

**PERSONALITY PREDICTORS OF FIRST-YEAR ATTRITION
FROM A MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Personality Predictors of First-Year Attrition in A Military Training Program. (May 2014)

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In military training programs, program attrition is a problem not only financially but also in terms of its effects on the team environment and team morale. The purpose of this study is to compare freshmen cadets who choose to stay in the Corps versus those who leave the Corps during the first semester their freshman year. The goal is to enhance the selection and retention of recruits in future military training programs as well as in business and industry.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother who bestowed upon me a never-ending love and desire for knowledge. She also taught me that the best things in life come to those who work hard and are committed to their goals. It is also dedicated to my father who taught me that if you do not succeed at first, it is not the end of the world. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to all past and current members of the Corps of Cadets for making the organization the great leadership program that it has become today, may this research grow in the future and benefit future members of the Corps of Cadets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. LeUnes and Dr. Bourgeois for being the absolute best research advisors that anyone could ask for. You have taken me under your wings and I appreciate that with all my heart. It still amazes me to think that a small talk at a conference would lead to such great opportunities and what I hope to see grow into lifelong friendships. I am beyond grateful for the amount of freedom and independence that y'all both have given me with this project and it has both challenged me and allowed me to grow as a researcher and student.

To the people who made this all possible: (Colonel Starnes, Colonel Stebbins, Bill Gutierrez and Rachel Janicek from the Corps of Cadets Association, the office of the Commandant recruiting staff including Colonel Hawes, Colonel Matte, Lt. Colonel Byrne, Major Hoffman, and Michael Hudson) Thank you so much for the opportunity to conduct this research on the Corps of Cadets and for all of your cooperation when I needed it most. I believe that we have just touched the tip of the iceberg when it comes to creating a great working relationship between us and am excited for the benefits and possibilities that expanding this research partnership can have for the future of the Corps of Cadets.

To the wonderful staff in the Texas A&M University Industrial/Organizational Psychology PhD program, including Dr. Payne, Dr. Arthur, and Dr. Bergman: Thank you so much for your willingness and attentiveness regarding my research. Y'all have given me great insights on the research and its possibilities from the perspective of Industrial and Organizational psychology. I am

so excited to hopefully work with you in the future and I believe that each of you are valuable resources and am grateful for the opportunity to have met all of you.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Challenges in recruiting and retention

Texas A&M University is a senior military college dedicated to preparing future leaders for both the military and civilian worlds. Part of this training is a student organization called the Corps of Cadets. The purpose of the Corps is to develop well-educated leaders of character who embody the values of honor, integrity, discipline, and selfless service. They strive for cadets to be academically successful, highly sought-after in the business and military worlds, and prepared for the global leadership challenges of the 21st century. As in any military training program, a major issue faced by the Corps of Cadets is the retention of Cadets in their first year of the program. Retention has emerged as a critical issue because Corps membership has increased in number to the largest Corps that the University has seen in at least four decades. With the growth experienced in recent years the Corps is looking to increase quantity without the sacrifice of quality of Corps participants and build upon the previous year's recruiting and retention efforts. The aim of this study, then, is to examine the personality characteristics of those who decide to stay in the Corps (Stayers) versus those who decide to resign from the Corps (Leavers). The objective of this research project is to determine how freshman stayer or leaver Cadets vary in terms of mental toughness, locus of control, leadership, and the Big Five personality factors.

Personality Variables

Locus of Control

Locus of control can be globally defined as a person's attributions concerning the cause of outcomes in their personal lives. Levenson (1974) has conceptualized locus of control as a multidimensional construct consisting of Internal, Powerful Others, or Chance factors. An individual's locus of control can be identified as an Internal orientation where individuals believe that events in their lives are under their control. Those perceiving outcomes as being determined by External factors attribute outcomes to Powerful Others or to Chance, Luck, or Fate. Research supports the notion that those holding an External locus of control are more likely to experience psychological and physiological distress than those exhibiting an Internal Locus of Control (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1970). Internals are generally better able to cope with stress (Lefcourt, 1980; Lefcourt, Miller, Ware, & Sherk, 1981). A stronger Internal orientation moderates the relationship between intentions to quit and turnover where internals are more likely to translate intentions into behavior than externals. Internals may be more likely to quit because they believe that they are in control of their destiny (Allen & Weeks, 2005; Blau, 1987; Spector, 1982).

