, interviews, and documents; 2) investigator triangulation or the use of multiple researchers to analyze the data to determine similarities and differences regarding the data analysis; 3) theory triangulation or the use of different theories to "interpret a single set of data" (Patton 2015, 316); and 4) methodological triangulation or the use of multiple methods (Yazan 2015, 146; Patton 2015, 316).

Merriam's Approach to Case Study Research

Merriam shared a similar perspective to Stake and approached case study research from a constructivist perspective (Yazan 2015, 137). Specifically, that knowledge about “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam 1998, 6 as cited in Yazan 2015, 137). Based on Merriam’s constructivist perspective she defined case study research as a bounded and integrated system where a case consists of “a person, a program, a group, a specific policy, and so on...occurring in a bounded context” (Yazan 2015, 139). Merriam defined case study research as “an intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (Merriam 1998, xiii as cited in Yazan 2015, 139).

In regards to case study research design, Merriam provided step by step, detailed procedures that included “conducting [a] literature review, constructing a theoretical framework, identifying a research problem, crafting and sharpening research questions, and selecting the sample (purposive sampling)” (Yazan 2015, 141). Merriam’s approach to gathering data emphasized the need for the researcher to attain appropriate skills in order to conduct effective interviews and review data from multiple sources (Yazan 2015, 143). For data analysis, Merriam discussed that “making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read” in order to make meaning (Yazan 2015, 145). Similar to Stake, Merriam argued the need to simultaneously collect and analyze data (Yazan 2015, 145). Merriam’s approach to data validation involves offering techniques and strategies to improve the study’s internal and external validity and its reliability (Yazan 2015, 147).

Yin's Approach to Case Study Research

Unlike Stake and Merriam's constructivist perspectives, Yin approached case study research from a positivist perspective (Yazan 2015, 136). Positivism involves knowledge being generated only through "verifiable claims based directly on experience" (Patton 2015, 105). Due to this perspective, Yin emphasized the need for case study research to contain elements of "objectivity, validity and generalizability" (Yazan 2015, 136). Additionally, this positivistic perspective impacted Yin's definition of a case as "a contemporary phenomenon...within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin 2018, 15). Based on this definition of a case, Yin defines case study as a research method as "an empirical method that investigates...the 'case'" (Yin 2018, 15). Yin described cases as individual persons, an event, an entity, organizations, countries, policies, decisions, communities, concepts, etc. (2018, 29).

According to Yin, case study research design involves "a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the set of questions to be addressed, and there is some set of conclusions about these questions" (2018, 26). Again, Yin's positivistic perspective supports Yin advocating the employment of a logical and well-structured research design when conducting case study research (Yazan 2015, 140). Therefore, Yin's research design comprised of five components:

1. A case study's questions;
2. Its propositions, if any;
3. Its case(s);
4. The logic linking the data to the propositions; and

5. The criteria for interpreting the findings. (2018, 27)

The case study question or questions involves the form of the research question i.e. “who, what, where, how, and why” (Yin 2018, 27). Yin argued that case study research becomes most appropriate for research questions that become comprised of how and why forms (2018, 27). Yin’s second research design component involved study propositions that help direct “attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study” (2018, 27). In other words, study propositions serve as statements that can help provide further clarity and focus to the research question and ensure the case study researcher is moving in the right direction (Yin 2018, 28).

The third component of Yin’s case study research design deals with defining and bounding the case (2018, 28). Defining the case requires the case study researcher to identify the topic of the study and the related information that require collection (Yin 2018, 29). Yin recommends the use of a literature review to help define the topic of study (2018, 32). Bounding the case involves the case study researcher providing boundaries to the study’s topic in order to distinguish between the topic of the study or the phenomenon i.e. the case and everything external to case i.e. the context through “spatial, temporal, and other explicit boundaries” (Yin 2018, 31). Examples of bounding the case include specifying a particular time period that starts and ends the case or a specific location (Yin 2018, 31).

Yin’s fourth component of case study research design involves “linking data to propositions” (2018, 33). This part of the research design involves the selection of the appropriate data analysis technique i.e. “pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis” (Yin 2018, 33). The fifth

component identifies the “criteria for interpreting the strength of a case study’s findings” (Yin 2018, 33). Where most quantitative studies apply statistics to determine statistical significance regarding a study’s findings, case study research does not typically apply statistics (Yin 2018, 33). Therefore, an “alternative strategy is to identify and address rival explanations for [one’s] findings” (Yin 2018, 33).

In regards to the gathering or collection of data, Yin continuing to argue for the objectivity and rigor for case study research developed a case study protocol that provides a case study researcher focus when collecting data (2018, 93). This case study protocol consisted of four sections: Section A – an overview of the case study, Section B – data collection procedures, Section C – the specific question or questions the case study researcher keeps in mind when collecting data and the types of data being collected, and Section D – outline of the case study report (Yin 2018, 94). Yin argued that the inclusion of a case study protocol in case study research helped improve the reliability of the study (Yin 2018, 96).

Yin also specified six types of data sources that case study researchers can collect data from which include “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, [and] physical artifacts” (2018, 114). Yin also discussed four principles when collecting data that involved: 1) using multiple sources of evidence to achieve data triangulation (2018, 126), 2) organizing and managing case study data through the creation of a case study database (2018, 130), 3) using a chain of evidence that links the study’s research question or questions to the study’s findings (2018, 134), and 4) “exercise care when using data from social media sources” (2018, 136).

As mentioned earlier, Yin discussed five analytic techniques i.e. “pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis” (2018, 33) that case study researchers can use to analyze collected data. Pattern matching “compares an empirically based pattern – that is, one based on the findings from your case – with a predicted one (or with several alternative predictions, including rivals) made before [one] collected...data” (Yin 2018, 175). Explanation building attempts to build causal sequences through a narrative form to explain how or why an outcome occurred regarding a particular phenomenon (Yin 2018, 179). Time-series analysis involves tracking measures over a single period of time i.e. “simple time series” (Yin 2018, 181) or over multiple periods of time i.e. “complex time series” (Yin 2018, 183). Logical models “stipulates and operationalizes a complex chain of occurrences or events over an extended period of time, trying to show how a complex activity...takes place” (Yin 2018, 186). Cross-case synthesis uses a case-based approach “aggregating findings across a series of individual studies” (Yin 2018, 196).

As far as validating data, Yin based on his positivistic perspective emphasized the importance for construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability (Yazan 2015, 146). Therefore, Yin included techniques to improve on case study research’s construct validity by including a research design that is logical and well-structured (2018, 26), and improved its internal and external validity by including in its research design criteria to strengthen the case study’s findings through the inclusion of alternative and rival explanations (2018, 33). Additionally, Yin improved case study research’s reliability with the inclusion of a case study protocol when conducting data collection (2018, 96) and identifying five specific data analysis techniques for case study

researchers to employ (2018, 33). In order to better compare and contrast Stake, Merriam, and Yin's case study research approaches, table 9 summarizes this information.

Table 9. Summary of Three Case Study Approaches			
Dimension of Interest	Stake	Merriam	Yin
Perspective	Constructivism	Constructivism	Positivism
Definition of Case	Case is a specific, a complex, function thing, more specifically, an integrated system which has a boundary and working parts and purposive in social sciences and human services.	Case is a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries and it can be a person, a program, a group, a specific policy and so on.	Case is a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and the context
Definition of Case Study	Case study is a study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances	Case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit	Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates the case or cases conforming the abovementioned definition by addressing the how and the way questions concerning the phenomenon of interest
Case Study Design	Flexible design which allows researchers to make major changes even after they proceed from design to research. Researchers need a set of two or three sharpened issue questions (research questions) that will help structure the observation, interviews, and document review.	Five steps of research design: conducting literature review, constructing theoretical framework, identifying research problem, crafting and sharpening research questions, and selecting the sample (purposive sampling)	Five components of case study research: a study's questions, its propositions (if any), the case or cases, the logic linking of data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings.
Gathering Data	Use of observation, interview, and document reviews as data gathering tools.	Collection techniques include interviews, observing, and analyzing documents.	Six data gathering tools: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts.
Analyzing Data	Two strategic ways to analyze data: Categorical and Direct Interpretation	Six analytic strategies: ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis, phenomenological analysis, constant comparative method, content analysis, and analytic induction	Five dominant techniques for data analysis: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis.
Validating Data	Four strategies for triangulation: data source triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation.	Six strategies to enhance internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory research, and disclosure of researcher bias. Three techniques to ensure reliability: explanation of investigator's position with regards to the study triangulation, and use of an audit trail. Three techniques to enhance external validity: use of thick descriptions, typicality or modal categories, and multi-site designs.	Improve construct validity through the triangulation of multiple sources of evidence, chains of evidence, and member checking. Improve internal validity through the use of established analytic techniques. Improve external validity through analytic and theoretical generalizations. Improve reliability through case study protocols and databases.

Source: Modified by author using data from by Bedrettin Yazan, *Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake* (The Qualitative Report, 2015), 148-150

As described in table 9, Stake, Merriam, and Yin's approaches to case study research differ in certain aspects, but all three approaches help address the concerns and critiques regarding case study research discussed earlier. Specifically, the three approaches do provide support to the critique that case study research lacks an agreed upon definition of what constitutes a case, but looking at how Stake, Merriam, and Yin each define a case one can see more similarities than differences. Particularly all three researchers include in their definition of a case the importance of boundaries to help better bound and define the case (Yazan 2015, 148).

More importantly Stake, Merriam, and Yin's three approaches help refute the criticism that case study research lacks rigor and well-structure, systematic procedures (Yin 2018, 18). All three of the case study research approaches provide procedures and at a minimum guidelines on how to systematically conduct case study research to help improve the study's validity and reliability (Yazan 2015, 149). Also, the concern regarding case study research using an unmanageable amount of data becomes addressed by Stake, Merriam, and Yin's procedures on how to gather data and including in their procedures specifics on the kinds and types of data to collect (Yazan 2015, 149). Stake, Merriam, and Yin address the critique regarding the inability to generalize case study research findings through their recommended strategies to help improve data validation (Yazan 2015, 150).

The concerns and critiques associated with case study as a research method can dissuade the use of case studies as a research methodology. However, Stake, Merriam, and Yin's approaches to case study research address these concerns and provide solutions

to these criticisms that help enhance case studies as a legitimate and valuable research method (Yazan 2015, 150). Therefore, this author argues that case study as a research method serves as an appropriate research methodology to help this study achieve its intended purpose to fill the gap in the literature and investigate the antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within a military context. Additionally, case study research can aid in answering the study's research question of how do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy. The next section discusses the selection of Yin's approach to case study research and justifies its use for this study.

Selecting Yin's Case Study Approach

One can argue that Stake and Merriam's constructivist perspectives that influenced their case study research approaches (Yazan 2015, 148) aligns well with this study's realism qualitative inquiry framework that "emphasizes that truth is context dependent" (Patton 2015, 111). However, Yin's emphasis of using case studies to answer how and why questions regarding issues that exist in the real-world context (2018, 13) aligns with realism's purpose to explain and understand phenomenon within the real world (Patton 2015, 112). Therefore, Yin's case study approach aligns with this study's chosen realism qualitative inquiry framework. Additionally, this study chooses to apply Yin's case study approach because it provides the author the needed structure and systematic procedures to help ensure objectivity, validity, reliability, and generalizability (Yazan 2015, 136).

Although, Stake and Merriam's case study approaches both offer systematic procedures for their approaches to case study research, Yin's positivist perspective

provides more emphasis on ensuring case study as a research method contains within it the necessary rigor to ensure its legitimacy as a research method (Yazan 2015, 137). As a result of this positivist perspective, Yin offers more detailed and definitive procedures for case study researchers to employ. Yin's detailed procedures prove helpful to novice case study researchers who require structure to compensate for the lack of experience and skill in conducting case study research (Yazan 2015, 144).

On the other hand, Stake and Merriam's case study approaches place a lot of emphasis on the previous experience and the skill of the researcher (Yazan 2015, 143). So it makes sense that their approaches provide less structure and more guidelines for case study researchers to employ because their approaches become catered to more seasoned case study researchers (Yazan 2015, 143). However, this author being a novice case study researcher lacks the necessary experience and skill to correctly carry out Stake and Merriam's case study approaches. Therefore, Yin's well-structured, systematic procedures that provide a logical step-by-step process on how to conduct case study research serves as the most fitting approach to aid the author as a novice case study researcher in conducting the case study research. The next section discusses how this author applies Yin's case study approach to conduct this study.

Applying Yin's Case Study Approach

This section provides details regarding how this author intends to apply Yin's case study methodology (2018, 26) to examine the study's topic of interest regarding the possible relationship between the dark personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy and the phenomenon of toxic leadership by United States Navy leaders. The organization of this section adheres to and follows Yin's well-structured approach to

case study research. It first discusses the application of Yin's five components of research design that include the case study's question, propositions, defines and bounds the selected cases, the selection of the analytic technique to link the collected data to the propositions, and the criteria to interpret the findings (2018, 27). It then reviews the data collection procedures that will be applied by identifying the sources of evidence used (Yin 2018, 114) and the way the data will be collected and organized (Yin 2018, 130). Lastly, this section discusses the cross-case synthesis technique as the selected data analysis procedure that this author intends to use to analyze the collected data from the selected cases (Yin 2018, 194).

Research Design

According to Yin, a research design serves as a logical approach to conducting a study that connects collected data and analysis to help answer the study's research questions (2018, 26). Therefore, the subsequent paragraphs discuss the application of Yin's research design components (2018, 27) to help ensure the proposed plan to conduct the study actually answers the identified research question.

Case Study Question

Yin argued that case study as a research methodology becomes best suited for research questions that take the form of how or why (2018, 27). This study aligns with Yin's assertion since its research question takes the form a "how" question (2018, 27). Specifically, this study's research question consists of the following: How do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy?

Additionally as explained in the literature review chapter of this study, this research question was generated from the existing literature regarding toxic leadership (see Reed and Bullis 2009, 5; Reed and Olsen 2010, 58; Reed 2014, 3; Reed 2015, 5) and dark triad personality traits (see Paulhus and Williams 2002, 556; Medeovic and Petrovic 2015, 228). The use of the existing literature to inform, undergird, and generate this study's research question aligns with Yin's suggestion to conduct a literature review to help narrow the scope of the study (2018, 27). Therefore, the aforementioned question aligns with Yin's first research design component and serves as this study's case study research question (2018, 27).

Propositions

The second component of Yin's research design involves propositions or statements and assumptions that help provide more fidelity to the defined research question (Yin 2018, 27-8). In other words a proposition "directs attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study" (Yin 2018, 27). Therefore, some propositions for this study's research question (i.e. how do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy?) include the following:

1. The hierarchical structure and culture of compliance that characterize the United States Navy as a military organization can encourage narcissistic tendencies of entitlement, superiority, and dominance (Grijalva et al. 2015, 2; Muris et al. 2017, 184) for those individuals filling positions high up in the military structure such as senior enlisted and officers that when left unchecked can result in the emergence of toxic leaders.

2. The positional power associated with certain jobs such as being the Commanding Officer of a United States warship, being the Master Chief Petty Officer of the United States Navy, and/or filling non-commissioned officer senior enlisted leadership positions can facilitate manipulative and controlling behaviors associated with Machiavellianism (Drory and Gluskinos 1980, 81; Deluga 2001, 341; Kessler et al. 2010, 1869-70; Muris et al. 2017, 184) as people who fill these types of positions in the Navy can lord their positional power and influence over others, which creates the perception of these leaders being toxic.
3. The inherit danger and risk of losing one's life while conducting operations coupled with the high stress and tempo that becomes associated with serving in the military can desensitized individuals and create emotional instabilities that increases the likelihood of psychopathic behaviors such as lack of empathy and remorse, irritability, and a lack of concern for others (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206; Strickland et al. 2013, 328; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168; Muris et al. 2017, 184). The inability to show concern for others can then create the perception of toxic leadership (Reed and Bullis 2009, 5; Reed and Olsen 2010, 58; Reed 2014, 3; Reed 2015, 5).

The generation of these propositions help serve as statements that guide the case study in the right direction (Yin 2018, 28). They also become a starting point on the types or sources of evidence to include to collect data from (Yin 2018, 28). It becomes worth noting that Yin does not prescript a specific number of propositions to include when conducting case study research (2018, 28). In fact, Yin posited that some circumstances and studies “may have a legitimate reason for not having any propositions” (2018, 28).

However, this author generated these propositions to help further scope and focus the study on the topics and items to examine and what items the study intentionally leaves out (Yin 2018, 28). Therefore, these propositions can serve as an initial step to define and bound cases that the study will include and examine (Yin 2018, 28). The defining and bounding of cases become further discussed next.

