AUIRTROSAI

(Acronym Usage in ROTC: The Relationship of Socialization and Identification)

Word Count: 5,456

Abstract

This study analyzed the relationship between knowledge of acronym meaning and group member's socialization and identification. It examined the understudied relationship between knowledge of acronym meaning by cadets in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs and their socialization and identification in the group. Research has concluded that when assimilated into a group the group members contribute more, and overall have greater satisfaction (Riddle, Anderson, & Martin, 2000). This assimilation can be separated into two variables, socialization and identification of group members. Research on the relationship for knowledge of acronym meaning and assimilation has been understudied; therefore, this project explored how the terms we use in groups impacts our connection within the group.

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Have you ever joined a new group excited for all the possibilities your membership can bring, then quickly realize the other members are using unfamiliar terms? This experience depicts the impact of jargon usage in organizations, defined as "the technical terminology of characteristic idiom of a special activity or group" (Strehlow, 1983, pg. 23). The member is privy to more information than the newcomer (Wang, Cheng, & Wang, 2016). The newcomer is left feeling disconnected from the organization they just joined, since they cannot readily communicate with other group members using the jargon.

Research has concluded that when assimilated into a group, the group members contribute more and have greater satisfaction (Riddle, Anders, & Martin, 2000). This assimilation can be broken down into two variables: socialization and identification of group members. This paper is organized around prior research of group socialization and identification, the methods for the study, and a final discussion. This research project analyzes the relationship between knowledge of acronyms and the group member's socialization and identification.
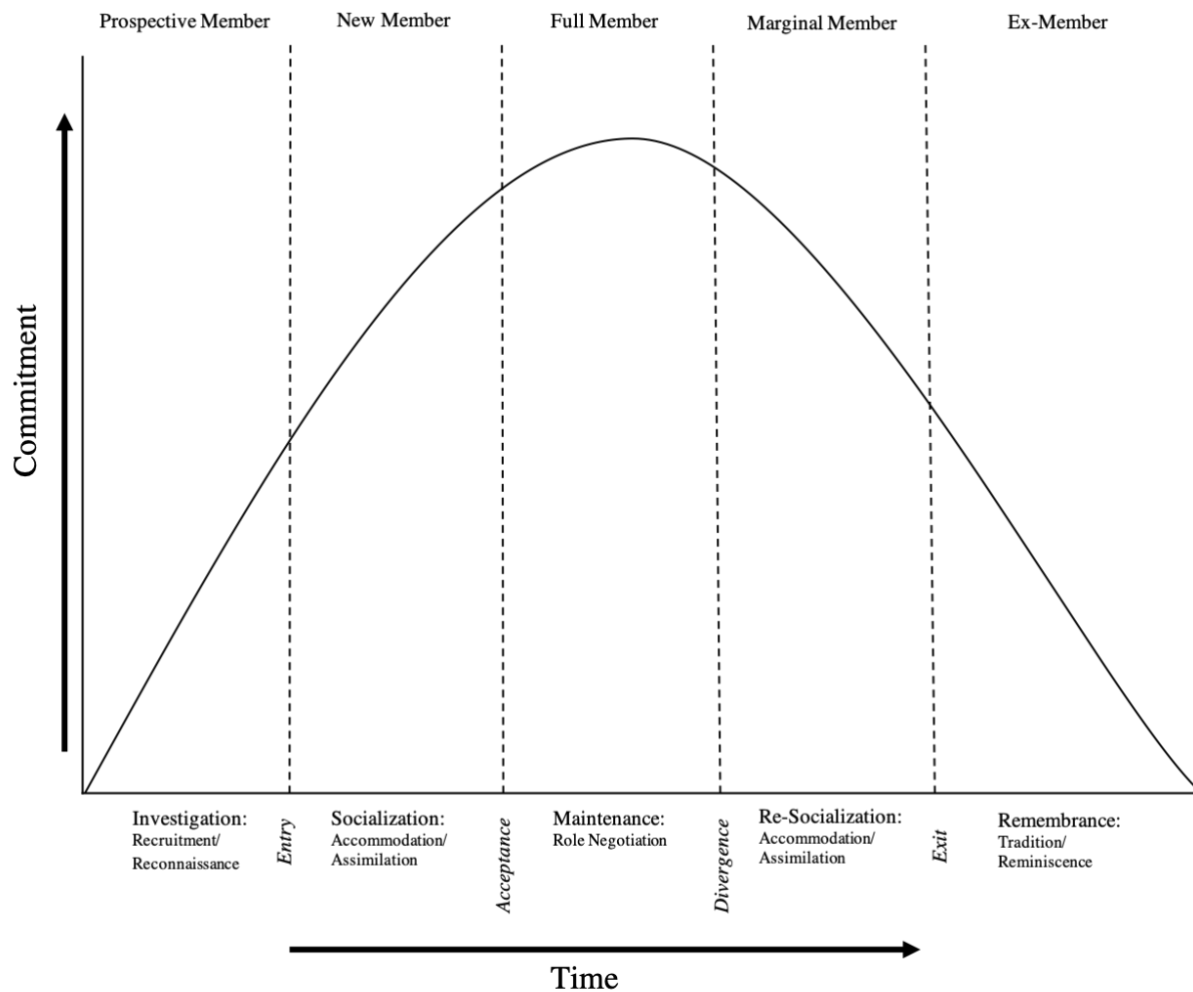
Group Socialization