The Big Five Personality Factors

In the past there has been controversy concerning the conceptualization of personality traits and on the nature of the factor structure hierarchy. A consensus has emerged as researchers can generally agree on a five factor model of personality that was first named in a small publication by Norman but described to a larger audience by Costa & McCrae and includes Openness to

experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism/Emotional Stability (McCrae & Costa, 1985; Norman, 1963). Personality traits have been characterized by Cattell (1a, 1b, 1945, 1947, 1948) as consisting of a taxonomy of 16 primary factors with 8 secondary factors. These factors included: abstractedness, apprehension, dominance, emotional stability, liveliness, openness to change, perfectionism, privateness, reasoning, rule consciousness, self-reliance, sensitivity, social boldness, tension, vigilance and warmth (Cattell; 1a, 1b, 1946, 1947, 1948). Subsequent findings by Digman (1990, 1997), Noller, Law, & Comrey (1987), and Tupes & Christal (1992) support an alternative five factor model which included the traits of: Surgency, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, Dependability and Culture and are similar to McCrae & Costa (1985) and Norman's taxonomy of personality traits (1963). Some still argue for a simpler three trait model suggested by Eysenck (1947, 1991) which consists of scores on three facets, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism. Recent research has suggested that individual characteristics may exist that serve to buffer the impacts of stressful life events on psychological health which in turn make them more resistant to stress (Bartone, 1999). It has been argued in the past that some individuals may possess an ability to regain and maintain a high degree of well-being even when confronted with high stress situations (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; Meyer & Taylor, 1986; Wortman & Silver, 1989). High degree of well-being would be of great utility in both the military and civilian sectors and would enhance adjustments to stressful situations and newcomer adaptations to organizations. The Big Five model of personality proposes that personality may be made up of the following five factors.

(1.) *Openness to new experience* is characterized by a tendency to be involved in a range of intellectual interests, curiosity, creativity, flexibility, and imagination. Those high on Openness have a propensity or tendency to be introspective and have a wide range of interests (McCrae & John, 1992, Barrick & Mount, 1991). Those scoring high on the Openness factor have a high degree of self-regulation, impulse control, are persistent, achievement-oriented, and exhibit self-discipline. These traits lead to persistence in the face of difficulties and the shifting of attention from negative thoughts toward more positive activities or thoughts (Barrick & Mount, 2001; Lengua, Sandler, West, Wolchik, & Curran, 1999; Vollrath, 2001). It has been suggested that those who are high in Openness would also tend to employ more problem solving and emotionally-based coping responses and better adapt to new and difficult situations. Openness is also said to play a role in pre-entry attitudes, motivation, and positive attitudes toward training, thus giving those high in Openness an advantage from the beginning (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

(2.) *Conscientiousness* is characterized by a tendency to be reliable, responsible, organized and efficient, and to have high aspirations. High scorers are able to delay gratification, show self-discipline (McCrae & John, 1992), and tend to be rule-bound, controlled, cautious, and risk averse (Goldberg, 1990). These observations suggest that those high in Conscientiousness adjust better to new and unfamiliar situations by using self-discipline and by keeping their high aspirations in mind. Barrick and Mount (1991) suggest that the dimension of achievement orientation is related to traits such as planful, organized, and working hard while dependability assesses traits such as thorough, careful, and responsible. Previous research has shown that those high in Conscientiousness may be more likely to

perceive moral and contractual obligations to the organization (Maertz & Campion, 2004; Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). These conclusions are related to Ghiselli's (1974) Hobo Syndrome whereby those high in Conscientiousness will not engage in unplanned quitting but instead will consider the long-term ramifications of their actions (Watson, Clark, & Harkness, 1994).