Defining and Bounding the Case: Selection of Cases

The third component of Yin's research design involves defining and bounding cases that help lead to the identification and selection of cases for inclusion in the study (2018, 28). This research component design becomes important because it helps further narrow and scope the topic or phenomenon of study and also helps provide specificity when it comes to collecting data (Yin 2018, 28). A case becomes considered an event, organization, individual, etc. (Yin 2018, 29). As mentioned earlier, the study's research question and associated propositions help with the selection, identification, defining, and bounding of the cases (Yin 2018, 28). Therefore, based on this study's research question and the propositions discussed earlier, this study defines its cases as events that describe follower and subordinate perceptions of behaviors of toxic leaders in the United States Navy and if dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy were present and helped to contribute to the perceived toxicity.

Although one can argue that the study's research questions and propositions can define its cases using specific individuals rather than events (Yin 2018, 29) the limited access to career military information on selected Navy personnel serves as a major obstacle in regards to collecting data. Additionally, selecting cases that focuses on events that include specific individuals and their perceived toxic behaviors rather than specific

individuals themselves helps ensure that the study does not attempt “to cover ‘everything’ about the individuals, which is impossible to do” (Yin 2018, 29). Also, as mentioned in the literature review chapter of this study, due to this author’s limited knowledge and lack of professional expertise regarding the clinical application of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* it only becomes referenced and not employed for the purpose of this study. Therefore, it becomes inappropriate and ill-advised to focus on specific individuals because doing so can lead to trying to diagnose personality disorders, which this author does not intend to do (Goldman 2006a, 393).

Again, the focus of this study involves trying to determine if the existence of dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy in the selected cases helped contribute to the emergence of follower and subordinate perceptions of toxic leadership behaviors by United States Navy leaders to demonstrate the dark triad personality serving as possible causes to the toxic leadership phenomenon. To provide more clarification to the study’s defined cases, Yin suggested bounding the cases which helps identify and describe additional specifics to further narrow and refine the identification and selection of cases for inclusion in the study and the scope of the data that will be collected (2018, 31).

Therefore, this study bounds its defined cases to publically reported events of toxic leadership committed by United States Navy leaders from 2010 to 2018. It specifically focuses on events that became highlighted in news media sources and where an investigation took place that substantiated allegations of leader toxicity and/or associated behaviors. Based on how this study defines and bounds its cases this study includes three cases that meet the criteria described above.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the three cases selected and included in this study consist of the following:

1. Case 1 – Removal of Captain Holly Graf as the Commanding Officer of the Japan based, cruiser, the United States Ship Cowpens in January 2010 due to substantiated toxic leadership behaviors of “demeaning, humiliating, publically belittling and verbally assaulting...subordinates while in command of *Cowpens*” (Thompson 2010).
2. Case 2 – Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano in June 2018 amid allegations of creating a toxic workplace environment (Faram 2018, 2019; Harkins 2019).
3. Case 3 – Suicide of Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco onboard the Norfolk, Virginia, based destroyer, the United States Ship James E. Williams in June 2014 that stemmed from toxic behaviors exhibited by the ship’s Chief Petty Officers who were enabled by the lack of involvement and disregard from the ship’s Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief, which led to the creation of a toxic command culture and climate based on “fear and intimidation” (Simmons 2014, 003; Rockett 2014).

The selection of these cases aligns with Yin’s criteria of being “a real-world phenomenon” with tangible, physical, and concrete occurrences (2018, 31). But one can argue that inclusion of these three cases does not accurately capture all of the possible toxic leadership events within the bounded time frame of 2010 to 2018. This assertion becomes supported by a statement provided by Department of Defense Principal Deputy Inspector General Glenn Fine who during his hearing before the House Arm Services

Committee, Subcommittee on Military Personnel presented data regarding 590 substantiated official misconduct made by senior Department of Defense military and civilian officials during the time period of 2013 to 2017 (US Congress 2018, 11).

However, based on how this study specifically defines and bounds its cases a number of those 590 substantiated misconduct allegations do not meet the criteria for inclusion for this study. Additionally, returning to the nature of this study to understand specific context in which the topic and phenomenon of study occurs justifies the need to not cover the various events that fall outside of how this study defines and bounds its cases (Yin 2018, 29). This section continues with a discussion of how this study intends to link data to propositions (Yin 2018, 33).

Linking Data to Propositions

The fourth component of Yin's research design of linking data to propositions helps foreshadow the analytic technique that the study will use (2018, 33). Since this study defined and bounded its cases to three events that capture substantiated follower and subordinates' perceived toxicity by United States Navy leaders it aligns with Yin's definition of multiple case studies analysis that examines two or more case studies (2018, 195). Due to this study's inclusion of three case studies it becomes appropriate to apply the cross-case synthesis analytic technique (Yin 2018, 195). The selection of the cross-case synthesis technique becomes discussed in more detail in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Criteria for Interpreting Results

Yin argued that the use of rival and alternative explanations to the study's topic of interest can serve as useful criteria for interpreting the case study's results and findings (2018, 33). Since this study explores the topic of dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serving as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership in the United States Navy it included in its literature review chapter a section that covers the antecedents to toxic leadership and primarily focused on Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's toxic triangle framework (2007, 179). The toxic triangle framework highlighted the interdependent factors that cause toxic leadership that include toxic leaders, susceptible subordinates/followers, and conducive environments/circumstances (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 179).

This study primarily focuses on the individual toxic leader component of Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser's toxic triangle framework and argues that individual level factors such as dark personality traits can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership (2007, 180). Therefore, the other toxic triangle components of susceptible subordinates/followers and conducive environments/circumstances (Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser 2007, 179) can serve as alternative and rival explanations that become a source of comparison to the study's findings (Yin 2018, 33-4). By including, addressing, refuting, and/or rejecting these alternative and rival explanations the more credible the study's findings become (Yin 2018, 34). The next section of this chapter discusses how this author intends to collect data for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Continuing to follow Yin's approach to case study research this section explains this study's data collection procedures that align with Yin's "four principles of data collection" (2018, 126). Specifically, it discusses the multiple sources of evidence used to collect data (Yin 2018, 114, 126). It also explains the creation of a tool that serves as the study's case study database to help organize the collected data (Yin 2018, 130). It then demonstrates how this study maintains a chain of evidence to help illustrate the logical linkages from the case study's research question to the case study's findings, which overall improves the study's construct validity (Yin 2018, 134-5). Lastly, it identifies the advantages and disadvantages of using data from secondary sources (Yin 2018, 136).

Multiple Sources: Documents and Archival Records

A number of sources can become included as data for case study research (Yin 2018, 111). However, Yin identified six main sources of data commonly included when conducting case study research. Two of these sources of evidence include documentation and archival records (Yin 2018, 114). Documentation can consist of emails, personal diaries, news articles, internal records, formal studies and reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, etc. (Yin 2018, 113). The advantages of using documentation as a source of evidence involve its flexibility in being able to provide both broad and specific information, and it being able to help quickly orient the researcher to the selected study or phenomenon of interest (Yin 2018, 114). However, some of the disadvantages associated with this source of evidence involve it not being accurate and it containing bias (Yin 2018, 114). Therefore, documentation becomes useful when it comes to corroborating other sources of evidence (Yin 2018, 114).

Generally speaking, archival records contain statistical information and as its name implies serve as documents and/or reports that become archived by an organization (Yin 2018, 117). Examples of archival records include reports from public organizations such as the United States Department of Defense or Department of the Navy, but they also include non-governmental and private sector organizations as well (Yin 2018, 117). The advantage of using archival records as a source of evidence involves the ability for a researcher to review the report multiple times and so they become considered a stable source of evidence (Yin 2018, 114). However, a disadvantage of using this source of evidence include its accessibility as certain archived records become difficult to locate for privacy reasons (Yin 2018, 114).

As mentioned previously, due to the study's selected realism inquiry framework that emphasizes the use of indirect evidence in order to study real-world phenomenon (Patton 2015, 112) this author chooses to include documentation and archival records as the sources of evidence for data collection (Yin 2018, 114). Additionally, the inclusion of two sources of evidence aligns with Yin's first principle for data collection that emphasizes the use of multiple sources of data to help validate findings through data triangulation (2018, 128).

Based on how this study defined and bounded its selected cases, the documentation that this study will examine focuses on news articles that capture the events covered in the study's selected three cases regarding follower/subordinate perceptions of toxic leadership by United States Navy leaders that occurred within the bounded time period of 2010 to 2018 (see Thompson 2010; Slavin 2010; Rockett 2014; Faram 2018; 2019; Seck 2018; Harkins 2019). Whereas, the archival record that the study

examines involves the redacted and publically released investigation report conducted by representatives of the United States Navy regarding this study’s Case 3 that investigated the suicide of Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco (Simmons 2014, 002). Table 10 provides a summary of the sources of evidence that this study collected data from.

Table 10. Sources of Evidence	
Documentation	Archival Record
News Article – “The Rise and Fall of a Female Captain Bligh” (Thompson 2010)	Official Investigation Report – “Command Investigation Regarding the Circumstances Surrounding the Preliminary Investigation and Line of Duty Determination Recommendation ICO (Redacted)” (Simmons 2014, 001)
News Article – “IG Report: Cowpens Captain Berated, Abused Sailors” (Slavin 2010)	
News Article – “Leadership of Norfolk-based Destroyer Blamed for Sailor’s Suicide” (Rockett 2014)	
News Article – “‘Like Working for a Pop Star or a Hollywood Diva’ Navy Investigating MCPON amid Reports of Toxic Workplace” (Faram 2018)	
News Article – “Navy’s Senior Enlisted Leader Steps down amid Reports of Toxic Leadership” (Seck 2018)	
News Article – “Probe: MCPON Giordano ‘Failed to Exhibit Exemplary Conduct’” (Faram 2019)	
News Article – “Former MCPON Bawled Out Staff, Made Sailors Fetch Coffee: Investigation” (Harkins 2019)	

Source: Created by author.

Organizing and Managing Collected Data

The second principle of Yin's data collection procedures involves creating a case study database that helps the organization and management of data (2018, 130). Case study researchers can use a number of different ways to develop a case study database that include using software that compiles and analyzes qualitative data, employing the use of tables through word processing applications such as Microsoft word and excel, and/or creating different electronic files that separate the collected data from the qualitative report (Yin 2018, 131). This study uses electronic files that help organize and manage the collected data from the identified sources of evidence listed in table 10. Additionally, due the author's inexperience with case study research, this study applies tables developed in Microsoft word as its method to create a case study database due to its simplicity and ease of use (Yin 2018, 131).

As mentioned earlier, this study intends to apply the cross-case synthesis analytic technique to analyze the collected data (Yin 2018, 33). Due to this selected case study analytic technique the author intends to collect data separately regarding the three selected case studies (Yin 2018, 196). In order to facilitate the separate data collection for each case, tables 11-16 serve as this study's case study database tables that will allow the author to collect and manage data for each case.

Table 11. Case 1 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors		(F) <i>Factor</i> (B) <i>Behavior</i> (C) <i>Characteristic</i> (T) <i>Trait</i>

Source: Created by author.

Table 12. Case 1 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors		

Source: Created by author

Table 13. Case 2 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace		(F) <i>Factor</i> (B) <i>Behavior</i> (C) <i>Characteristic</i> (T) <i>Trait</i>

Source: Created by author.

Table 14. Case 2 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace		

Source: Created by author.

Table 15. Case 3 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate		(F) <i>Factor</i> (B) <i>Behavior</i> (C) <i>Characteristic</i> (T) <i>Trait</i>

Source: Created by author.

Table 16. Case 3 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Device		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate		

Source: Created by author.

The author intends to use tables 11, 13, and 15 to extract and capture excerpts and quotes from the sources of evidence (Xu and Storr 2012, 9) listed in table 10 that describe toxic leadership themes i.e. toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits as explained in table 3 for each of the selected cases. These excerpts and/or quotes represent the data that will be collected from each of the case studies and will be inputted into the “Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote” column of the tables (Xu and Storr 2012, 9). Additionally, to better organize and manage the collected data from each case, this author employs the use of qualitative coding (Xu and Storr 2012, 9; Saldana 2016, 4).

According to qualitative coding researcher and author, Johnny Saldana “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (2016, 4). Aligning with Saldana’s definition of code in

the context of qualitative research, this author identifies the toxic leadership themes listed in table 3 as the descriptive codes that will be inputted in the column titled “Toxic Leadership Theme” in tables 11, 13, and 15 (Saldana 2016, 102).

Descriptive codes help summarize “in a word or short phrase...the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldana 2016, 102). Descriptive qualitative coding becomes useful for this study because it helps the author organize and summarize the large amount of data into words and short phrases (Saldana 2016, 102). Also due to the author’s inexperience with case study research qualitative coding becomes recommended for novice qualitative researchers due to its ease of use (Saldana 2016, 102). Additionally, descriptive coding helps identify and link comparable concepts and contents (Saldana 2016, 102).

While a number of coding methods can apply to organize and manage data (Saldana 2016, 70), this study’s research question and purpose of seeking to understand how dark triad traits can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership justify the use of applying the toxic leadership themes captured in table 3 as descriptive codes. As previously mentioned, the literature uses the terms factors, behaviors, characteristics and traits interchangeably to describe toxic leadership. Due to the interchangeability associated with these terms, this study groups these terms as toxic leadership themes (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41). However, to provide more specificity associated with the qualitative coding this study chooses to apply the individual components of these toxic leadership themes.

Applying toxic leadership themes of factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits separately as descriptive codes will better summarize the selected passages and excerpts

from the case studies, and serve as the means to illustrate the possible linkages of the perceived toxic leadership actions exhibited in the case studies to the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Therefore, descriptive coding through the use of the toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits listed in table 3 serves as the initial or first cycle coding method that helps the author initially organize and manage the collected data (Saldana 2016, 102).

In order to understand how the toxic leadership themes possibly relate to the dark triad personality traits, the author applies pattern coding as its second cycle coding method (Saldana 2016, 236) that builds on the first cycle descriptive coding to help identify within-case patterns that emerge from each individual case study (Yin 2018, 196). Pattern coding provides a way to group the summarized data from descriptive coding “into a smaller number of categories, themes, or concepts” (Saldana 2016, 236). Pattern codes serve as a unit of analysis that helps “identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation” (Saldana 2016, 236). Based on this definition, the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy serve as this study’s pattern codes (Saldana 2016, 236). The dark triad personality traits as pattern codes become defined using the dark triad trait descriptions and definitions listed in table 8.

Therefore, after completing the first cycle coding for each case and capturing the information in study’s first cycle coding data collection database tables (i.e. tables 11, 13, and 15) the author will use the identified toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and/or traits that help describe one or more of the dark triad personality

traits to identify any patterns (Saldana 2016, 237). The author illustrates this action by first identifying the pattern code (or codes) that best summarizes the identified toxic leadership themes and then places the pattern code (or codes) in the respective Dark Triad Trait column within the second cycle coding data collection database tables (i.e. tables 12, 14, and 16). This action will help show the possible linkages and similarities between the study's descriptive codes that consist of the toxic leadership themes described in table 3 and the study's pattern codes that involve the dark triad personality traits as defined in table 8 (Saldana 2016, 237).

Additionally, the use of pattern codes will help the author identify within-case patterns. Within-case patterns serve as those themes that arise from the data collected from each individual case (Yin 2018, 196). Therefore, the emergence and identification of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy as pattern codes that stem from the individual case's toxic leadership themes will serve as the within-case patterns that indicate the presence of these dark triad personality traits within the cases. Also, these within-case patterns become useful when trying to identify patterns across the three selected cases (Saldana 2016, 236; Yin 2018, 196). Table 17 provides an additional case study database table to help capture and summarize the across case patterns derived from the within-case patterns identified from each individual case study.

Table 17. Across Case Data Collection Device			
Case Studies	Dark Triad Traits		
	Presence of Machiavellianism (Y/N)	Presence of Narcissism (Y/N)	Presence of Psychopathy (Y/N)
Case 1- Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors			
Case 2 - Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace			
Case 3 - Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate			

Source: Created by author.

Table 17 uses the information from the second cycle coding data collection database tables (i.e. tables 12, 14, and 16) that identify the presence or emergence of dark triad personality traits within each of the individual cases. It then captures the within-case patterns from each case by simply marking a “Y” for yes and “N” for no to indicate if dark triad personality traits were present in the case studies or not. Table 17 will help the author compare and contrast the within-case patterns of each case to determine if any relationships regarding the presence or emergence of dark triad personality traits existed among the three selected cases (Yin 2018, 196).

Maintaining a Chain of Evidence

Yin’s third principle of data collection involves maintaining a chain of evidence in order to help improve the study’s construct validity (2018, 134). The purpose of maintaining a chain of evidence helps ensure that the research question logically links to

the case study's findings (Yin 2018, 134). This becomes achieved by first demonstrating to the reader that the study's research question connects to the study's topic (Yin 2018, 135). The logical linking continues by linking the study's topic to citations, excerpts, and quotes from the sources of evidence (Yin 2018, 135). These excerpts and quotes from the sources of evidence become captured and illustrated in the study's case study databases and ultimately become analyzed and explained in the study's findings (Yin 2018, 135). The author adhering to Yin's logical research design helps ensure that a chain of evidence becomes maintained (2018, 134).