Define. Socialization of group members is an important step for group communication effectiveness. Anderson, Riddle, and Martin (1999) define socialization "as a two-way process of groups influencing individuals and vice versa, a dual perspective of the individual and the group is essential in developing a comprehensive understanding of socialization process in groups" (pg. 140). In order for newcomers to gain membership in a group they must first go through the socialization process. This process helps the newcomer learn the culture of the group (Moreland & Levine, 1982). Socialization leads newcomers and members to evaluate whether their goals

align (Levine & Moreland, 1994), and if the newcomer is fulfilling the expectations and goals of the group.

       Moreland and Levine Model. The first socialization model was created by Moreland and Levine in 1982, it evaluated the process of a newcomer going through socialization, assimilation, accommodation, and finally becoming a full member. Due to Moreland and Levine's (1982) social psychological focus, they had a cognitive perspective approach when developing their "model of group socialization" (pg. 153). The group socialization model is displayed below as figure 1; "within each phase, evaluations produce change in commitment, which in turn lead to a role transition when a decision criterion has been reached. Once a role transition has taken place, a new phase is entered and evaluations begin anew" (Moreland & Levine, 1982, pg. 151). Moreland and Levine's (1982) model depicts an ideal individual's group experience through five stages of membership divided by four role transitions. For each of the stages, which can be from the perspective of the group or individual, there is a continual process of evaluation of rewards from the individual/group, this evaluation will then impact the individual/group feeling of commitment towards group goals and values, and due to the changes in commitment a role transition from the individual/group results (Moreland & Levine, 1982).

Fig. 1. A model of group socialization

Socialization is the second stage of the model, and the stage that will be the focus of this study. Moreland and Levine (1982) state socialization is when the "group attempts to teach the individual 'appropriate' behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, and evaluates how much he or she contributes to the attainment of group goals" (pg. 152). The group accommodates to the individual, and the individual assimilates to the group by adapting and evaluating the group, as well as, having the group modify to fit the individual (Moreland & Levine, 1982). This socialization model created a foundational understanding of the interworking's of group transitions.

Communication Model. In 1999 Anderson et al. expanded a phase model titled Group Socialization Model: Individual Member. Whereas, Moreland and Levine focused on psychological aspects of the individual, Anderson et al. centered their work on group communication. This model has five phases representing "both an individual member and a group perspective, essential characteristics that explain how communication serves to shape socialization activities associated with participating in group tasks and developing intragroup relationships" (Anderson et al., 1999, pg. 144). Within this non-linear model, the authors understood an individual can be a part of another group in a different phase. During group socialization the group may accommodate or reject the newcomer, additionally, groups may repeat phases and will handle the process at different variations (Anderson et al., 1999; Myers & Anderson, 2008). The five phases will now be discussed more in depth.