(3.) *Extraversion* generally describes someone who is assertive, energetic, outgoing, and enthusiastic. Extraverts generally behave in an assertive manner and are talkative (McCrae & John, 1992) but there is a link proposed between extraversion and aggression in view of their apparent assertiveness and forceful nature (Goldberg, 1990). Extraverts may also experience positive emotions more frequently (Watson & Clark, 1999) and be more likely to recall positive information about their work and environment (Brief, Butcher, & Roberson, 1995, Watson & Slack, 1993, Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Extraversion has also been shown to have a negative relationship with turnover (Zimmerman, 2008). These findings suggest that extraverts, because of their assertiveness and outgoing qualities, would adjust more readily to new situations and socialize more effectively into new organizations (Maertz & Campion, 2004, O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989).

(4.) *Agreeableness* is characteristic of those who tend to be appreciative, forgiving, trusting, and sympathetic. Higher scorers generally behave altruistically, are trustful, warm, and considerate (McCrae & John, 1992) and tend to prefer team-oriented and supportive organizations (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). A recent meta-analysis by Zimmerman (2008) showed that Agreeableness had the highest negative relationship with turnover and intent to quit and suggests

that the adaptability and compliance aspects of Agreeableness make people more understanding of the negative aspects of their environment. Ghiselli's (1974) Hobo syndrome is related to Agreeableness because it may lead to impulsive quitting (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino 1979). It would seem that those high in Agreeableness would thrive in a team-oriented environment such as the Corps of Cadets and would tend to be well-liked by peers.

(5.) *Neuroticism or emotional stability* is characteristic of those who are anxious, tense, touchy, self-pitying, and unstable. They appear to be thin-skinned, are self-defeating, show fluctuating moods, and are overly concerned with personal adequacy (McCrae & John, 1992). Those high in Neuroticism have been shown to experience chronic negative affect (Watson & Clark, 1984). The recurrent depression, frustration, guilt, and self-consciousness that people high in Neuroticism usually feel generally may result in irrational thinking, poor impulse control, low self-esteem and ineffective coping (McCrae & Costa, 1987). These findings would suggest that those scoring lower on Neuroticism would be more effective at coping and adjusting to new situations or organizations and would feel less distress when confronted with difficult situations. It has been suggested in previous research that those low on Emotional Stability and high on Neuroticism are more likely to recall and encode negative situations and information about their environment, (Watson & Clark, 1984; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) more likely to have negative perceptions of themselves, (Burke, Brief, & George, 1993; Maertz & Griffeth, 2004) and more likely to give up on stress inducing goals (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Recent research results suggest that Emotional Stability/Neuroticism may play a role in job satisfaction and show a strong negative relationship with employee's intent to quit and actual turnover decisions (Zimmerman, 2008).

Mental Toughness

Mental Toughness is a personality construct often used in sport psychology studies and is related to the personality constructs of grit and hardiness which can be summarized as having a high sense of control, a strong sense of commitment, and open to change. Grit can be conceptualized as a persistent effort in pursuit of long-term goals (Maddi, Matthews, Kelly, Villarreal, & White, (2012). The construct of Mental Toughness includes all three aspects including challenge, control, and commitment but includes a fourth subscale of confidence which should include a high degree of willpower and belief in achieving success and staying in a training program as well as a greater ability to cope in difficult situations (Clough, Earle, & Sewell, 2002). Research by Clough et al. (2002) has also suggested that higher levels of Mental Toughness are associated with the use of more problem or approach (i.e., hands-on) coping strategies and less use of avoidance coping strategies. Mental Toughness seems related to significant positive associations between resiliency, hardiness, and the personality traits of Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion. Prior studies on basic training attrition have shown that those exhibiting a hardy personality had a significantly higher chance of graduating from a basic training program (Bartone, Roland, Picano, & Williams, 2008). Earlier research by Bartone (1999) had shown that hardiness and grit play an important role in military populations and showed that those soldiers who were high in hardiness adjusted better to stress and responded more favorably in future months. These results suggest that including Mental Toughness training in a comprehensive training program would increase successful coping and reduce voluntary turnover.