As explained in the earlier sections of this chapter, the study's research question receives support and is undergirded by an exhaustive literature review that links the defined research question to the study's topics of interest regarding dark triad personality traits and toxic leadership (Yin 2018, 134). The identified sources of documentation and archival record listed in table 10 help provide evidence to the study's selected topics (Yin 2018, 134). Tables 11 through 13 will help capture and illustrate the citations from the sources of evidence and serve as the study's case study databases (Yin 2018, 135). The data compiled in tables 11 through 13 will aid in identifying patterns when applying the study's chosen cross-case synthesis analytic technique that will help inform the study's findings (Yin 2018, 135).

Caution when Using Secondary Data Sources

The fourth principle associated with Yin's data collection procedures involves case study researchers applying caution when collecting data from social media sources (2018, 136). Since this study's primary source of evidence comes from news articles produced by media outlets it requires the author to verify the credibility of these media

outlets (Yin 2018, 136). Specifically, for this study the selected news articles were generated by credible and well respected media outlets such as Time magazine and United States Military news sources such as Navy and Military Times. Additionally, the use of these news articles and the one command investigation report that serves as this study's archival record highlight the caution in using secondary data sources (Yin 2018, 136).

Secondary data becomes defined as "data collected by others, not specifically for the research question at hand" (Cowton 1998, 424). The news articles and command investigation report included as sources of evidence for this study provide data that initially was not collected for this study's research question and justify their categorization as secondary data sources (Cowton 1998, 424). The use of secondary data sources has evolved into an accepted practice within the research community due the benefits associated with its use (Johnston 2014, 619). One primary advantage of using secondary data sources involves its low cost (Cowton 1998, 427). Secondary data sources such as the news articles included in this study are free and publically available at no financial cost (Cowton 1998, 427). Another benefit of using secondary data is it saves the research time from going out to collect data such as conducting interviews or focus groups since secondary data sources uses previously collected data (Greenhoot and Dowsett 2012, 4).

However, using secondary data sources comes with its own set of challenges and disadvantages (Cowton 1998, 424; Willms 2011, 27). The main disadvantage of using secondary data sources consists of the researcher not having any control over how the original data was collected, which can raise issues regarding the data's validity and

accuracy (Greenhoot and Dowsett 2012, 5). Also, since the data in secondary data sources were previously collected for a different purpose other than the current research study the data may not apply nor be suitable for the current study (Greenhoot and Dowsett 2012, 5).

Some of the disadvantages and challenges associated with using social media and secondary data sources can be mitigated, such as verifying the credibility of the social media outlets being used as sources (Yin 2018, 136). However, other disadvantages such as the validity and accuracy of the previously collected data associated with secondary data sources goes beyond the researcher's control and should be indicated as a research limitation (Simon and Goes 2013, 2). The next section describes how the study intends to analyze the collected data.

Data Analysis Procedures: Cross-Case Synthesis

Since this study includes more than two cases, Yin's cross-case synthesis analysis technique becomes appropriate and encouraged (2018, 194). The cross-case synthesis works by establishing patterns by "aggregating findings across a series of individual studies" (Yin 2018, 196). However, an important aspect when conducting cross-case synthesis involves the application of a case-based approach (Yin 2018, 196). Yin defined a case-based approach as the use of a synthesis technique with the goal of retaining the integrity of each individual case by first assessing and identifying patterns within each case before comparing or synthesizing the within-case patterns to the other selected cases (2018, 196). In other words, when conducting cross-case synthesis the researcher first draws conclusions based on the identified within-case patterns of each individual case

and then compares those conclusions/findings from each individual case across all cases in order to identify overall patterns of events and themes (Yin 2018, 196).

The goal of cross-case synthesis justifies why this study uses initially three separate case study database tables (refer to tables 11 through 13) because it helps facilitate treating each case as its own event, encourages analyzing each case separately, and helps increase and retain individual case integrity (Yin 2018, 196). The use of table 17 helps summarize the within-case patterns captured in tables 12, 14, and 16. It also helps identify the across case patterns from all three cases that can help generate findings and conclusions that will help answer the study's research question (Yin 2018, 196).

Assumptions

According to researchers Dr. Marilyn Simon and Dr. Jim Goes, assumptions become necessary in research studies as they help move the study forward (2013, 1). This assertion becomes supported by the previous discussion regarding the use of case study propositions (Yin 2018, 27). Therefore, for the purposes of this study the propositions listed in the propositions section of this chapter serve also as these study's assumptions. These propositions/assumptions become confirmed or disproven during data analysis (Simon and Goes 2013, 1; Yin 2018, 28).

Another assumption involves the accuracy and validity of the secondary data sources used as sources of evidence i.e. news articles and command investigation report in this study (Simon and Goes 2013, 1). This author assumes that the individuals interviewed during the command investigation reports that the news articles are based on provided truthful statements regarding their experiences and perceptions of toxic leadership by their United State Navy leaders. This assumption becomes supported by the

fact that the names and identities of those interviewed were kept confidential, which helps increase the likelihood of witnesses to offer truthful testimonies without facing fears of retribution (Simon and Goes 2013, 1).

Limitations

Study limitations involve research constraints beyond the researcher's control (Simon and Goes 2013, 1). As stated earlier, the accuracy and validity associated with the data already collected and included in the secondary data sources used for this study go beyond this author's control. Therefore, this author makes the assumption regarding the validity of the data and that witnesses to the toxic leadership events provided truthful testimonies that accurately captured their experiences. Also, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter a common critique and concern regarding the use of case study research involves the inability to generalize from case study findings (Yin 2018, 20).

Although, Yin argued that similar to other quantitative studies case study findings can be generalized theoretically, but “not to populations or universes” (2018, 20). Therefore, the generalization of this study's findings not only serves as a limitation, but becomes inappropriate because case study research by its design is not intended to be generalized to populations (Yin 2018, 20). However, the findings from this study can help fill the gap in the literature and serve to add to the theory of the toxic leadership and the possibility of dark triad traits serving as antecedents or causes to this phenomenon (Yin 2018, 20).

Also, since this study applies the case study research methodology and not an experimental design it becomes limited in its ability to generate a cause and effect relationship regarding the study's topics of interest involving dark triad personality traits

and toxic leadership (Yin 2018, 21). The limitation to infer a cause and effect relationship also becomes supported by the small number of cases included in this study (Yin 2018, 21). Therefore, this study continues to emphasize that it does not intend to establish a definitive causal relationship between dark triad personality traits and toxic leadership, but instead suggests the possibility of dark triad traits potentially serving as antecedents or causes to toxic leadership.

Another limitation associated with this study involves the amount of time and resources available to actually conduct the study (Patton 2015, 258). The ten month timeline to complete this study serve as a time constraint beyond the author's control and imposed limitations in the types of research methodology to employ, the sources of evidence to include, and the way to conduct data collection. For example, the ten month time allotted to conduct this study does not afford the opportunity to conduct a longitudinal study that spans a number of years (Patton 2015, 256) or does not provide enough time to collect data through participant-observation (Yin 2018, 121) or in depth prolonged case study interviews (Yin 2018, 119).

Additionally, due to privacy laws and regulations the author cannot access the official inspector general investigation reports regarding Case 1 involving the removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors and Case 2 that deals with the resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace since these investigation reports were not made publically available. The author submitted requests through the Department of the Navy to receive a copy of these investigation reports but received no response. However, due to the ten month timeline to complete this study the author mitigated the lack of receiving the official investigation

reports and decided to use news articles that summarized the findings of these investigation reports. The author recognizes the disadvantage with using these secondary data sources and exercised caution by ensuring that the news articles included in this study came from credible news outlets (Yin 2018, 136).

Delimitations

A study's delimitations include the choices a researcher makes regarding the study's selected research problem, theoretical frameworks, research design, etc. (Simon and Goes 2013, 2). The delimitations applicable to this study were previously discussed in this chapter's section that defined and bounded the study's cases (Yin 2018, 28-31). However, a summary of that information is provided here. The study defines cases as events that describe follower and subordinate perceptions of behaviors of toxic leaders in the United States Navy and the possibility of the dark triad personality traits being present in these events. The selected events become bounded to publically reported events of toxic leadership committed by United States Navy leaders from 2010 to 2018 and focuses in on reports made by credible news media outlets where allegations of leader toxicity and its associated components became investigated and substantiated.

Additionally, based on this study's purpose which focuses on toxic leaders in the United States Navy and argues that dark personality traits exhibited by these United States Navy individuals may serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership this study intentionally only focuses on the toxic leadership phenomenon and its occurrence in the United States Navy. Therefore, it does not examine other dark leadership constructs and their emergence in other United States military branches. Also, as mentioned in the literature review chapter of this study, due to this author's limited

knowledge and lack of professional expertise regarding the clinical application of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* it only becomes referenced and not employed. In other words, this author does not intend to diagnose personality disorders from the selected case studies (Goldman 2006a, 393). Instead, the author seeks to determine if the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy were present in these cases and serve as possible linkages to perceived toxic leadership behaviors.

Ethical Assurances

This study does not include any human subject participation, so receiving informed consent (Cozby and Bates 2018, 49) does not apply. Additionally, the names and identities of witnesses included in the sources of evidence used for this study have been redacted and remain confidential. The identities of witnesses helps ensure adherence to the respect for persons research ethical principle that requires researchers to “respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination” (Cozby and Bates 2018, 51). Also, the author continues to adhere to ethical principles associated with conducting research to ensure a high level of integrity and truthfulness in the collection of data, analysis, presentation of findings, and the documentation/citing of sources to avoid plagiarism and minimize misrepresentation (Cozby and Bates 2018, 50).

Another ethical consideration involves the role of the researcher in regards to qualitative inquiry (Creswell and Creswell 2018, 183). In qualitative research the researcher serves as the instrument to analyze data (Creswell and Creswell 2018, 181). Therefore, the quality of the data analysis becomes dependent upon the researcher’s skills

(Creswell and Creswell 2018, 181). To ensure transparency, this author admits to being a novice qualitative case study researcher and therefore does not possess a great amount of skill or depth in the conduct of case study research. As a way to mitigate and compensate for the lack of experience and skill, this author applies Yin's well-structured and logical approach to case study research that provides step by step instructions to help the author complete the case study with the highest forms of reliability and validity (2018, 14). Also, the researcher applies Saldana's descriptive coding method to help organize and analyze the collected data, which serves as a suitable coding method for novice qualitative researchers (2016, 102).

In regards to researcher bias, this author recognizes the impact previous experience can have in shaping and formulating interpretations of the study's findings (Creswell and Creswell 2018, 184). In order to mitigate the negative impact of research bias, the author employs Yin's multiple sources of evidence data collection principle in order to achieve data triangulation to increase validity of the study's findings (2018, 126). Also, the author approaches the study with an adversary-advocacy mindset (Patton 2015, 655) and takes into account alternative and rival explanations that the study will use to compare against the findings from the data analysis to further build credibility to the study's conclusions (Yin 2018, 33).

Summary

This chapter provided information regarding how the author intends to carry out this study to answer the study's research question. It provided a general overview regarding the conduct of qualitative research and information about the selected realism qualitative inquiry framework (Patton 2015, 112). It then discussed the application of the

case study research design methodology, the various case study approaches (Yazan 2015, 134), and justified the selection of Yin's case study method that becomes appropriate for this study due to the benefit of its well-structured and logical approach that helps guide the author as a novice case study researcher (2018, 62).

It continued by explaining the criteria that helped define and bound the study's cases that resulted in the selection and inclusion of three cases for this study which involve the following:

Case 1: The removal of Captain Holly Graf as the Commanding Officer of the Japan based, cruiser, the United States Ship Cowpens in January 2010 due to substantiated toxic leadership behaviors of "demeaning, humiliating, publically belittling and verbally assaulting...subordinates while in command of *Cowpens*" (Thompson 2010).

Case 2: The resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano in June 2018 amid allegations of creating a toxic workplace environment (Faram 2018, 2019; Harkins 2019).

Case 3: The suicide of Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco onboard the Norfolk, Virginia, based destroyer, the United States Ship James E. Williams in June 2014 that stemmed from toxic behaviors exhibited by the ship's Chief Petty Officers who were enabled by the lack of involvement and disregard from the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief, which led to the creation of a toxic command culture and climate based on "fear and intimidation" (Simmons 2014, 003; Rockett 2014).

The chapter continued by describing the study's data collection procedures by first identifying documentation and archival records serving as the multiples sources of evidence that this study intends to collect data from (Yin 2018, 114). It then provided a discussion regarding the use of tables 11 through 17 that serve as the study's case study database tables that aid the author in organizing and managing the data (Yin 2018, 130). In addition to the use of descriptive (Saldana 2016, 102) and pattern coding (Saldana 2016, 236) as the first and second coding cycle methods to further aid in organization and management of collected data.

It presented a section to discuss the selected cross-case synthesis analysis technique that will be used to analyze and determine the within-case patterns that will ultimately be used to identify across case patterns that will inform the study's findings (Yin 2018, 196). The chapter concluded with a discussion regarding the study's assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances. The next chapter goes over the findings from the conducted data collection and analysis procedures. It also provides the study's evaluations of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Toxic leaders in the United States military negatively impact the organizations and followers they lead (Reed 2004, 67; Lipman-Blumen 2005, 29). Although a number of studies explored the negative consequences associated with toxic leadership in the United States military (see Di Geno 2002, 14; Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy 2002, 1070; Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Schmidt 2008, 14; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, 58; Steele 2011, 8; Aubrey 2012, 1; Mueller 2012, 251; Gallus et al. 213, 590; Hannah et al. 2013, 584; Schmidt 2014, 2; Johnson 2018, 3) it becomes important to gain deeper insight regarding the antecedents or causes that can contribute to the emergence of toxic leadership in the United States military. Dr. George Reed's previous research regarding toxic leadership in the United States military helped guide this study through his assertion that "a personality or interpersonal technique" (2004, 67) serves as a key element to toxic leadership. Building on Dr. Reed's assertion, the purpose of this qualitative case study involved investigating toxic leadership in the United States Navy and the possible relationship to dark triad personality traits.

Based on this study's purpose it sought to answer the research question: How do the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy? To answer this research question the study collected data from three case studies involving United States Navy toxic leaders. This chapter presents the findings and analysis from the data collected from the selected case studies. Applying Yin's case-based approach to multiple case studies (2018, 196) this chapter first provides individual

sections for each case. Each section examines the selected cases and consists of a summary, findings, and evaluation of findings subsections for each individual case. The chapter concludes with a section that discusses the findings and evaluations from the selected cross-case synthesis analysis technique that helped identify patterns common across all three cases (Yin 2018, 194) that helped answer the study's research question.

Case 1: Removal of Captain Holly Graf from Command of United States Ship Cowpens due to Toxic Behaviors

In January 2010, Navy Captain Holly Graf was relieved of her command at Admiral's Mast as the Commanding Officer of the United States Ship Cowpens, a United States warship stationed in Yokosuka, Japan, amid allegations of cruelty and maltreatment of her Sailors (Slavin 2010). A Navy inspector general report concluded that Graf consistently verbally abused her crew while serving in the position as the Commanding Officer of the United States Ship Cowpens (Thompson 2010; Slavin 2010). The Navy inspector general report (not publically released) included accounts from Sailors onboard Cowpens who claimed that Graf created an environment based on tyranny, fear, and abuse (Thompson 2010).

Sailors made statements in the report indicating that Graf belittled subordinates, constantly screamed, used an obscene and unnecessary amount of profanity, and showed no regard for her subordinates (Thompson 2010). One Sailor even went so far to report that Graf's actions not only showed a complete disregard for her subordinates, but Graf vocalized such sentiments and told her subordinates that she hated them (Thompson 2010). The report exposed Graf and her toxicity, which eventually led to her removal

from command and the ending of her naval career. For additional information regarding the removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors please refer to appendix A.

Case-Based Findings: Case 1

After reviewing the case information regarding the leader toxicity exhibited by Graf, the author identified quotes and excerpts from the selected sources of evidence that aligned with toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics and traits summarized in table 3 that helped describe toxic leaders. In order to better organize and summarize the meaning from these selected quotes and excerpts the author applied descriptive coding as a first cycle coding method (Saldana 2016, 102) using the toxic leadership themes i.e. elements that comprise toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41).

Please refer to table 25 in appendix D that illustrates the selected quotes, excerpts, and assigned descriptive codes that summarize the toxicity Graf demonstrated. Table 18 provides a summary of the descriptive codes used to describe Graf's toxic actions.