First, the antecedent phase is a step in which the newcomer influences the group through their beliefs, attitudes, motives, motives for communication, communication traits, communication apprehension, argumentativeness, and demographics; these influencers impact the work relationship of the members and the newcomer's perception of the group (Anderson et al., 1999). Next, the anticipatory phase "describes the pre-affiliation expectations that group members form about each other" (Anderson et al., 1999, pg. 148). This process involves the group/individual determining if the expectations set for one another are being met. If expectations aren't being met, an evaluation seeing if both parties are willing to change will occur. The next three phases are encounter, assimilation, and exit. For this research the focus will be on the encounter and assimilation phase.

The encounter phase is the initial interaction of individuals whether it be computer mediated or face to face, this phase is the first step in determining group roles and goals

(Anderson et al., 1999). During this socialization phase, members are evaluating if a newcomer is able to meet their goals, newcomers are inquiring if they appreciate the goals of the group, and both are determining their roles amongst one another (Anderson et al., 1999). This phase resembles the 'ribbon cutting of a new building', and newcomers are feeling out the building during their first walk through. The fourth phase of the model is assimilation, "a process of full integration into a group culture" (Anderson et al., 1999, pg. 152). Anderson et al. (1999) explains how this process involves the newcomer understanding the group culture and identifying with the group's identity. If both of these feeling align, the newcomer will have a sense of connection with the group. The final phase is exit, and occurs when an individual leaves a group, the result of this exit phase leaves the group/individual reflecting on their past time involved with one another (Anderson et al., 1999). Hess (1993) deemed a group can be perceived as successfully assimilating the out-group members based on their satisfaction, effectiveness, socialization, and personalization. The encounter and assimilation phase are at the root of socializing new members to acclimate to the group culture.

Outcomes. When newcomers enter a group, the newcomer and group itself develops and changes as a result of the new member (Anderson et al., 1999; Moreland & Levine, 2001). The more a newcomer is committed and willing to accommodate to the group's culture, the smoother the assimilation process will be for that newcomer (Kane & Rink, 2015). Gibson and Papa (2000) stated how it is "to the organization's benefit that the newcomer engage in such information-seeking and 'learn the ropes' quickly so that existing efficiency, productivity, morale and cohesion levels are not negatively affected" (pg. 71). However, it isn't only about the newcomer conforming to the group values. Burke, Kraut, and Joyce (2010) stated that "socialization to groups and organizations is a bidirectional process in which newcomers play a

proactive role" (pg. 30). The group develops as a result of newcomers, therefore, both new and old members are evaluating their expectations of one another throughout the process.

Group Identification

According to Anderson, Riddle, and Martin (1999) assimilation begins when members are immersed in the culture and have a "shared identity through symbolic interaction that builds group cohesion" (pg. 152). From this, we can conclude socialization and identification processes combine in order for newcomers to assimilate into the organization. This process requires the identity of one individual being merged into the identity of the group.

The foundational studies for identification are rooted in social psychologies' social identity theory from Tajfel and Turner (1979). Due to this basis there are two cognitive process at the epicenter of the theory: 'categorization' and 'enhancement of self-esteem' (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This theory explains the relationship between the individual and the group from self-perceptions of cognition and behavior (Abrams, Hogg, Hinkle, & Otten, 2005; Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004). Cheney (1983) explained the impact the group has on the individual, by being a "motivational" source for identification, the policies of the organization influence the individuals identity, and have the potential to hold "referent power" over the individuals' identity. The social identity theory illustrates the influences and interaction of the organization on the individual's identity.