Leadership

Landy and Conte (2009) have identified two important dimensions as important in the study of leadership, leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness. Leader emergence has been defined as the process in which a member of the group assumes the leader role. Leadership effectiveness is how effective the leader is at fulfilling job duties set forth by the organization and includes perceptions of leadership by followers. Leadership by definition is hard to define but most people can agree that “we know it when we see it”. One definition of leadership that is commonly used is the process of whereby an individual influences others in order to help attain group goals. Some common tasks of leaders include motivating and energizing others, promoting unity and collaboration, and producing change. It is important to identify leaders early on so that you may train and groom them to take over leadership positions in the future. Previous research has indicated that Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Conscientiousness are positively correlated with leader emergence (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). A list of personality variables assessed in this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Personality Variables

	Characteristics	Facets
The Big Five Personality		
Openness to Experience	High scorers tend to be artistic, curious, imaginative, insightful, original, and have wide interests	Fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values
Conscientiousness	High scorers tend to be efficient, organized, planful, reliable, responsible, and thorough	Competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, deliberation
Extraversion	High scorers tend to be active, assertive, energetic, enthusiastic, outgoing, and talkative	Warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, positive emotions
Agreeableness	High scorers tend to be appreciative, forgiving, generous, kind, sympathetic and trusting	Trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, tender-mindedness

Table 1. Personality Variables Continued

Neuroticism	High scorers tend to be anxious, self-pitying, tense, toughy, unstable, and worrying	Anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability
Locus of Control		
Internal Locus of Control	High scorers expect to have control over his/her life	Low scorers do not expect to have control over his/her life
Powerful Others Locus of Control	High scorers expect powerful others to have control over his/her life	Low scorers do not expect powerful others to have control over his/her life
Chance Locus of Control	High scorers expect chance forces such as luck and fate to have control over his/her life	Low scorers do not expect chance forces such as luck or fate to have control over his/her life
Mental Toughness & Leadership		
Mental Toughness	Self-confidence, negative energy control, attention control, vizualization and imagery control, motivation, positive energy and attitude control	Challenge, commitment, and control
Leadership	Leadership emergence	Leadership effectiveness

Source: Big Five: NEO-PI-R= Revised NEO personality inventory (60-item) Costa & McCrae, Locus of Control: Levenson (1981), Mental Toughness and Leadership: Bourgeois, LeUnes, and Hudson (2011)

Based on the above information and conceptualizations of the Big Five personality characteristics, locus of control, mental toughness and leadership the following hypotheses have been theorized. Table 1 summarizes the personality characteristics and their facets.

Hypothesis 1: Stayers will exhibit a higher Internal Locus of Control which will allow for better adjustment because they will feel that they have control over positive/negative events in their lives.

Hypothesis 2: Leavers will exhibit a higher Powerful Others Locus of Control which will suggest that they attribute positive/negative events to powerful others around them.

Hypothesis 3: Those who leave the Corps of Cadets in their first-year will exhibit a high Chance Locus of Control which suggests that leavers attribute positive/negative events in their lives to forces such as luck or fate.

Hypothesis 4: Those who exhibit high levels of Openness will tend to stay in the Corps of Cadets in their first year and exhibit better coping strategies whereas those who are lower in openness will tend to leave the Corps.

Hypothesis 5: Stayers will be higher in measures of Conscientiousness than those who leave the Corps of Cadets in their first year and will exhibit higher self-discipline to persevere.

Hypothesis 6: Stayers will score higher on measures of Extraversion than leavers which may contribute to better coping through being enthusiastic and experiencing more positive emotions.

Hypothesis 7: Stayers will be higher in Agreeableness than Leavers in the first year of the Corps of Cadets which could indicate a higher level of social support seeking and low level of withdrawal.

Hypothesis 8: Those who stay in the Corps of Cadets in their first-year will exhibit lower levels of Neuroticism than Leavers which indicates superior coping and adjustment strategies in the face of stressful situations.

Hypothesis 9: Those who score higher on Mental Toughness will be more likely to stay in the Corps of Cadets which indicates a need for challenges, high self confidence, and willingness to persevere in stressful situations.