Table 18. Summary of Case 1 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	
Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Neglect for well-being of subordinates (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Destructive (F) Unwilling to develop others (F) Over-controlling (F) Dominant (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (F) Arrogant (F) Narrow minded, unable to see big picture (B) Shaming (B) Demeaning	(B) Humiliates others (B) Uses authority to punish others (B) Using physical acts of aggression (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent (B) Is clueless that they are toxic to others (B) Threatening employee's job security (C) Malicious (C) Arrogance (T) Ineffective

Source: Created by author.

Within table 18, “F” refers to toxic leadership factors, “B” refers to toxic leadership behaviors, “C” refers to toxic leadership characteristics, and “T” refers to toxic leadership traits. For presentation purposes, these letters representing the toxic leadership themes remain the same for the findings in the other cases included in this study.

Again descriptive codes help identify and link comparable concepts and contents (Saldana 2016, 102). Therefore, to accomplish the study’s purpose and answer its research question regarding the possible connection between toxic leadership and the dark triad personality traits it uses pattern coding as its second cycle method (Saldana 2016, 236). Applying a pattern coding method helps further refine and organize the identified descriptive codes listed in table 18 in a way that aligns with the descriptions and associated characteristics of the dark personality triad traits as described in table 8. The applied pattern coding findings for Case 1 is presented in table 19.

Table 19. Case 1 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Narrow minded, unable to see big picture (F) Unwilling to develop others (B) Distrusts the opinions of others	Machiavellianism
	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Arrogant (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (F) Dominant (B) Uses authority to punish others (C) Arrogance (C) Malicious	Narcissism
	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Neglect for well-being of subordinates (F) Narrow minded, unable to see big picture (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Destructive (F) Unwilling to develop others (B) Using physical acts of aggression (C) Malicious (T) Ineffective	Psychopathy

Source: Created by author.

Case-Based Evaluation of Findings: Case 1

Subordinates and followers of Graf perceived her actions as toxic (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010). This statement becomes supported by a comment made in the investigation report by one of Graf's followers saying, "[Graf] creates an environment of fear and hostility [and] frequently humiliates and belittles watch standers by screaming at them with profanities in front of the Combat Information Center and bridge-watch teams" (Thompson 2010). Additionally, the investigation concluded that "Graf violated Navy regulations, 'by demeaning, humiliating, publicly belittling and verbally assaulting...subordinates while in command of *Cowpens*'" (Thompson 2010). Graf's substantiated actions of toxicity aligned with a number of toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits. Specifically, Graf's actions exhibited a clear lack of concern for subordinates (Reed 2004, 67; 2014, 4); emphasized behaviors of humiliation (Kusy and Holloway 2009, 25), demeaning others, and the use of physical aggression (Pelletier 2010, 375); became characterized as malicious (Williams 2005, 4; Davis 2016, 5); and was deemed overall ineffective (Kellerman 2004, 43) in her position as the Commanding Officer of Cowpens.

As illustrated in table 19, the toxic leadership themes that described and summarized Graf's actions encompassed all three dark personality triad traits. However, the majority of the toxic leadership themes describing Graf's actions most aligned with the dark personality triad trait of psychopathy. This finding supports the assertion that the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy share

similarities, overlap, and relate to each other but there are enough differences among the traits to consider each trait as its own separate and distinct construct (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140).

Graf's toxic leadership actions aligning the most with the psychopathy dark triad personality trait becomes supported by reports made by her followers on how she "regularly berated both officers and senior ranking chief petty officers in front of enlisted sailors" (Slavin 2010). Again, psychopathy becomes described as "a personality trait characterized by enduring antisocial behavior, diminished empathy and remorse, and disinhibited or bold behavior" (Muris et al. 2017, 184). It also involves high impulsivity, failure to conform to social norms and laws, deceitful, fails to plan ahead, irritable, aggressive, lack of concern for others, irresponsible, and inconsistent (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206; Strickland et al. 2013, 328; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168; Muris et al. 2017, 184).

Graf's repeated verbal abuse of her followers coupled with her demonstrations of physical aggression (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010) exhibited her lack of empathy and remorse, her lack of concern for her subordinates, and her inability to conform to social norms and laws (Smith and Lilienfeld 2013, 206; Strickland et al. 2013, 328; Cheang and Appelbaum 2015a, 168; Muris et al. 2017, 184). One can argue that Graf's actions of being controlling and dominant can justify her actions as aligning with the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism and narcissism. However, the data showed that Graf's perceived toxic actions mostly emphasized elements that aligned with the dark triad personality trait of psychopathy more than Machiavellianism and narcissism. Therefore, the findings from Case 1 supports the assertion that a relationship does exist

between toxic leadership and the dark personality triad traits. Case 1 illustrated that Graf's toxic actions resulted in the emergence and presence of all three dark triad personality traits, but particularly emphasized the psychopathy dark triad trait.

Case 2: Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a Result of Fostering a Toxic Workplace

On June 21, 2018, Steven Giordano the 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the United States Navy's most senior enlisted leader, unexpectedly and abruptly resigned amid allegations of toxicity and fostering a hostile work environment (Seck 2018). Giordano took over as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy in September 2016 and during his tenure a high volume of employee turnover occurred (Faram 2018). Speculations regarding the high turnover rate included claims that the turnover resulted from individual employee personal reasons for voluntary transfer or separation (Faram 2018). But others claimed that it stemmed from Giordano's abusive and toxic leadership.

The Navy's office of the inspector general recently concluded its investigation in April 2019 (not publically released) into these allegations and complaints, and found that Giordano "failed to exhibit exemplary conduct" (Faram 2019). The inspector general report also included the testimonies of active duty Navy members who worked for and knew Giordano characterized him as an individual with an uncontrollable temper who bullied, belittled, and berated his subordinates (Faram, 2018; 2019; Harkin 2019). Additionally, while Giordano filled the position of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, his subordinates noticed that Giordano began to overly fixate and obsess over the perquisites that came with his position to the point that he believed and insisted that he receive the same level of privileges given to a three-star flag (i.e. admiral)/general officer

(Faram 2018). For additional information regarding the resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Giordano regarding the fostering of a toxic workplace please refer to appendix B.

Case-Based Findings: Case 2

The author collected data from Case 2 by selecting quotes and excerpts that captured Giordano's toxic actions as perceived by his followers and subordinates. These quotes and excerpts also became summarized using descriptive codes (Saldana 2016, 102) that involved the toxic leadership themes (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41) or the elements of toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics and traits that help describe toxic leaders. Please refer to table 26 in appendix D that illustrates the selected quotes, excerpts, and assigned descriptive codes that summarize the toxicity Giordano demonstrated. Table 20 provides a summary of the descriptive codes used to describe Giordano's toxic actions.

Table 20. Summary of Case 2 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings				
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes			
Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Unpredictability (F) Demeaning (F) Arrogant (F) Self-serving (F) Narcissistic (F) Self-serving misguided values (F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (F) Unable to delegate or prioritize (F) Being reactive rather than proactive	(F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture (F) Mistrust in people (F) Feelings of inadequacy (F) Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion (F) Driven primarily by self-interest (F) Over-controlling (B) Dominant (B) Forcing people to endure hardships (B) Demonstrates passive-aggressive behaviors (B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (B) Threatening employees' job security	(B) Presenting toxic agenda as noble visions (B) Blaming others for mistakes (B) Using physical acts of aggression (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent (B) Demeaning (B) Passive hostility (B) Demonstrates passive-aggressive behaviors (B) Humiliates others (B) Ignoring comments/ideas	(C) Malicious (C) Deception (C) Narcissism (C) Egotism (C) Arrogance (C) Selfish values (C) Lack of integrity (T) Intemperate (T) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective (T) Corrupt

Source: Created by author.

As in Case 1, the author applied pattern codes as the second cycle coding method (Saldana 2016, 236) to organize the descriptive codes listed in table 20 to determine the emergence or presence of dark triad personality traits based on the toxic leadership actions conducted by Giordano. The findings associated with the applied pattern coding for Case 2 is presented in table 21.

Table 21. Case 2 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Mistrust in people (F) Driven primarily by self-interest (F) Being reactive rather than proactive (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (C) Deception	Machiavellianism
	(F) Arrogant (F) Self-serving (F) Narcissistic (F) Self-serving misguided values (F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (F) Feelings of inadequacy (F) Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion (F) Driven primarily by self-interest (B) Dominant (B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (B) Presenting toxic agenda as noble visions (B) Ignoring comments/ideas (C) Narcissism (C) Egotism (C) Arrogance (C) Selfish values	Narcissism
	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Being reactive rather than proactive (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture (C) Deception (T) Intemperate (T) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective (T) Corrupt	Psychopathy

Source: Created by author.

Case-Based Evaluation of Findings: Case 2

Giordano's followers described him as someone with a "ferocious...horrific and unpredictable temper" (Faram 2018) who became quickly irritated and displayed a "bombastic – and at times abusive...bullying leadership style" (Faram 2018). As shown in table 20 Giordano's actions embodied a number of the toxic leadership themes, which provides support to the Navy inspector general report's conclusion that Giordano failed to set an exemplary example (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019). Specifically, the reported indicated the following:

[Giordano] yelling at Sailors, using profanity towards them and making jokes at their expense is not a good example of virtuous behavior, does not promote the general welfare of the enlisted persons under MCPON's [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] charge, and has the capability to erode any trust and confidence that the sailors may currently possess for the MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] office. (Harkins 2019)

Therefore, the Navy inspector general report's conclusion substantiated the allegations regarding Giordano's toxic actions that created a toxic workplace environment for his followers and subordinates (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019).

Again, the numerous amount of toxic leadership themes used to describe Giordano's actions coupled with the conclusions from the investigation report provide support to Giordano being considered a toxic leader. However, in order to derive more meaning from the assigned toxic leadership themes the study's pattern coding as shown in table 21 helped organize and group the toxic leadership themes in such a manner to determine that Giordano's toxic actions also aligned to the characteristics and components that describe the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. While table 21 presents the finding that all the toxic leadership themes that summarized Giordano's toxic actions relate to all three dark triad

personality traits it also illustrates that the majority of the toxic leadership themes describe and relate to the dark triad trait of narcissism.

Again, narcissism becomes defined as “the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one’s own attributes...that negatively impacts relationships with other people” (Muris et al. 2017, 184). Additionally, narcissism becomes described and associated with terms such as grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, superiority, self-centeredness, lack of empathy, arrogant, requires excessive admiration, exploitive, and manipulative (Grijalva et al. 2015, 2; Muris et al. 2017, 184). Although one can argue that reports from Giordano’s followers regarding his abusive yelling and unpredictable temper justifies Giordano’s toxic actions better aligning with the dark triad trait of psychopathy, examining the quotes and excerpts that followers used to describe Giordano’s toxicity provide support to the finding of Giordano’s toxic actions aligning and relating the most with narcissism.

For example, one follower described working for Giordano “was like working for a pop star or Hollywood diva” (Faram 2018), which alluded to Giordano’s need for attention, entitlement, his followers perceiving him as high-maintenance, and Giordano thinking he was superior to them (Faram 2018). Another follower reported how Giordano would “yell over your attempts to calmly repeat your position on a matter or issue and he’ll try to bully or belittle you into agreeing with him” (Faram 2018). This statement provides support to the Giordano’s dominant nature.

Additionally, a follower commented on the frustration from the staff based on Giordano’s emphasis on focus on the privileges associated with his position and stated, ““The staff’s frustration was that these privileges became the focus...We could not figure

out where was the humility in the Navy's top chief petty officer. We truly thought he had forgotten where he came from, and in his own mind, had become a flag officer" (Faram 2018). This statement helps explain the negative relationship that occurred between Giordano and his staff and followers as a result of his pompous and self-serving tendencies. Therefore, the findings from Case 2 supports the assertion that a relationship does exist between toxic leadership and the dark personality triad traits. Case 2 illustrated that Giordano's toxic actions resulted in the emergence and presence of all three dark triad personality traits, but particularly emphasized the narcissism dark triad trait.

Case 3: Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a Result of a Toxic Climate

In June 2014, Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco, a 23 year old female Sailor, committed suicide (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 008). An investigation conducted by the United States Navy determined that the toxic leadership exhibited by the ship's Chief Petty Officers enabled by the lack of involvement and disregard from the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief (i.e. ship's senior enlisted advisor) created a toxic command culture and climate based on "fear and intimidation" (Simmons 2014, 003) onboard the Norfolk, Virginia, based destroyer, the United States Ship James E. Williams (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002).

The Chief Petty Officers targeted junior Sailors like Seaman Villot-Carrasco and bullied, belittled, demeaned, abused, assaulted, and demoralized them (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002). Specifically, Seaman Villot-Carrasco before taking her own life by overdosing with Unisom sleep aid medication reached out for help for feelings of being singled out, being treated unfairly, and difficulties integrating with the ship's crew due to rumors being spread about her being romantically involved with another crewmember

(Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 008). However, her plea for help received disciplinary action when Villot-Carrasco's supervisor learned that "she wanted to file an equal opportunity (EO) complaint" (Simmons 2014, 009). This toxic workplace environment coupled with the perceived unfair treatment by Seaman Villot-Carrasco's immediate supervisors drove her to commit suicide during the first month of the ship's eight month deployment (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 010). For additional information regarding the suicide of Seaman Villot-Carrasco due to a toxic climate please refer to appendix C.

Case-Based Findings: Case 3

The data collected data from Case 3 includes quotes and excerpts that described follower perceptions regarding the controlling and manipulative nature of the Chief Petty Officers onboard the United States Ship James E. Williams (Simmons 2014, 083-4). It also includes the investigation reports conclusion regarding the Chief Petty Officers' "culture of retribution" (Simmons 2014, 024) that became enabled based on the inactions and/or ignorance from the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief.

To help ensure the reliability regarding the study's methodology, these quotes and excerpts also became summarized using descriptive codes (Saldana 2016, 102) that involved the toxic leadership themes (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41) or the elements of toxic leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits that help describe toxic leaders. Please refer to table 27 in appendix D that illustrates the selected quotes, excerpts, and assigned descriptive codes that summarize the toxicity of the Chief Petty Officers and the inaction from ship's top three key leaders that created a toxic climate

onboard of James E. Williams. Table 22 provides a summary of the descriptive codes used to describe these toxic actions.

Table 22. Summary of Case 3 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings	
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes
Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Self-serving (F) Demeaning (F) Lack of concern for subordinates (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (B) Points out the mistakes of others (B) Humiliates others (B) Ostracizing/disenfranchising employees (B) Shaming (C) Selfish values (C) Irresponsible (C) Egotism (T) Ineffective (T) Corrupt

Source: Created by author.

To ensure continued reliability regarding the study's case study research methodology and procedures, the author again applied pattern codes as the second cycle coding method (Saldana 2016, 236) to organize the descriptive codes listed in table 22 to determine the emergence or presence of dark triad personality traits based on the toxic leadership actions conducted by James E. Williams' Chief Petty Officers and key leaders. The findings associated with the applied pattern coding for Case 3 is presented in table 23.

Table 23. Case 3 Second Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Themes	Dark Triad Traits
Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (B) Humiliates others (B) Ostracizing/disenfranchising employees (B) Shaming (F) Self-serving	Machiavellianism
	(F) Self-serving (C) Selfish values (C) Egotism	Narcissism
	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (C) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective (T) Corrupt	Psychopathy

Source: Created by author.

Case-Based Evaluation of Findings: Case 3

The investigation into the suicide of Seaman Villot-Carrasco yielded a 315 page investigation that reviewed and included testimonies from 65 witnesses familiar with the incident (Rocket 2014; Simmons 2014, 012). A number of witness testimonies attributed Seaman Villot-Carrasco's suicide to her being unfairly treated because of her size and gender and because of "poor command climate" (Simmons 2014, 019). Sailors interviewed in the investigation described the ship's poor command climate being one of fear (Simmons 2014, 178). Testimonies indicated that the source of the poor command climate resulted from the actions of the Chief Petty Officers (Simmons 2014, 023).

The Chief Petty Officers onboard James E. Williams were perceived as being on a "power trip" (Simmons 2014, 023) and who were allowed "free reign to impose discipline without effective oversight" (Simmons 2014, 024). This perception of the

Chief Petty Officers onboard James E. Williams being able to do whatever they pleased generated the impression among Sailors that the Chief Petty Officers were not approachable and could not be trusted. Additionally, many of the James E. Williams Sailors, particularly the junior enlisted, did not feel comfortable going to the Chief Petty Officers with their complaints and problems “for fear of retribution” (Simmons 2014, 022, 120).