Hypothesis 10: Stayers will score higher on measures of Leadership than Leavers.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

The participants consisted of 755 college freshmen (males = 612 and females = 143) who joined the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University in August, 2013. Survey Monkey assessment procedures were used to administer a multi-faceted survey consisting of the NEO-PI-R, the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control scale, and a series of questionnaires adapted from the Psychological Skills Inventory which measures Mental Toughness and Leadership. Participants completed the survey during August prior to the beginning of the fall 2013 semester and those who chose to leave the program were recorded. Reasons for leaving and time of departure were also noted. Stayers (n = 608) were defined as those who chose to stay in the Corps and Leavers (n = 147) were defined as those who chose to voluntarily leave the program by the beginning of their second academic semester (January). Past data has shown that most attrition occurs in the first semester beginning in August and declines at the end of January so analyses were conducted at this time. Another analyses will be conducted at the end of the year to study attrition throughout the year. Using SAS procedures, a MANOVA analysis was conducted in order to contrast the personality traits of those that stayed in the Corps with those that decided to leave the program on the personality measures. The analyses used are presented below.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

A MANOVA analysis was used to compare leavers versus stayers on the Big Five, Mental Toughness, Locus of Control, and Leadership scales. A significant Wilks' λ $F_{(10,742)} = 3.23$, $p < .0005$ was observed. A significant effect was found for Extraversion $F_{(1,754)} = 6.74$, $p < .0003$ with Stayers ($\bar{X} = 50.69$) scoring significantly higher than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 47.13$, $p < .0003$). A significant effect was found for Conscientiousness $F_{(1,754)} = 5.93$, $p < .0006$ where Stayers ($\bar{X} = 50.61$) scored significantly higher than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 47.47$, $p < .004$). A significant effect was also found for Neuroticism $F_{(1,754)} = 16.23$, $p < .0002$ with Stayers ($\bar{X} = 48.96$) scoring significantly lower than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 54.30$, $p < .0002$). The difference between Stayers and Leavers approached but did not achieve statistical significance on the Openness to Experience and Agreeableness scales. A significant difference was also observed on the Chance Locus of Control scale $F_{(1,754)} = 7.43$, $p < .0002$ where Stayers ($\bar{X} = 49.24$) scored significantly lower than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 53.13$, $p < .0009$). No significant differences were observed between Stayers and Leavers on the Powerful Others or Internal Locus of Control scales. Differences between the Stayers and Leavers were also found on the Mental Toughness subscale of the Psychological Skills Inventory (Bourgeois, LeUnes, Meyers, & Hudson (2011) $F_{(1,754)} = 3.45$, $p < .02$ where Stayers ($\bar{X} = 50.54$) scored significantly higher than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 47.76$, $p < .004$). A significant effect was also found on the Leadership subscale $F_{(1,754)} = 2.67$, $p < .05$ where Stayers ($\bar{X} = 50.50$) scored significantly higher than Leavers ($\bar{X} = 47.91$, $p < .02$). Results of the MANOVA analyses are presented in Table 2 and graphed in Figure 1.