The Sailors’ perceptions regarding the Chief Petty Officers’ abuse of power and leading by fear, reprisal, and retribution became reinforced by the perceived inaction from the ship’s Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief to intervene and correct such actions or clarify these negative perceptions (Simmons 2014, 002). Based on these witness testimonies and negative perceptions regarding James E. Williams’ Chief Petty Officers and key leaders the investigation report recommended that Commander Curtis Calloway, James E. Williams’ Commanding Officer, “be held accountable at nonjudicial punishment (NJP)” (Simmons 2014, 002). The report continued stating the following:

As the CO [Commanding Officer] CDR [Commander] Calloway owned the culture on board USS [United States Ship] James E. Williams. He failure to hold CPOs [Chief Petty Officers] accountable, including the CMC [Command Master Chief], enabled a culture that empowered CPOs [Chief Petty Officers] to target, belittle, and bully junior Sailors. CDR [Commander] Calloway was either willfully blind to problems on board his ship or he was in an extremely negligent state of denial. He owned the culture that, I believe, contributed to the suicide of (redacted) [Seaman Villot-Carrasco]. (Simmons 2014, 002)

The investigation report’s recommendation receives support from a Sailor’s testimony who also attributed Seaman Villot-Carrasco’s suicide to the toxic climate created by the leadership onboard James E. Williams:

I [witness] believe that the result of (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] suicide was of hazing, terrible leadership, horrible quality of life, unfair treatment, and isolation from the rest of the division. (redacted) has fostered a climate of fear, unfair treatment by the petty officer ranks, and a complete and utter failure on the part of (redacted) and the second classes [E5 paygrade members] (redacted) to take care of their sailors...Her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] death is on their hands and I [witness] hope that this report sheds light upon the horrid quality of leadership among our [James E. Williams] Chiefs and Petty Officers. (Simmons 2014, 083-4)

While this testimony becomes considered very emotionally charged it becomes corroborated by other witness testimonies that described the climate of fear, reprisal, and retribution as a result of the actions by the Chief Petty Officers (see Simmons 2014, 024, 120, 178-9, 186, 190, 191, 210, 213, 236, 238, 244, 246, 294).

Based on the testimonies provided by the Sailors interviewed in the investigation of Seaman Villot-Carrasco's suicide the toxic leadership themes listed in table 22 become assigned to summarize these negative perceptions regarding the Chief Petty Officers and the inaction by the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief. It becomes worth noting that the toxic leadership factor of unable to build teams (Hogan and Hogan 2001, 41) and the toxic leadership trait of ineffective (Kellerman 2004, 43) summarizes the investigation report's conclusion regarding the ship's top three leadership's inability to properly correct the problems associated with the negative climate onboard (Simmons 2014, 002).

Also, the toxic leadership behaviors of coercion (Pelletier 2010, 375) and using authority to punish others (Kusy and Holloway 2009, 25) properly summarize the testimonies of a number of Sailors regarding the actions of the Chief Petty Officers and the climate of fear, reprisal, and retribution that they created and enforced (Simmons 2014, 002). These assigned toxic leadership behaviors also capture the actions by Seaman

Villot-Carrasco's Chief Petty Officer who retaliated against her when Seaman Villot-Carrasco wanted to file an equal opportunity complaint, which the investigation concluded being a key stressor that led her to commit suicide. Overall, the toxic leadership themes applied as descriptive codes that are listed in table 22 properly describe the actions conducted by James E. Williams' Chief Petty Officers as well as the inaction by the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief being described as toxic.

The use of the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy as pattern codes helped organized the toxic leadership themes listed in table 22. As illustrated in table 23 the toxic actions by the Chief Petty Officers and inaction by the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief to correct the toxic climate align with all three dark triad personality traits. However, the number of witness testimonies describing Chief Petty Officers being perceived as leading by fear, retribution, and reprisal highlight that the majority of the toxic leadership themes relating the most to the dark triad personality trait of Machiavellianism.

Again, Machiavellianism becomes described "as a duplicitous interpersonal style, characterized by cynical disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and personal gain" (Muris et al. 2017, 184). Machiavellianism also becomes associated with terms such as manipulative, harsh, deceitful, controlling, lack of affect in interpersonal relationships, lack of concern for conventional morality, short-sighted, distrustful, and self-interest (Drory and Gluskinos 1980, 81; Deluga 2001, 341; Kessler et al. 2010, 1869-70; Muris et al. 2017, 184). One can argue that the Chief Petty Officers being perceived

by their subordinates as not being concerned about their wellbeing as justification that their actions aligning more with psychopathy.

However, the feelings of distrust expressed by subordinates (Simmons 2014, 210) coupled with the number of negative perceptions regarding the Chief Petty Officers being primarily driven by self-interests (Simmons 2014, 237, 246); that they abused their power (Simmons 2014, 236), had free reign to discipline Sailors how they wanted with no oversight (Simmons 2014, 024), and created a climate of fear, reprisal, and retribution reinforced by coercion and manipulation (Simmons 2014, 002) provide more support and justification that the toxic actions by James E. Williams senior enlisted leaders aligned more with the dark triad trait of Machiavellianism.

Overall, the findings from Case 3 supports the assertion that a relationship does exist between toxic leadership and the dark personality triad traits. Case 3 illustrated that the toxic actions from the Chief Petty Officers and inaction by the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief created a toxic climate onboard James E. Williams and contributed to the suicide of Seaman Villot-Carrasco (Simmons 2014, 002). The findings demonstrated that such activities resulted in the emergence and presence of all three dark triad personality traits, but particularly emphasized the Machiavellianism dark triad trait.

Cross-Case Synthesis

Since this study includes multiple case studies it becomes appropriate to use the cross-case synthesis analysis technique (Yin 2018, 194). The cross-case synthesis analysis technique applies a case-based approach where the researcher focuses on first conducting an analysis of each case study separately to help “retain the integrity of the

entire case” (Yin 2018, 196) and identifies within-case patterns. These within-case patterns or findings from each individual case analysis then become used as a way to compare, contrast, and/or synthesize the findings among all the study’s analyzed cases (Yin 2018, 196). The three previous sections presented in this chapter illustrate the individual case study analysis and findings. The findings from the cross-case synthesis analysis become discussed next to show the relationships among all three cases, which helps answer the study’s research question.

Cross-Case Synthesis: Findings

In this section the author presents the findings after comparing, contrasting, and synthesizing the individual case findings (Yin 2018, 196). The cross-case synthesis findings are presented in table 24.

Table 24. Cross-Case Synthesis Findings			
Case Studies	Dark Triad Traits		
	Presence of Machiavellianism (Y/N)	Presence of Narcissism (Y/N.)	Presence of Psychopathy (Y/N)
Case 1 - Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors	Y	Y	Y
Case 2 - Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace	Y	Y	Y
Case 3 - Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of toxic climate	Y	Y	Y

Source: Created by author.

Table 24 captures the individual findings from the three case studies that this author examined and analyzed. Specifically, table 24 illustrates how all three cases studies that exhibited toxic leadership by United States Navy leaders all contained the presence of

dark triad personality traits. The evaluation of the study's finding becomes discussed below.

Cross-Case Synthesis: Evaluation of Findings

Again, the cross-case synthesis analysis determined that all three cases contained within them all of the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. This finding provides support to the relationship between the concepts of toxic leadership and the dark triad personality traits. Based on the study's findings that support the existence of a relationship between these two concepts, it answers the study's research question and determines that the dark personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership. It becomes important to point out that this author emphasizes the word "possible" to indicate that the study's findings do not and cannot establish a definitive cause and effect relationship between the dark triad personality traits and toxic leadership.

As discussed before, a limitation regarding the use of case study research methodology involves the inability to make inferences to greater populations (Yin 2018, 37). Therefore, it becomes inappropriate for the author to generalize and make claims that dark triad personality traits cause toxic leadership in all situations and settings because this study only examined three specific cases of toxic leadership exhibited by United States Navy leaders. Although the cross-case synthesis findings established a trend of dark triad traits being present in all three of these separate United States Navy toxic leadership case studies, the limited number of case studies used in this study does not

provide sufficient supporting evidence to justify generalizing the study's finding to the greater United States Navy population.

While it becomes inappropriate for this study to generalize its results to a specific population it does become appropriate for these findings to be analytically generalized. Analytic generalization involves “corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that [one] referenced in designing [one's] case study” (Yin 2018, 38). The findings from the cross-case synthesis provide corroborating support to the theories of toxic leadership and dark triad personality traits applied in the study's research design. First the author applied Reed's definition of toxic leadership in its research design that emphasized three key elements to describe the concept (2004, 67; 2014, 4). These three toxic leadership elements consisted of the following:

1. An apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates.
2. A personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate.
3. A conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self-interest. (Reed 2004, 67; 2014, 4)

The study's findings of determining the dark triad personality traits being present in all three cases where United States Navy leaders exhibited toxic leadership strengthens and corroborates Reed's assertion that “a personality or an interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate” (2004, 67; 2014, 4) serves as a key element of toxic leadership.

The second analytic generalization that becomes derived from this case study research involves the finding of how even though each case determined the presence of

all three dark triad personality traits, one dark triad personality trait emerged as the dominant trait over the other two. Specifically, in Case 1 psychopathy served as the dominant dark triad personality trait, Case 2 found narcissism as the dominant dark triad personality trait, and Case 3 determined Machiavellianism as the dominant dark triad personality trait. This additional finding of a dominant dark triad personality trait being more pronounced in each of the analyzed cases supports the theoretical assertion that even though the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy share similarities, overlap, and relate to each other there exists enough differences among the traits to consider each trait as its own separate and distinct construct (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140).

Summary

This chapter provided a presentation of the author's findings after collecting and analyzing the data from the selected cases of toxic leadership by United States Navy leaders. The study found all of the dark triad personality traits being present in all three selected cases, and the emergence of a dominant dark triad trait in each case. Even though it becomes inappropriate to generalize the study's findings to a specific population, setting, and/or circumstance (Yin 2018, 37) the findings do add to the toxic leadership and dark triad trait literature. These findings add to the literature through analytical generalization where these findings corroborated and provided support to existing toxic leadership and dark triad trait theories (Yin 2018, 38).

Specifically, the study's findings provided support to Reed's theoretical assertion of personality playing a key element to toxic leadership (2004, 67; 2014, 4). Additionally,

it provided support to the assertion that there exists commonalities shared among the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140). However, despite the commonalities shared among the dark triad traits, it becomes important to preserve the integrity of each dark triad trait as its own individual construct (Paulhus and Williams 2002, 560; Glenn and Sellbom 2015, 365; Bertl et al. 2017, 140). These findings that answer the study's research question and corroborate the theories regarding toxic leadership and dark triad traits through analytic generalization serve as notable accomplishments for this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem this study addressed involved the need to study the phenomenon of toxic leadership within the context of the United States Navy. Existing studies regarding toxic leadership come from the perspective of United States Army Soldiers and senior military leaders (Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Williams 2005, 1; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, Steele 2010, 8; 58; Hannah, Schaubroeck, Peng, Lord, Trevino, Kozlowski, Avolio, Dimotakis, and Doty, 584; Reed 2014, 4). Although it becomes possible to generalize the findings from these studies to other United States military services, one can argue that the differences in military service cultures and the scarcity of studies that explores toxic leadership from a maritime perspective provides support to exploring the topic of toxic leadership in more detail from the perspective of the United States Navy.

The purpose of this qualitative case study investigated possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership. Previous studies regarding toxic leadership in the context of the United States military explored the negative impact, consequences, and outcomes that toxic leaders impose on organizations and followers (see Di Geno 2002, 14; Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy 2002, 1070; Bullis and Reed 2003, 1; Reed 2004, 67; Schmidt 2008, 14; Reed and Bullis 2009, 6; Reed and Olson 2010, 58; Steele 2011, 8; Aubrey 2012, 1; Mueller 2012, 251; Gallus, Walsh, van Driel, Gouge, and Antolic 590; Hannah et al. 2013, 584; Schmidt 2014, 2; Johnson 2018, 3). While benefits and advantages exist from approaching the toxic leadership phenomenon from a consequence orientation it serves as a reactionary perspective to this topic. Therefore, this study helped fill the gap in the

literature and examined how the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership within the context of the United States Navy.

The employment of a qualitative case study research methodology to accomplish this study's purpose became helpful because the use of qualitative research highlighted and provided deeper insight regarding the toxic leadership phenomenon within the United States Navy context (Patton 2015, 8). Although, qualitative case study research helped provide better contextual understanding regarding the phenomenon of study it came with its own set of limitations. Specifically, since the study used secondary data sources as sources of evidence to collect data from the author had to assume that the testimonies provided by witnesses regarding their perceptions of toxic leadership by their United States Navy leaders were accurate and truthful. Another study limitation involved the inability for the study to generalize its findings to a greater population, situation, or circumstance (Yin 2018, 20).

Additionally, due to the study using a case study research design it did not become appropriate to derive causation or a causal relationship from the study's findings. Thus the author reiterated multiple times throughout the study that this study only suggests that dark triad personality traits serve as possible and not definitive antecedents or causes to toxic leadership. The author recognizes that based on the study's chosen research design and findings it does not contain sufficient supporting evidence to draw inferences or conclusions that a cause and effect relationship exists between dark triad personality traits and toxic leadership.

In regards to ethical assurances, the study did not include human subject participation. Therefore ethical research components of informed consent and approval from the United States Army Command and General Staff College, institutional review board were not required. Also, the sources of evidence used to collect data redacted and purposefully left out the names of witnesses who provided testimonies to investigation officials regarding their experiences of toxic leadership by their United States Navy leaders. The documents and archival record with the redacted names protected the identity of those witnesses and adhered to the respect for persons ethical research principle (Cozby and Bates 2018, 51). Additionally, the author addressed the role of the researcher in regards to qualitative research (Creswell and Creswell 2018, 183) and provided transparency regarding the actions taken in the conduct of this study. The remainder of this chapter presents the conclusions regarding the data gathered in the study and recommendations based on the analysis of the data that can help inform suggested future research on this phenomenon of interest.

Conclusions

This study's purpose to investigate possible antecedents of toxic leadership within the United States Navy coupled with Dr. George Reed's definition of toxic leadership and his associated three key elements that describe toxic leadership (2004, 67; 2014, 4) helped inform this study's research question that guided the conduct of this study. This study's research question consisted of the following: How do the dark triad traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy serve as possible antecedents or causes of toxic leadership within the United States Navy? Applying Yin's case study research methodology (2018, 27) the study selected and included three cases that

exhibited toxic leadership actions by United States Navy leaders that became substantiated based on completed United States Navy investigations into the incidents.

The three cases included in the study comprised of the following: Case 1 – the removal of Captain Holly Graf from her position as the Commanding Officer of the United States Ship Cowpens (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010), Case 2 – the resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano amid allegations of fostering a toxic workplace environment (Faram 2018; 2019; Seck 2018; Harkins 2019), and Case 3 – the suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco due to a toxic climate (Rockett 2014; Simmons 2014, 002). Data collected from these three cases were captured in case study database tables (Yin 2018, 130) and organized using descriptive (Saldana 2016, 102) and pattern codes (Saldana 2016, 236) as first and second cycle coding methods respectively. Due to the multiple case studies included in the study the cross-case synthesis analysis technique became applied to analyze the collected data (Yin 2018, 194).

This study found that all three dark triad personality traits were present in each of the three selected cases. Additionally, this study found the emergence of a dominant dark triad personality trait that became more pronounced than the other two in each of the cases. Specifically, in Case 1 psychopathy served as the dominant dark triad personality trait that related the most with Graf's toxic leadership actions. Case 2 found narcissism as the dominant dark triad personality trait that related most with Giordano's toxic leadership actions. Lastly, Case 3 determined Machiavellianism as the dominant dark triad personality trait that related most to the toxic actions conducted by the Chief Petty Officers onboard the James E. Williams that created a toxic climate, which contributed to the suicide by Seaman Villot-Carrasco.

These study findings answered the research question and confirmed that the dark triad personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and/or psychopathy can serve as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership by United States Navy leaders. As previously mentioned, these findings do not support or do not make a determination that dark triad personality traits do cause toxic leadership. To be clear the presence of these dark triad personality traits being found in the selected toxic leadership cases does not establish causation. Instead, because this study found dark triad personality traits being present in the selected toxic leadership cases involving United States Navy leaders it suggests the possibility that dark triad personality traits can potentially serve as one of the causes or antecedents to toxic leadership. This conclusion provides an opportunity for future research to help further explore the possibility of dark triad traits being an antecedent to toxic leadership. The next section provides recommendations for such future research.

Recommendations

In order to further explore this study's findings that concluded dark triad personality traits serving as possible antecedents or causes to toxic leadership within the United States Navy this author recommends a future research study use a quantitative research design that addresses this study's limitation associated with its findings regarding improved internal validity and causation as well as external validity and generalization to a greater population (Yin 2018, 42). Specifically, a future quantitative study can employ a survey research design that uses toxic leadership and dark triad personality trait survey instruments to measure and establish a correlation between the concepts of toxic leadership and dark triad personality traits.

In order to gain a sample that more accurately represents the United States Navy population, it becomes recommended that future researchers partner with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute has the resources and ability to send out survey information to active duty Navy personnel across all paygrades. To ensure a representative study sample future researchers should employ a probability sampling technique (Cozby and Bates 2018, 154). This will ensure that participants in the quantitative study are chosen at random and account for the various paygrades that comprise the entire United States Navy population, which helps improve external validity and the generalization of findings.

This author also recommends that future researchers conduct a qualitative study that employs a phenomenological qualitative inquiry framework. For this phenomenological qualitative study future researchers can select and interview officers at the United States Naval War College to understand their lived experiences regarding their previous leaders who exhibited toxic leadership actions and dark triad personality traits. Conducting a phenomenological qualitative study helps build on this study's topic of interest and develops deeper understanding and insight of the relationship between toxic leadership and dark triad personality traits within the context of the United States Navy.

The continued research and study regarding toxic leadership whether through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method research will provide additional findings that can help inform the creation of a United States Navy leadership doctrine. Currently, the topic of leadership in the United States Navy becomes taught through on the job training, suggested professional reading lists, and referenced in maritime strategic documents. However, this author recommends that the creation of a United States Navy leadership

doctrine can help provide needed direction regarding the leadership factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits that the United States Navy as a military service expects from its leaders. This can help serve as a clearly defined standard of what right Navy leadership looks like to help offset the factors, behaviors, characteristics, and traits that arise from toxic leadership and the impact of dark triad personality traits.

APPENDIX A

CASE 1 - REMOVAL OF CAPTAIN HOLLY GRAF FROM COMMAND OF UNITED STATES SHIP COWPENS DUE TO TOXIC BEHAVIORS

On January 13, 2010, Captain Holly Graf was relieved of her command of the Yokosuka, Japan based guided missile cruiser the United States Ship Cowpens after a non-judicial punishment hearing found her guilty on two Uniform Code of Military Justice charges involving conduct unbecoming of an officer and cruelty and maltreatment (Slavin 2010). The Navy inspector general conducted an investigation that substantiated five of the eight claims against Graf that included: “breaches of ethics, use of her office for personal gain, dereliction of duty, and both verbal and physical assault” (Slavin 2010). The 50 page Navy inspector general report that was not released to the public contained within it a number of witness testimonies from United States Ship Cowpens Sailors who described their negative experiences working for Graf (Slavin 2010).

The Navy inspector general investigation started in June 2009 by three anonymous complaints regarding Graf’s conduct (Thompson 2010). The witness testimonies included in the inspector general report described Graf being verbally abusive, demeaning, combative, and threatening (Slavin 2010, Thompson 2010). One witness summarized Graf’s behavior and reported that Graf “creates an environment of fear and hostility [and] frequently humiliates and belittles watch standers” (Thompson 2010). Witness testimonies corroborated this allegation by explaining how Graf exhibited this type of behavior on a number of occasions. One witness testimony recalled Graf expressing a lack of concern for her subordinates when she told the witness, “Don’t come to me with your problems, you’re a [expletive] department head” (Slavin 2010). The

same witness then explained the experience of feeling threatened when Graf stated, “I can’t express how mad you make me without getting violent” (Slavin 2010).

Another witness discussed Graf demeaning her crew with comments such as, “What are you, [expletive] stupid?” (Slavin 2010). Other witnesses recalled Graf’s demeaning behavior with her stating, “You two are [expletive] unbelieving. I would fire you if I could, but I can’t” (Thompson 2010). Not only did witnesses recount Graf verbally demeaning and berating her Sailors, but one witness reported that Graf humiliated a senior enlisted member in front of junior Sailors by ordering the senior enlisted member to go into a corner and stand there and do nothing, which the junior Sailors perceived Graf putting the senior enlisted member in “time out” like a parent would do a child (Thompson 2010).

The Navy inspector general report even included instances when Graf’s behavior escalated to physical incidences (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010). The Navy inspector general report included a witness describing a time when Graf pushed a Sailor toward a radio communications equipment device (Slavin 2010). The report also noted that during times of heated discussion, Graf physically grabbed junior officers and other Sailors to get their attention (Thompson 2010). There was also an instance when Graf threw a wadded-up piece of paper at a Sailor (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010). Graf claimed that her use of vulgar language, profanity, and placing pressure on her Sailors was to help ensure the ship’s readiness and ability to conduct missions out at sea (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010). Graf claimed that she applied such actions to ensure that her crew was aware about how serious she was about the crew living up to her high standards (Thompson 2010). Graf also noted that the allegations against her only represented a

small portion of disgruntled crew members who were spreading rumors about her actions and making them appear worse than what they really were (Thompson 2010).

Despite Graf's comments and reasoning to defend and explain her perspective of the situation, the Navy inspector general report concluded that Graf "violated Navy regulations 'by demeaning, humiliating, publically belittling and verbally assaulting...subordinates while in command of *Cowpens*'" (Thompson 2010). The report also stated that Graf's actions "exceeded the firm methods needed to succeed or even thrive [and her] harsh language and profanity were rarely followed with any instruction" (Thompson 2010). Ultimately, the Navy inspector general report determined that the witness testimonies from the crew substantiated the allegations against Graf and concluded that her actions were "contrary to the best interests of the ship and the Navy" (Thompson 2010).

APPENDIX B

CASE 2 - RESIGNATION OF MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY STEVEN GIORDANO AS A RESULT OF FOSTERING A TOXIC WORKPLACE

On June 21, 2018, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano resigned from his position as the Navy's most senior enlisted member amid allegations of fostering a toxic workplace environment and bullying his subordinates (Seck 2018). Giordano's resignation came days after news reports indicated that he was being investigated based on complaints made against him where sources claimed that Giordano demonstrated "'a horrific and unpredictable temper' and 'was like working for a pop star or Hollywood diva'" (Seck 2018). Other sources who previously worked for Giordano cited that he had "a ferocious temper, a bullying leadership style and can be verbally abusive towards his own staff members in front of other office personnel" (Faram 2018). These sources portrayed Giordano as living two different lives where in the public eye he characterized himself as a quiet and humble leader, but "'behind closed doors, MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] Giordano [took] on an alter ego that [was] condescending and defaming to the senior leaders and junior staff alike on a regular basis'" (Faram 2018).

Aside from the unpredictable and ferocious temper, sources who worked for Giordano stated that Giordano became obsessed with the perquisites and benefits of being the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (Faram 2018). The Navy protocol regarding the perquisites and benefits of the office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy equaled that of a three-star admiral (Faram 2018). Previous staffers who worked for Giordano noted that Giordano got irate and upset whenever he felt that he was not

receiving the “deference and respect he desperately craves” associated with the benefits of holding the title of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (Faram 2018). There was one instance when Giordano got upset when a unit that he was visiting still had up a picture of the previous Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy instead of his own (Faram 2018). The former staffer noted that when that happened it changed Giordano’s mood for the remainder of the unit visit and hindered Giordano from being able to focus on the unit’s issues that they needed help with (Faram 2018). The staffer noted, “the sad thing was the [unit] was having a number of issues, including manning problems they needed help from the MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy], but his focus was on the fact that his picture wasn’t up at the [unit]” (Faram 2018).

Giordano’s obsession with the privileges of the office he filled reached a point where one subordinate noted that he was so “fixated on the faux three-star status to the point of actually considering himself an admiral too” (Faram 2018). One source supported this perception of Giordano’s obsession with being treated like a three-star admiral by stating that Giordano’s ““priorities seem to be set on understanding why he could not fly [on his own in private military jets] as he said in his own words, like the other flag officers”” (Faram 2018). Giordano’s obsession with the perquisites and benefits associated with his office created the perception to Giordano’s subordinates that he cared more about being treated like a three-star admiral than working with senior Navy leaders to address the issues and concerns of the Navy’s enlisted Sailors (Faram 2018).

The combination of Giordano’s temper and obsession to receive preferential treatment because he was filling the position of the Navy’s Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy contributed to a toxic and hostile workplace environment (Faram 2018).

Anonymous sources reported that ever since Giordano took office in September 2016 there have been a high number of personnel turnover from his office (Faram 2018). One can argue that personnel turnover becomes a normal part of being in the military due to consistent rotations associated with military assignments (Faram 2018). However, one anonymous source claimed that “the real reason they [Giordano’s subordinates] all left before their actual rotation dates was because of the difficult and oppressive work environment” (Faram 2018).

Sources continued to describe Giordano creating this toxic, difficult, and oppressive work environment by stating that Giordano was “known for treating his staff poorly and blaming them when things go wrong” (Faram 2018). One source reported that on one occasion Giordano ““was so irritated that when he kicked one staff member out of the office to berate another, he almost shut the departing staff members hand in the door...This behavior had become the norm – and he made it clear to us all that his failures were because of the staff, not his own doing” (Faram 2018). Additionally, sources noted that along with Giordano’s short temper and unpredictable anger he was also indecisive, which made communicating with him very difficult (Faram 2018). One source described Giordano’s indecisiveness by stating, “We functioned in an environment where we did not know what the expectations were and when we thought we had met them, they changed, sometimes multiple times a day” (Faram 2018).

However, when subordinates asked questions as a way to seek clarification and gain better understanding of his expectations, Giordano responded with anger (Faram 2018). One subordinate reported that Giordano ““thought staff members asking questions and seeking clarity about his expectations in assigned tasks or direction were attempts to

challenge his authority, and those questions were usually answered by his temper” (Faram 2018). Another staffer described Giordano’s reaction to questions of clarification by stating that Giordano would respond by “either a long awkward moment of silence and a red wash of anger over his face, or he would immediately raise his voice or bang a desk” (Faram 2018). Also, Giordano did not respond well to feedback or suggestions either (Faram 2018). One source indicated that “often when presented with an idea [Giordano will]...call it dumb, and even make fun of the idea and the person making the suggestion, though he rarely comes up with an original idea himself” (Faram 2018).

Sources noted that Giordano’s anger and temper was not only reserved for his staff, but also extended out to other “high-ranking senior enlisted sailors who attempted to have frank discussions with him in private” (Faram 2018). One source indicated that Giordano “doesn’t like to be told no...He’ll raise his voice and yell at you – he’ll yell over your attempts to calmly repeat your position on a matter or issue and he’ll try to bully or belittle you into agreeing with him” (Faram 2018). Another source noted that Giordano ““can’t help himself when he’s questions or challenged...He possesses some significant insecurities that have defined his leadership style throughout his career, but for some reason no one has ever called him on his behavior”” (Faram 2018).

Giordano being perceived by his subordinates as being difficult to work with because of his unpredictable anger, unwillingness to receive questions or feedback, indecisiveness, and inability to properly communicate made it very difficult for Giordano’s subordinates to gain a sense of direction and vision and purpose (Faram 2018). Giordano’s subordinates anonymously reported that “they were frustrated by Giordano’s failure to develop a clear agenda or to act on key issues or engage the Navy’s

chiefs mess, inaction that has further eroded the morale in the office” (Faram 2018).

Reports of these allegations coming to light placed pressure on Giordano and most likely led to his resignation (Faram 2018).

On April 4, 2019, the Navy inspector general completed its investigation on the allegations made against Giordano (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019). Investigators interviewed “Giordano and 13 unnamed witnesses, including past and present members of his staff, a chief petty officer, two fleet master chiefs, and two command master chiefs” (Faram 2019). In the 35-page investigation report (not publically released) it substantiated “several allegations of wrongdoing” (Harkins 2019). The report included one instance regarding Giordano’s alleged uncontrollable temper and lashing out at his subordinates when one witness reported “Giordano unleashed a ‘profanity-laced outburst towards a staff member’” (Faram 2019).

The witness recalled Giordano on that occasion saying, “God [expletive] (name redacted) I’m [expletive] sick and tired of hearing of your computer problems...Who the [expletive] is the computer guy who’s supposed to fix this?” (Faram 2019). When investigators asked Giordano about his perspective of the reported incident, Giordano denied yelling, shouting, and using profanity but did admit in raising his voice or how it could be perceived that he raised his voice because he speaks so loudly (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019). Another instance that the report highlighted included a time when a witness described Giordano yelling at another Navy senior enlisted member while placing his hand in the person’s face “in a disrespectful manner” (Faram 2019). Giordano denied behaving in such a manner and told investigators that he did not “remember yelling at anyone” (Harkins 2019).

Despite the responses from Giordano, the inspector general report concluded that his actions “failed to exhibit exemplary conduct” (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019). The inspector general report also provided the following conclusion:

[The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] yelling at sailors, using profanity towards them, and making jokes at their expense is not a good example of virtuous behavior, does not promote the general welfare of the enlisted persons under MCPON’s [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] charge, and has the capacity to erode any trust and confidence that the sailors may currently possess for the MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] office. (Faram 2019; Harkins 2019)

In regards to the allegations of subordinates perceiving Giordano was obsessed with the privileges associated with his office, the inspector general report noted a number of instances where witnesses reported Giordano misusing his staff “by having them fetch his food or coffee” (Harkins 2019). One witness reported this type of behavior when in March 2018 while visiting Recruit Training Command Great Lakes that Giordano was the only person who did not get his own coffee but was seen “asking a subordinate to get his coffee even though others including Rear Admiral Michael Bernacchi, head of Naval Service Training Command – were serving themselves” (Harkins 2019). Another witness reported that at a Sailor of the Year barbeque Giordano was seen having “someone fix him a plate of food and bring it to him” even though it appeared the person doing so did not feel comfortable with the action (Harkins 2019).

When asked by investigators to comment on these witness testimonies, Giordano denied such actions ever occurred (Harkins 2019). However, the inspector general report “found it was likely ‘more true than not’ that MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] had directed someone to get his coffee and food based on a ‘preponderance of the evidence’” (Harkins 2019). The inspector general report then concluded that “the

evidence reveals that MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] used the MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] position to treat his staff in an unauthorized manner” (Harkins 2019). Based on these conclusions that substantiate the allegations placed against Giordano regarding his uncontrollable temper and misuse of his subordinates and staffers, the inspector general report recommended that Giordano “face corrective action for violating Navy regulation article 1131, which calls on leaders to set a good example and protect those in their command” (Harkins 2019).

APPENDIX C

CASE 3 - SUICIDE OF SEAMAN YESHABEL VILLOT-CARRASCO

AS A RESULT OF A TOXIC CLIMATE

On the evening of June 19, 2014 Boatswain's Mate Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco died after committing suicide onboard a Navy destroyer, the United States Ship James E. Williams, while out at sea at the beginning of the ship's eight month deployment (Rocket 2014; Simmons 2014, 010). Seaman Villot-Carrasco reported onboard the James E. Williams in August 2013 (Simmons 2014, 010). Based on Seaman Villot-Carrasco's job occupation as a Boatswain's Mate she worked in the ship's deck division, a ship organization responsible for equipment associated with deck seamanship e.g. mooring lines, ship's anchor, life rafts and other lifesaving equipment, etc. Seaman Villot-Carrasco spent the majority of her time with deck division except when she was on a rotational 90 day assignment with the ship's Supply department as a Food Service Associate (Simmons 2014, 010). Those who knew Seaman Villot-Carrasco described her as "a hard worker and strong performer" (Simmons 2014, 010). Others noted that she kept to herself and did not open up to a lot of people (Simmons 2014, 010).

Seaman Villot-Carrasco complained to her close friends that she was not happy being a member of deck division (Simmons 2014, 010). Towards the end of her 90 day rotational assignment as a Food Service Associate she expressed interest in extending her time vice returning to deck division (Simmons 2014, 010). Seaman Villot-Carrasco alleged she was being treated unfairly due to her small stature since she was under five feet tall and because she was a female in a predominately male division (Simmons 2014, 010). Due to her size she was given nicknames (Simmons 2014, 010). Her coworkers in

deck division did not think that Seaman Villot-Carrasco was offended by these nicknames (Simmons 2014, 010). However, friends and those close to Seaman Villot-Carrasco expressed that she did not like being called those nicknames but did not mention anything because she did not want to attract additional attention to herself (Simmons 2014, 010). These nicknames by her coworkers helped reinforce Seaman Villot-Carrasco's perceptions about being treated unfairly and being singled out due to her size and gender, which the investigation report concluded as playing a contributing factor and additional stressor that led to her decision to take her own life (Simmons 2014, 009).

Additionally, rumors began to spread that Seaman Villot-Carrasco was perceived to be having an inappropriate relationship with a male Sailor who worked in a different organization on the James E. Williams (Simmons 2014, 011). Seaman Villot-Carrasco was married to another Sailor onboard a different ship, and the male Sailor that she was perceived to have an inappropriate relationship with was also married (Simmons 2014, 011). These rumors and perceptions became amplified during a port visit to Rota, Spain on June 13, 2014 (Simmons 2014, 011). Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor she was perceived on having an inappropriate relationship with left the ship with a group of other Sailors to enjoy some rest and relaxation in Rota, Spain. However, during the port visit Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor were separated from the rest of the group of Sailors they were hanging out with for approximately one hour (Simmons 2014, 012).