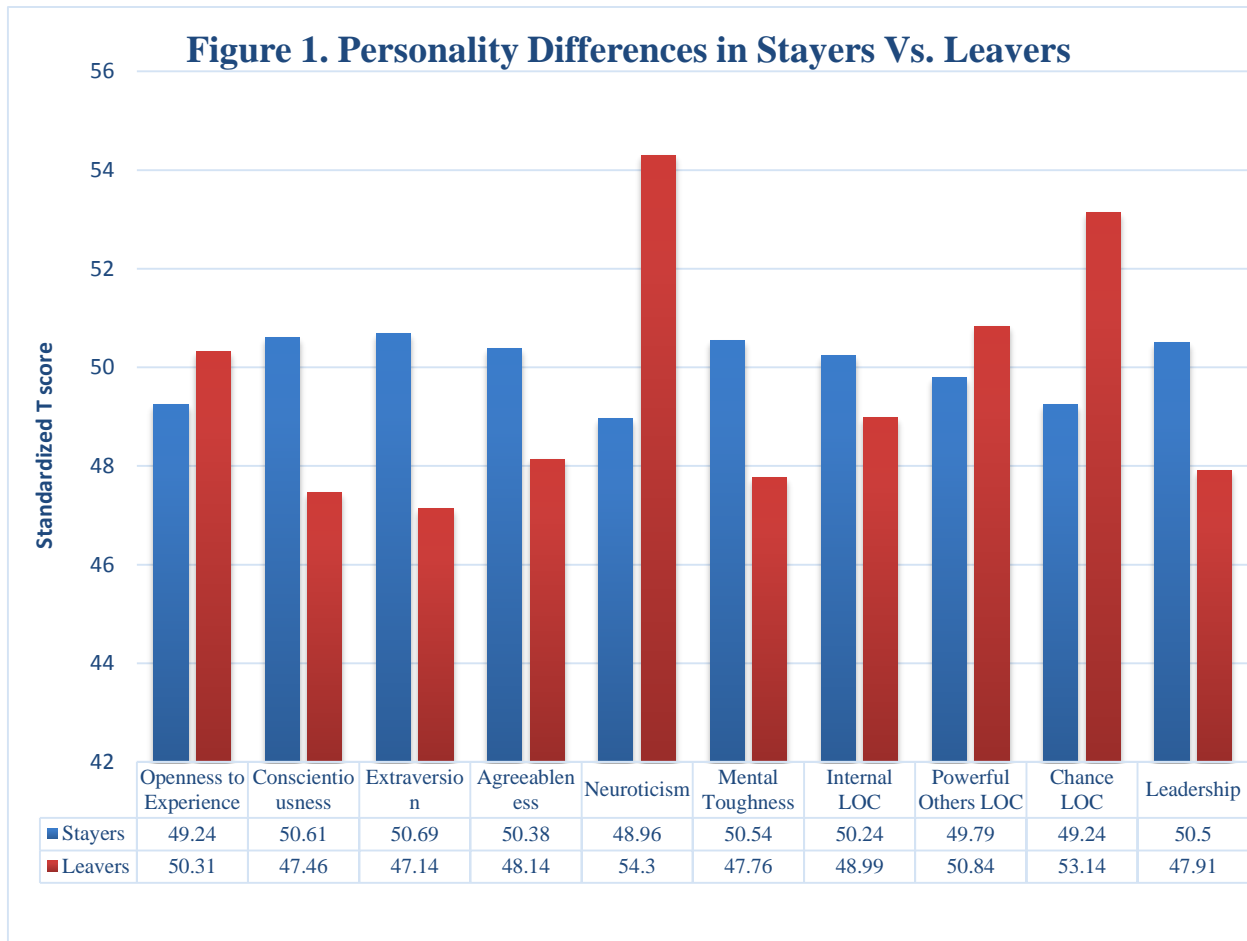


Table 2. MANOVA Results

Variable	Mean Standardized score	F	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
Openness to Experience		0.26	(1,754)	0.61
Stayers	49.24			
Leavers	50.31			
Conscientiousness**		8.88	(1,754)	0.003
Stayers	50.61			
Leavers	47.46			
Extraversion**		13.97	(1,754)	0.0002
Stayers	50.69			

Table 2 Continued MANOVA Results

Leavers	47.14			
Agreeableness		1.23	(1,754)	0.27
Stayers	50.38			
Leavers	48.14			
Neuroticism**		20.27	(1,754)	< .0001
Stayers	48.96			
Leavers	54.30			
Internal LOC		1.92	(1,754)	0.17
Stayers	50.24			
Leavers	48.99			
Powerful Others LOC		5.01	(1,754)	0.0019
Stayers	49.79			
Leavers	50.84			
Chance LOC**		7.43	(1,754)	< .0001
Stayers	53.14			
Leavers	49.24			
Mental Toughness**		3.45	(1,754)	0.0163
Stayers	50.54			
Leavers	47.76			
Leadership**		5.46	(1,754)	0.019
Stayers	50.50			
Leavers	47.91			

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results of this research show that there is a difference between Stayers and Leavers on several personality variables including Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Mental Toughness, Leadership, and Chance Locus of Control. These findings are important because it shows that there is a difference in personality between those who turn over voluntarily in the organization and those who stay. Organizations may select for these traits to reduce costs or identify those that may be at risk for turnover early in their tenure. The results support the notion that there may be differences that predispose individuals to cope better with stressful situations and adapt better to new organizations, persist and remain in an organization even if they are not satisfied, or predispose individuals to quit regardless of their satisfaction with the organization.

Locus of Control

The Chance Locus of Control hypothesis was supported since Leavers exhibited a higher Chance Locus of Control than Stayers. This finding may suggest that those who leave an organization early in their tenure may feel that forces such as luck or fate are in control of events in their lives rather than themselves or significant others.

Since the Internal Locus of Control subscale and the Powerful Others Locus of Control subscale approached but did not achieve significance, the hypotheses were not supported. A proposed end of the year analyses will hopefully support the Internal Locus of Control

hypothesis if Stayers exhibit significantly higher scores which would suggest that those who stay in organizations believe that they are in control of their lives. Hopefully, end of the year analyses will show that those who leave early in their tenure will exhibit a higher Powerful Others Locus of Control and attribute events in their life to others such as God or upper management leaders.

The Big Five Personality Traits

The hypotheses regarding both Openness to Experience and Agreeableness were not supported in this analysis. The Openness to Experience finding is contrary to previous research which suggests that those who leave an organization voluntarily may do so because of what Ghiselli (1974) deemed the Hobo Syndrome. This suggests that those high on Openness to Experience may engage in unplanned turnover because they view opportunities that arise to change jobs as a learning experience and view the move with a positive perspective. Our results may not support this hypothesis because individuals may not have viewed any other student organizations as worth leaving the Corps of Cadets or may plan to join the organization while still a member of the Corps of Cadets. The Agreeableness hypothesis was not supported since Stayers did not exhibit significantly higher scores. This result does not support Zimmerman's (2008) meta-analysis where Agreeableness had the highest negative relationship with turnover and was also negatively related to intentions to quit. If intentions to quit were measured in the study, it may have had an effect on turnover and intentions to quit and supported Zimmerman's results.

The hypotheses regarding Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Neuroticism were all supported in the results. The Conscientiousness hypothesis was supported because Stayers scored higher than Leavers on measures of Conscientiousness. This finding suggests that those who stay are more organized and responsible than those who chose to leave. This also supports the reverse side of Ghiselli's (1974) Hobo Syndrome which suggests that those higher in Conscientiousness will not engage in spontaneous turnover but instead will weigh their options and consider the long term ramifications of their actions. As suggested by Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, (2001) and Maertz and Colleagues (2004) those higher in Conscientiousness may feel more contractual or moral feelings of obligation to the organization which reduces their propensity to turnover voluntarily. The Extraversion hypothesis was supported since Stayers exhibited higher levels of Extraversion than Leavers. This supports Zimmerman's (2008) meta-analysis showing that Extraversion has a negative relationship with turnover. As Brief, Butcher, & Roberson (1995), Maertz & Campion (2004), O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett (1989) and Weiss & Cropanzano (1996) suggested, these results show that those who are more extraverted may experience positive emotions more frequently, are more likely to recall positive information about their work experiences, and are more likely to be liked by peers and therefore become socialized quickly into the organization and less likely to quit. The Neuroticism hypothesis was supported in our study since Stayers exhibited lower levels of Neuroticism than Leavers. This finding suggests that those higher in Neuroticism may not be equipped to cope as well with stressful events and may not socialize as quickly or effectively into the organization and therefore be more likely to turnover. These results support Burke, Brief, & George (1993), Maertz & Griffeth (2004), Watson & Clark (1984), and Weiss & Cropanzano (1996)

who suggest that those high in Neuroticism and low in Emotional Stability are more likely to encode and recall negative events about their work environment and have negative perceptions of themselves which gives them a higher propensity to turnover. We also found support for Zimmerman's (2008) meta-analysis which showed a negative relationship between Emotional Stability and turnover.

Mental Toughness and Leadership

The hypothesis regarding Mental Toughness was supported since Stayers exhibited higher levels of Mental Toughness than Leavers. This supports prior research by Bourgeois, LeUnes, Hudson, & Meyers (2011), Clough et al. (2002) and Loehr (1986) suggesting that those high in Mental Toughness are more likely to value and desire challenge, commitment, and control. The hypothesis on Leadership was supported since Stayers scored higher than Leavers on measures of Leadership. This upholds the notion that certain Big Five traits may relate to leadership emergence and effectiveness. Further research should examine the entire commitment process and how it relates to turnover, intentions to quit, situational factors such as shock events and organizational climate, as well as dispositions such as personality, person-organization fit, and core self-evaluations.

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