When confronted by the other people in their group about their separation both Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor stated that they were looking for swimsuits to buy, but ended up getting lost as they tried to rejoin the group (Simmons 2014, 012).

Although for the remainder of the port visit in Rota, Spain both Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor remained with the group, the approximate one hour separation from the group was reported to both Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor's supervisors (Simmons 2014, 012). After receiving this information Seaman Villot-Carrasco and the male Sailor's supervisors that included their Chief Petty Officers (E7 paygrade members) and junior pressured and instructed both of "them to not spend time with one another" (Simmons 2014, 012) and to keep their relationship strictly professional (Simmons 2014, 012).

On the morning of June 19, 2014, Seaman Villot-Carrasco was conducting her duties as a ship's observer at the rear end part of the ship (Simmons 2014, 012). Her duties included looking out for any debris, spillage, surface or subsurface contacts, air contacts, etc. and reporting this information over the ship's internal communication system to the ship's bridge or the place where the ship is driven (Simmons 2014, 012). While conducting her duties the male Sailor that Seaman Villot-Carrasco was perceived to have an inappropriate relationship with engaged in conversation with her (Simmons 2014, 012).

One of Seaman Villot-Carrasco's supervisors saw this happening and verbally warned that she was not allowed to have a conversation while conducting her duties because it can serve as major distraction (Simmons 2014, 012). As the morning continued, Seaman Villot-Carrasco supervisor who verbally warned her previously saw that she was again having a conversation with the same male Sailor (Simmons 2014, 013). At this point, Seaman Villot-Carrasco's supervisor informed her that this "incident would be reported" to deck division's leadership (Simmons 2014, 013). This resulted in

Seaman Villot-Carrasco receiving a counseling meeting with her division's Chief Petty Officer and Leading Petty Officer and associated documented disciplinary report (Simmons 2014, 013).

Seaman Villot-Carrasco became very upset and complained to a female Sailor, "who functionally served as a mentor to her" (Simmons 2014, 013) indicating that she thought she was being treated unfairly and being singled out because everyone engages in conversations while doing work, but that she was the only one being disciplined for it (Simmons 2014, 013-4). The female Sailor who functioned as a mentor for Seaman Villot-Carrasco mentioned that if she truly felt that she was being treated unfairly because of her gender that she file an equal opportunity complaint (Simmons 2014, 015). Seaman Villot-Carrasco agreed and reported to her chain of command of her intent to file (Simmons 2014, 016). Upon receiving information about Seaman Villot-Carrasco's intent to file an equal opportunity complaint regarding her perceptions of unfair treatment by her division for being female, her division leadership called a meeting with Seaman Villot-Carrasco (Simmons 2014, 016).

Seaman Villot-Carrasco's Chief Petty Officer asked her why she thought it was acceptable to continue conducting her duties and engage in a conversation even though she was warned earlier to not do so (Simmons 2014, 060). Seaman Villot-Carrasco's response was that other people do the same actions but they do not get in trouble (Simmons 2014, 060). Then Seaman Villot-Carrasco's Chief Petty Officer inquired why the person she was talking to the male Sailor that she was perceived to have an inappropriate relationship with (Simmons 2014, 060). The Chief Petty Officer then brought up the situation that occurred at the port visit in Rota, Spain and the perception

associated with that event (Simmons 2014, 060, 142). The Chief Petty Officer then counseled Seaman Villot-Carrasco regarding the perception of an inappropriate romantic relationship between the two of them and that “perception was everything in the Navy” (Simmons 2014, 060). The Chief Petty Officer then informed Seaman Villot-Carrasco that the documented disciplinary report regarding the improper conduct of her duties would be elevated to non-judicial punishment and then dismissed her (Simmons 2014, 060).

After being dismissed, Seaman Villot-Carrasco returned to her berthing i.e. the place on the ship where Sailors sleep and keep their personal belongings (Simmons 2014, 017). The female Sailor who functioned as Seaman Villot-Carrasco’s mentor saw her in berthing and asked her how she was doing, and Seaman Villot-Carrasco again mentioned that she remained frustrated at the perceived unfair treatment she was receiving from her division’s leadership (Simmons 2014, 017). At approximately 1630, one of the female Sailors in Seaman Villot-Carrasco’s berthing observed that she was at the water fountain and took some pills (Simmons 2014, 017). One of the female Sailors in the berthing with Seaman Villot-Carrasco made eye contact with her at which point Seaman Villot-Carrasco started crying (Simmons 2014, 017).

The female Sailor started to console her at which point Seaman Villot-Carrasco responded that “no one would help” (Simmons 2014, 018). It was indicated in the investigation report that Seaman Villot-Carrasco at that moment mentioned that she “thought everyone was against her and felt like everything was crashing down on her” (Simmons 2014, 018). Seaman Villot-Carrasco also stated that the “department [deck division leadership] was trying to get her in trouble for talking to (redacted) [male Sailor

perceived to have an inappropriate relationship with Seaman Villot-Carrasco]” (Simmons 2014, 018). Seaman Villot-Carrasco then continued by saying that she “ruined everyone’s lives” (Simmons 2014, 018).

The female Sailor consoling Seaman Villot-Carrasco, just coming from the shower, quickly changed to take her to see the ship’s Chaplain. However, Seaman Villot-Carrasco “began to lose consciousness” and the female Sailor asked Seaman Villot-Carrasco if she took any pills and Seaman Villot-Carrasco shook her head indicating that she did (Simmons 2014, 018). At 1650 a medical emergency was called away and Seaman Villot-Carrasco was then carried to the ship’s medical office for treatment. Despite resuscitation attempts by the ship’s medical personnel, Seaman Villot-Carrasco was pronounced dead at 1846 on June 19, 2014 due to lethal overdose consumption of Unisom sleep aid pills (Simmons 2014, 018).

The 315 page investigation report that occurred after Seaman Villot-Carrasco’s suicide interviewed 65 personnel to gain better understanding regarding the circumstances that led to Seaman Villot-Carrasco decision to take her life (Simmons 2014, 002). The investigation report included testimonies from those interviewed that corroborated the events described above that occurred prior to Seaman Villot-Carrasco’ committing suicide on June 19, 2014 (Simmons 2014, 007). Also, these testimonies provided support that other people also perceived that Seaman Villot-Carrasco’s was being treated unfairly by her division leadership (Simmons 2014, 019), and that her division leadership was unapproachable and would brush away her complaints by telling her she was weak or being overly sensitive (Simmons 2014, 082).

Additionally, these testimonies also highlighted perceptions that James E. Williams had a poor command climate based on fear and reprisal and where many Sailors were not comfortable going to the ship's Chief Petty Officers with their "problems for fear of retribution" (Simmons 2014, 022). One witness testimony indicated that this contributed to Seaman Villot-Carrasco's suicide and stated:

I [witness] believe that the result of (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] suicide was of hazing, terrible leadership, horrible quality of life, unfair treatment, and isolation from the rest of the division. (redacted) has fostered a climate of fear, unfair treatment by the petty officer ranks, and a complete and utter failure on the part of (redacted) and the second classes [E5 paygrade members] (redacted) to take care of their sailors...Her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] death is on their hands and I [witness] hope that this report sheds light upon the horrid quality of leadership among our [JAMES E. WILLIAMS] Chiefs and Petty Officers. (Simmons 2014, 083-4)

Other testimonies supported this assertion and indicated that "these Sailors are being led by fear...They [James E. Williams' Sailors] feared reprisal more than likely from their chain of command, starting with their (redacted) leadership, starting from their chiefs" (Simmons 2014, 178-9). Another testimony indicated, "Everyone on the ship is afraid of retaliation. If they [James E. Williams' Sailors] say anything they're afraid the Chiefs will find out about it and retaliate against them. Most of the crew is depressed" (Simmons 2014, 191). Other testimonies indicated that the ship's Chief Petty Officers abuse their power (Simmons 2014, 236), they are able to do whatever they want (Simmons 2014, 238), they use their power to intimidate Sailors (Simmons 2014, 244), and they are perceived as being self-serving (Simmons 2014, 246).

These testimonies helped inform the investigation report's observation that "disciplinary actions have been regularly dealt with at the CPO [Chief Petty Officer] level without informing the chain of command. The CO [Commanding Officer] and

former XO [Executive Officer] have contributed to this culture, and have failed to hold CPOs accountable for their missteps (Simmons 2014, 024). Ultimately, the investigation report concluded that the ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Curtis Calloway; Executive Officer, Commander Edmund Handley; and the ship's senior enlisted advisor, Command Master Chief Travis Biswell; were responsible for fostering a toxic climate that contributed to Seaman Villot-Carrasco's suicide (Simmons 2014, 002-3). Specific conclusions from the report included the following:

[Commander Calloway as the Commanding Officer] owned the culture onboard USS [United States Ship] JAMES E. WILLIAMS. His failure to hold CPOs [Chief Petty Officers] accountable, including the CMC [Command Master Chief], enabled a culture that empowered CPOs to target, belittle, and bully junior Sailors. CDR [Commander] Calloway was either willfully blind to problems on board his ship or he was in an extremely negligent state of denial. He owned the culture that...contributed to the suicide of (redacted) [Seaman Villot-Carrasco]. (Simmons 2014, 002)

The investigation report also concluded that the Executive Officer, Commander Handley, failed to keep up to date certain programs such as Equal Opportunity, Suicide Prevention, and Mentorship in accordance with United States Navy regulations that could have provided the command-level assistance and support Seaman Villot-Carrasco needed to overcome her feelings of being treated unfairly (Simmons 2014, 002). In regards to James E. Williams' senior enlisted advisor, Command Master Chief Biswell, the report concluded that he failed to set an exemplary example for the Chief's mess and did not properly act to reign in the actions of the Chiefs that created this culture of fear, reprisal, and retribution (Simmons 2014, 002).

APPENDIX D

CASE STUDY DATABASE COLLECTION TABLES

Table 25. Case 1 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Removal of Captain Holly Graf due to toxic behaviors	“Don’t come to me with your problems, you’re a [expletive department head]” (Slavin 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (C) Malicious
	“What are you, [expletive] stupid?” (Slavin 2010)	(F) Harmful or abusive (B) Shaming (B) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others
	“Graf regularly berated both officers and senior-raking chief petty officers in front of enlisted sailors, contributing to a lack of respect for the chain of command” (Slavin 2010).	(F) Harmful or abusive (B) Shaming (B) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Uses authority to punish others (C) Malicious
	“her [Graf] methods made them feel unsafe, unprepared, or generally embarrassed” (Slavin 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (B) Humiliates others
	“In one instance, Graf pushed a sailor toward a radio. In another, she threw a wad of paper at an officer in the wardroom” (Slavin 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (B) Using physical acts of aggression
	“she [Graf] grabbed several junior officers or sailors to get their attention or move them elsewhere – usually while in a heated discussion” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Over-controlling (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Dominant (B) Using physical acts of aggression
	“Graf ‘repeatedly verbally abused her crew and committed assault’” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (B) Using physical acts of aggression (C) Malicious
	“[Graf] creates an environment of fear and hostility [and] frequently humiliates and belittles watch standers by screaming at them with profanities in front of the Combat Information Center and bridge-watch teams” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (B) Humiliates others (C) Malicious
	Graf allegedly told a junior officer seeking her help, “This is one of the reasons I hate you” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Unwilling to develop others (B) Humiliates others, demeans
	“When another officer visited her quarters to discuss an earlier heated discussion, her response was terse: “Get the [expletive] out of my stateroom...The only words I want to hear out of your mouth are ‘Yes ma’am’ or ‘You’re correct, ma’am’” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Over-controlling (F) Dominant (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (F) Arrogant (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent (C) Arrogance
	“[Graf] also allegedly put a ‘well-respected master chief’ in ‘time out’ – standing in the ship’s key control room doing nothing – ‘in front of other watch standers of all ranks’” (Thompson 2010).	(F) Neglect for well-being of subordinate (B) Humiliates others, uses authority to punish others
	An officer reported that Graf once said, “I can’t express how mad you make me without getting violent” (Thompson 2010).	(B) Shaming (C) Malicious
	Graf told two officers while working on the ship’s bridge (place where the ship is driven), “You two are [expletive] unbelievable. I would fire you if I could,	(B) Humiliates others (B) Demeaning (B) Threatening employee’s job security

	but I can't" (Thompson 2010).	
	Graf claimed that her use of vulgar language, profanity, and placing pressure on her Sailors was to help ensure the ship's readiness and ability to conduct missions out at sea (Slavin 2010; Thompson 2010).	(F) Narrow minded, unable to see big picture (B) Is clueless that they are toxic to others
	"Graf violated Navy regulations 'by demeaning, humiliating, publicly belittling and verbally assaulting...subordinates while in command of <i>Cowpens</i> '" (Thompson 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (B) Humiliates others (B) Demeaning
	"Her repeated criticism of her officers, often in front of lower-ranking crew members, humiliated subordinates and corroded morale" (Thompson 2010).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) destructive (B) Humiliates others (B) Demeaning
	"[Graf's actions were] contrary to the best interests of the ship and the Navy" (Thompson 2010).	(F) Destructive (T) Ineffective

Source: Created by author.

Table 26. Case 2 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Resignation of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano as a result of fostering a toxic workplace	"The master chief petty officer of the Navy [Giordano] is stepping down from his post days after reports surfaced that he was being investigated by the service Inspector general's office over allegations that he bullied subordinates and created a hostile work environment" (Seck 2018).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Dominant (B) Forcing people to endure hardships (C) Malicious
	"Sailors who have worked with Giordano say that he has a ferocious temper, a bullying leadership style and can be verbally abusive" (Faram 2018).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (C) Malicious (T) Intemperate
	"This is a man [Giordano] defined by a passive-aggressive leadership style, laced with a horrific and unpredictable temper" (Faram 2018).	(F) Unpredictability (B) Demonstrates passive-aggressive behaviors (T) Intemperate
	"Behind closed doors, MCPON Giordano takes on an alter ego that is condescending and defaming to the senior leaders and junior staff alike on a regular basis, totally contradicting his own publicly preached values and beliefs of being a 'quietly humble leader'" (Faram 2018).	(F) Demeaning (B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (C) Deception
	"He [Giordano] is simply obsessed with the idea of being a three-star admiral and believes that he should have a chief petty officer assigned primarily to carry his cover and personal bag and takes notes for him" (Faram 2018).	(F) Arrogant (F) Self-serving (F) Narcissistic (F) Self-serving misguided values (C) Narcissism (C) Egotism (C) Arrogance (C) Selfish values
	"It [working for Giordano] was like working for a pop star or Hollywood diva" (Faram 2018).	(F) Arrogant (F) Self-serving (C) Narcissism (C) Egotism (C) Arrogance (C) Selfish values
	"[Giordano's] bombastic – and at times abusive – leadership style [resulted in]...a mass exodus of personnel from the MCPON's office since he took the role in September 2016. In some cases, Giordano 'fired' those sailors, while others...left	(F) Harmful or abusive (F) Lack of concern for subordinates (B) Threatening employees' job

voluntarily, requesting new assignments and anxiously leaving a workplace they describe as toxic” (Faram 2018).	security
“For the longest time, we [Giordano’s subordinates] felt we were protecting the integrity of the MCPON’s office...What we eventually realized was we were only protecting him” (Faram 2018).	(B) Presenting toxic agenda as noble visions
“MCPON will have you believe that all the staff members who departed prior to their regular rotation dates simply left for personal reasons...but I can guarantee you the real reason they all left before their actual rotation dates was because of the difficult and oppressive work environment” (Faram 2018).	(F) Destructive, harmful or abusive (B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (C) Deception
“Giordano is known for treating his staff poorly and blaming them when things go wrong” (Faram 2018).	(B) Blaming others for mistakes
“[Giordano] once was so irritated that when he kicked one staff member out of the office to berate another, he almost shut the departing staff members hand in the door as he left...This behavior had become the norm – and he made it clear to us all that his failures were because of the staff, not his own doing” (Faram 2018).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Unwilling to admit mistakes (B) Using physical acts of aggression (B) Blaming others for mistakes
“Staff members describe Giordano as a bad communicator who struggles to make his own decisions” (Faram 2018).	(T) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective)
“We [Giordano’s staff] functioned in an environment where we did not know what the expectations were and when we thought we had met them, they changed, sometimes multiple times a day” (Faram 2018).	(F) Unpredictability (F) Unable to delegate or prioritize (F) Being reactive rather than proactive (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture
“[Giordano] thought staff members asking questions and seeking clarity about his expectations in assigned tasks or direction were attempts to challenge his authority, and those questions were usually answered by his temper” (Faram 2018).	(F) Mistrust in people (F) Feelings of inadequacy (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent
“Giordano’s usual reaction to any suggestions and requests for direction from others [included] ‘either a long awkward moment of silence and a red wash of anger over his face, or he would immediately raise his voice or bang a desk’” (Faram 2018).	(F) Mistrust in people (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Unpredictability (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent
“[Giordano] doesn’t like to be told no...He’ll raise his voice and yell at you – he’ll yell over your attempts to calmly repeat your position on a matter or issue and he’ll try to bully or belittle you into agreeing with him” (Faram 2018).	(F) Dominant (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Demeaning
“Giordano wants to be the smartest person in the room and wants everyone else to know that” (Faram 2018).	(F) Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion (F) Arrogant
“It’s like he [Giordano] can’t help himself when he’s questioned or challenged...He possesses some significant insecurities that have defined his leadership style throughout his career” (Faram 2018).	(F) Mistrust in people (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Feelings of inadequacy (B) Distrusts the opinions of others (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Stifles dissent
“His [Giordano] staff members said they were frustrated by Giordano’s failure to develop a clear agenda or to act on key issues or engage the Navy’s chiefs mess, inaction that has further eroded morale in the office” (Faram 2018).	(F) Unable to delegate or prioritize (F) Being reactive rather than proactive (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture
“there was just no purpose, no mission in the [Master Chief Petty	(F) Being reactive rather than

Officer of the Navy] office” (Faram 2018).	proactive (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture
“I [Giordano’s subordinate] once witnessed him get so irate that a command we visited still had a picture of [Giordano’s predecessor] MCPON Stevens up that it changed his entire mood for the duration of the visit...The sad thing was the command was having a number of issues, including manning problems they needed help with from MCPON, but his focus was on the fact that his picture wasn’t up at the command” (Faram 2018).	(F) Feelings of inadequacy (F) Driven primarily by self-interest (F) Self-serving (F) Arrogant (F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Narrow minded, unable to see the big picture (B) Passive hostility (B) Demonstrates passive-aggressive behaviors (C) Egotism (C) Arrogance
“How can he [Giordano] be so totally not humble behind closed doors or to his staff, but profess quiet humility at every all hands and chief petty officer call?” (Faram 2018).	(B) Deliberately lies and distorts facts (C) Deception (C) Lack of integrity
“[Giordano] was fixated on the faux three-star status to the point of actually considering himself an admiral, too” (Faram 2018).	(F) Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion
““The staff’s frustration was that these privileges became the focus...We could not figure out where was the humility in the Navy’s top chief petty officer. We truly though he had forgotten where he came from, and, in his own mind, had become a flag officer” (Faram 2018).	(F) Fails to meet objectives due to excessive self-promotion
“Another witness complained that Giordano was ‘easily irritated’ and ‘always frustrated,’ to the point that he was ‘continually irritated, and a single irritation would be a cause for a distraction for the rest of the day’” (Faram 2019).	(F) Unpredictability (T) Intemperate
“Giordano ‘would get easily irritated, was always frustrated and...was difficult to work for” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Unpredictability (F) Harmful or abusive (T) Intemperate
“Investigators highlighted one incident in 2018, when witness said Giordano unleashed a ‘profanity-laced outburst towards a staff member who tended to being on the receiving end of his anger” (Faram 2019).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Humiliates others (C) Malicious
“Giordano was quoted bellowing, ‘God [expletive] (name redacted) I’m [expletive] sick and tired of hearing of your computer problems” (Faram 2019).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Humiliates others (C) Malicious
“[another witness noted] MCPON ‘yelled at (redacted) and placed his hand in (redacted) face in a disrespectful manner” (Faram 2019).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Humiliates others (C) Malicious
“A witness to the outburst told investigators that watching Giordano screaming at a fellow chief made him think ‘this guy is [expletive] crazy” (Faram 2019).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Humiliates others (C) Malicious (T) Intemperate
“He [the witness] wondered why the MCPON ‘can’t just listen for a second and why he feels so – such a need to control’ others” (Faram 2019).	(F) Over-controlling (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Ignoring comments/ideas

		(B) Stifling dissent
	““This guy is [expletive] crazy...And I cannot understand why he [Giordano] can't just listen for a second and why he feels so – such a need to control, and he's so, so angry” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Over-controlling (B) Has difficulty accepting negative feedback (B) Ignoring comments/ideas (B) Stifling dissent
	“MCPON [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy] yelling at sailors, using profanity towards them and making jokes at their expense is not a good example of virtuous behavior, does not promote the general welfare of the enlisted persons under MCPON's charge, and has the capability to erode any trust and confidence that the sailors may currently possess for the MCPON office” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Humiliates others (B) Demeaning (C) Malicious (T) Ineffective
	“Giordano was also found to have misused his staff on several occasions by having them fetch his coffee or food” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Harmful or abusive (T) Corrupt
	“During a March 2018 visit to Recruit Training Command...all the others at the meeting, including the admiral, stopped at the table and served themselves on their way into the session – except Giordano, who ‘entered the room, walked past the coffee and doughnuts and sat down in his seat’ then the MCPON leaned back and said, ‘I'd like some coffee’...Multiple witnesses told investigators that a sailor served Giordano his coffee” (Faram 2019).	(F) Harmful or abusive (T) Corrupt
	“Giordano directed a staff to fetch him a plate of chow [food] because he was busy talking to others” (Faram 2019)	(F) Harmful or abusive (T) Corrupt
	“at the Sailor of the Year barbeque...[Giordano] had someone fix him a plate of food and bring it to him. The person ‘was a little embarrassed’ and ‘not comfortable preparing the plate, but still did it’” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Harmful or abusive (T) Corrupt
	“The evidence reveals that MCPON used the MCPON position to treat his staff in an unauthorized manner” (Harkins 2019).	(F) Harmful or abusive (T) Corrupt
	“The investigator ultimately recommended that he [Giordano] face corrective action for violating Navy regulation article 1131, which calls on leaders to set a good example and protect those in their command” (Harkins 2019).	(T) Ineffective

Source: Created by author.

Table 27. Case 3 First Cycle Coding Data Collection Findings		
Case Study	Toxic Leadership Excerpt/Quote	Toxic Leadership Theme
Suicide of Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco as a result of a toxic climate	“I recommend that CDR Calloway be held accountable at nonjudicial punishment (NJP). As the CO [Commanding Officer] CDR Calloway owned the culture on board USS JAMES E. WILLIAMS (DDG 95). His failure to hold CPOs [Chief Petty Officers] accountable, including the CMC [Command Master Chief], enabled a culture that empowered CPOs to target, belittle, and bully junior Sailors” (Simmons 2014, 002).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
	“CDR Calloway was either willfully blind to problems on board his ship or he was in an extremely negligent state of denial. He owned the culture that, I believe, contributed to the suicide of (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco]” (Simmons 2014, 002)	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
	“This ship is a national asset, and I am incredibly disappointed in the leadership triad for allowing a climate of fear and intimidation to take hold and for failing to hold individuals accountable” (Simmons 2014, 003).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective

“His [Command Master Chief] continued misconduct set a climate within the Chief Petty Officer (CPO) mess in which bad behavior is tolerated” (Simmons 2014, 004).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
“The former Executive Officer (XO), CDR Handley, bears a significant share of the responsibility for the climate that led to (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] suicide and the subsequent suicide attempt...His responsibilities included management of executive-level oversight programs onboard JAMES E. WILLIAMS, including the Command Managed Equal Opportunity (CMEO) program. These programs failed to provide desperately needed support for (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco]” (Simmons 2014, 004).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Poor judgement (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
“CDR Handley’s [former Executive Officer] heavy-handed style is not consistent with the level of dignity and respect that our Sailors deserve. I simply do not believe that CDR Handley will foster a healthy command climate if given the opportunity to Command” (Simmons 2014, 005).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
“allegations that the command climate contributed to (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] decision to commit suicide, and that she reached out for help on the day she died but was rebuffed in her efforts” (Simmons 2014, 008, Rockett 2014).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
“Disturbingly, two factors on board JWS [JAMES E. WILLIAMS] likely contributed to her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] decision to take her own life. First, (redacted) initiated disciplinary action against her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] after he learned that she wanted to file an equal opportunity (EO) complaint. Second, support networks that are required to be in place to assist Sailors in distress were not function as required by Navy policy” (Simmons 2014, 009).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
“Some Sailors believed that (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was being treated unfairly by (redacted) division. Additionally, one Sailor attributed the suicide to mistreatment by (redacted) division and a poor command climate on board JWS [JAMES E. WILLIAMS]” (Simmons 2014, 019).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
“Many Sailors are not comfortable going to CPOs [Chief Petty Officers] with problems for fear of retribution” (Simmons 2014, 022).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
“Sailors perceive the CPO [Chief Petty Officer] Mess to be on a ‘power trip,’ and many thin the CPOs put themselves first” (Simmons 2014, 023).	(F) Self-serving (F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others (C) Selfish values
“The CO [Commanding Officer] failed to ensure that these concerns were addressed, and failed to engage in critical introspection within the command following the loss of this Sailor [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco]” (Simmons 2014, 023).	(T) Ineffective
“Leadership in (redacted) division, including (redacted), (redacted), and (redacted), unfairly targeted (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] due to her perceived relationship with (redacted). These individuals compounded the stress that (redacted) was dealing with by using her watchstanding performance as a ‘proxy’ for their desire to stop (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] from having contact with (redacted). (redacted) division watch standers routinely had conversations with other Sailors while standing aft lookout. Because (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] saw that others engaged in the same conduct that she did, but she was the only one punished, it added to her stress and frustration that she was being unfairly targeted” (Simmons 2014, 023).	(F) Destructive (B) Uses authority to punish others (B) Points out the mistakes of others
“(redacted) decision to initiative a report chit and send (redacted)	(B) Coercion

[Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] case to NJP [Non-judicial Punishment] after learning she desired to file a CMEO complaint is a violation of reference (b) [OPNAVINST 5354.1F, Navy Equal Opportunity Policy] that is punishable under reference (e) [Uniform Code of Military Justice]" (Simmons 2014, 024).	(B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"The (redacted) and (redacted) were negligent in failing to ensure that a climate of fair treatment and equal enforcement of standards was present in (redacted) division. (redacted) was allowed free reign to impose discipline without effective oversight" (Simmons 2014, 024).	(B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"Sailors generally perceive a 'culture of retribution' in the CPO [Chief Petty Officer] Mess on JWS [JAMES E. WILLIAMS] that is discouraging and demoralizing. Disciplinary actions have been regularly dealt with at the CPO level without informing the chain of command. The CO [Commanding Officer] and former XO [Executive Officer] have contributed to this culture, and have failed to hold CPOs accountable for their missteps" (Simmons 2014, 024).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"The CO [Commanding Officer] failed to exercise his authority under Navy Regulations and the CNO's [Chief of Naval Operations] Charge of Command to hold people accountable. He is ultimately responsible for failed communication within the triad. The [Commanding Officer] either turned his back on problems or doesn't possess the ability to identify missteps and take firm corrective action" (Simmons 2014, 025).	(F) Unable to build teams (F) Destructive (T) Ineffective
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] expressed feeling like her division has been trying to get her [in] trouble for awhile and that she'd been feeling attacked" (Simmons 2014, 071).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was left out of the group [division], made fun of, taunted, and ridiculed. She also explained to me [witness] that the leadership of her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] division did nothing to try to help her excel in her duties or help her overall quality of life onboard the USS JAMES E. WILLIAMS" (Simmons 2014, 081).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Ostracizing/disenfranchising employees (T) Ineffective
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] felt that the leadership and senior leadership in her division were unapproachable and would only tell her that she was just being weak or sensitive as a result, again, of her height, looks, etc." (Simmons 2014, 082).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] decided to hold off on filing the grievance for fear of retribution and further ridicule" (Simmons 2014, 082).	(B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"I [witness] believe that the result of (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] suicide was of hazing, terrible leadership, horrible quality of life, unfair treatment, and isolation from the rest of the division. (redacted) has fostered a climate of fear, unfair treatment by the petty officer ranks, and a complete and utter failure on the part of (redacted) and the second classes (redacted) to take care of their sailors...Her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] death is on their hands and I [witness] hope that this report sheds light upon the horrid quality of leadership among our [JAMES E. WILLIAMS] Chiefs and Petty Officers" (Simmons 2014, 083-4).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"sailors are afraid to voice complaints for fear of retribution from the Chief Petty Officer's mess" (Simmons 2014, 120).	(B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] said that she [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] thought we [people in the division] were after her" (Simmons 2014, 153).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive
"Their relationship was spread around the ship" (Simmons 2014, 156).	(B) Humiliates others (B) Shaming
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was crying in the head	(F) Harmful or abusive

[bathroom] about not wanting to go back to (redacted) [division], that she wasn't comfortable. It was constant...(redacted) division jokes a certain way and females don't know how to handle it. I think she [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was being treated differently because she was a little strange...I think she was misunderstood by the (redacted) personnel" (Simmons 2014, 167).	(F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Shaming
"She was made fun of because of her height. I am not sure if she was made fun of face to face, but I heard people talking about it throughout the ship" (Simmons 2014, 176).	(F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Shaming
"People truly believe (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was being mistreated and singled out for minor things" (Simmons 2014, 178).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Ostracizing/disenfranchising employees
"These Sailors are being led by fear...They [Sailors] feared reprisal more than likely from their chain of command, starting with their (redacted) leadership, starting from their chiefs" (Simmons 2014, 178-9).	(B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was so afraid that they [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco's supervisors] would pick or target her more if I [witness] did" (Simmons 2014, 186).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"Everyone made fun of her [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco]. It bother (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] when people called her "(redacted)" and "(redacted)". The Chiefs onboard called her that, she didn't say who. She hated it. She didn't tell anyone. I don't think she like the attention. She liked to keep to herself all the time" (Simmons 2014, 190).	(F) Harmful or abusive (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others (B) Shaming
"The (redacted) treated (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] very crappy. She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] complained about (redacted) and (redacted). They [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco's supervisors] gave her a counseling chit because she was talking to (redacted). She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] had told (redacted) that she [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] wanted to file an EO [equal opportunity] complaint a couple of days before she passed away...She [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] didn't file a complaint because it wouldn't have gone anywhere" (Simmons 2014, 191)	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
"(redacted) and (redacted) were not approachable...Everyone on the ship is afraid of retaliation. If they say anything they're afraid the Chiefs will find out about it and retaliate against them. Most of the crew is depressed" (Simmons 2014, 191).	(F) Unable to build teams (B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (C) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective
"I [witness] don't think junior sailors trust us Chiefs. I think they're scared that they're going to be reprimanded or are afraid of the repercussions that would arise from their complaints" (Simmons 2014, 210).	(B) Coercion (B) Uses authority to punish others (C) Irresponsible (T) Ineffective
"I know that the Chief's mess was completely wasted in port calls. We notice. I know that the current CMC [Command Master Chief] is a young CMC but his mind is still at an E6 level. I expect more from my leaders. I don't feel we get the full support from our Chief's mess" (Simmons 2014, 213).	(T) Ineffective
"(redacted) told me that (redacted) division bullied (redacted) [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco]. I was not surprised that she [Seaman Yeshabel Villot-Carrasco] was bullied based on how she reacted; she was by herself a lot" (Simmons 2014, 217).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (F) Unable to build teams (F) Demeaning (B) Humiliates others
"I [witness] feel like the Chief's mess does not like us [junior officers] too much. I think they [Chiefs] think junior officers are college kids...I am aware that Chiefs gossip about the DIVOS [division officers]. I have never discussed the gossip with the CMC [Command Master Chief]. I really don't think I can go to	(B) Humiliates others (B) Shaming (T) Ineffective

	anyone to talk about it” (Simmons 2014, 236).	
	“The CPO [Chief Petty Officer] mess has a lot of power on this ship. They sometimes abuse that power” (Simmons 2014, 236).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others
	“It seems that I [witness] have to stroke someone’s ego to get qualified”(Simmons 2014, 237).	(F) Self-serving (C) Egotism
	“I [witness] hate this command [JAMES E. WILLIAMS]. This is my fifth ship and it’s absolutely the worst ship I’ve been onboard. I believe that it has a lot to do with leadership. The Chiefs do what they want to do. Junior personnel are disrespectful to their peers and towards the First Classes [E6 paygrade personnel]. No one attempts to correct them” (Simmons 2014, 238).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
	“I [witness] believe the Chiefs think they have a lot of power because they wear the anchor and they try to intimidate because of this. I think they’re Chiefs because I know they think they have a lot of power. A lot of them are intimidating” (Simmons 2014, 244).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective
	“I [witness] don’t want to be a part of the chief’s mess on this ship. I don’t get a really good vibe from them. As a whole, it just seems like they’re on a power trip. I would say that they put their mess first” (Simmons 2014, 246).	(F) Destructive (F) Harmful or abusive (B) Uses authority to punish others (T) Ineffective (T) Corrupt
	“No, I [witness] am not surprised that a Sailor has said that they’ve ‘never felt so disrespected and humiliated in their entire life..’ when referencing me. I’m not here to be a Sailor’s friend, I’m here to be a sailor’s Chief.” (Simmons 2014, 294).	(F) Lack of concern for subordinates

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