The theory concludes individuals in groups normally categorize themselves based on societal categories; such as generations, gender, and ethnicity, and when in groups, they are more likely to connect with those with similar demographics (Bayazit & Maanix, 2003). This social categorization occurs because group members identify with others based on the same classification (Hogg et al., 2004). The more obvious identity features initially outline group

boundaries because it's simpler to see differences, but outwardly apparent social categories are not the only groups people pair with. Individuals will group with those who make them comfortable, which is normally those with similar identities and therefore complementary attitudes. Abrams et al. (2005) finds that social identity is both the result and catalyst for group attitude. Individuals have a strong role of influence on group behaviors, due to the dynamic experiences and attitudes each member can add to the group. Scott (2007) stated that "SIT has been useful not only for recognizing the organization as one social identification target relevant to individuals but also by illustrating the multiple identification targets (i.e., various social identities) of relevance to organizational members" (pg. 126). However, social identity is only a part to a whole and "must be set in the context of individual, relational, and cultural elements in groups" (Abrams et al., 2005, pg. 125). Considering this, it's beneficial to understand the impacts and factors of shared identities in groups.

   Define. Identification is the concept that a member feels their identity aligns with the group they are involved in or the group members' values correspond with the group's (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Cheney (1983) claims identification is vital, because it aids "us in making sense of our experience, in organizing our thoughts, in achieving decisions, and in anchoring the self" (pg. 342). Understanding the reasoning behind one's membership in a group is a part of the identification process, and there are multiple aspects to process this evaluation. Henry, Arrow, and Carini (1999) broke identification into variables of cognition, affection, and behavior based from Bouas and Arrow's (1996) original work. First Henry, Arrow, and Carini (1999) state, "the cognitive source taps how social identity and social categorization- aspect of individual cognition and the self – influence group identification" (pg. 561); second, the relational connections interpersonally displayed through emotional feelings; thirdly, the behavior variable "focuses on

the group-level construct of cooperative interdependence (pg. 561). In addition, contextual norms of a group share the groups' mutuality and identity, and help distance the outgroup (Abrams, Hogg, Hinkle, & Otten, 2005). These features help one understand the variables of identification, and awareness that each person will have to navigate themselves.

The results of a member feeling a strong sense of identity in the group has proven to have positive outcomes on the group and member (Abrams et al., 2005; Cheney, 1983; Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994) When a newcomer has a sense of identification with the group, they will be able to align with the goals of the organization more easily. This identification can develop as individuals spend more time involved in an organization, which leads to the group evaluating the individual positively (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Cheney (1983) stated that during this time of organizational identification, newcomers can gain an understanding of protocol, socialization, and the administrative interworking's of the organization.

Identification aligning with a group is an intentional action by the newcomer; it is a representation of their commitment to gain and remain a member. Especially considering Bayazit and Maanix (2003) deemed there will be a conflict of interest if individual goals are not coordinated with the organizational goals. They conducted a study on the team interactions of eighty- three MBA students, which concluded a member is more willing to continue in the group when there is: "absence of relationship conflict," "individual member's beliefs in the efficacy of the team, and perceived effective team task performance" (Bayazit & Maanix, 2003, pg. 314). In the process of adjusting one's identity to match the identification of the group, the newcomer is in pursuit of reducing uncertainty (Bayazit & Maanix, 2003; Hogg et al., 2004). In this process they will become more comfortable and confident in the group. Identification in a group leads to a member feeling more interconnected and knowledgeable about the group.

Rationale

There are more than 6,500 verbal and written languages spoken across the world. In communication studies, research on group-languages can be traced back to the 1980's from research on airplane crews and the impact the crew's communication had on the safety and effectiveness of the piloting (Vinton, 1989). There has also been extensive research on the development of children's culture and societal norms as a result of the language they are surrounded by, defined as the language socialization paradigm (Paugh, 2005). Language plays an important role in the development of an individual, because from the first message one hears they are being socialized to their society, and "communication style and language...reflect relative status" (Van Swol & Kane, 2019, pg. 10). Van Swol and Kane (2019) stated "language helps to reify status through pronoun use, polite language, and language convergence, and also creates status differences through inequality of participation" (pg. 25). Group language is a result of and created from the establishment of social norms as group cultures.

Acronyms are a specialized type of language, groups use for efficiency. An acronym is defined as "a word formed from the first (or first few) letters of a series of words" (Strehlow, 1983, pg. 22). Acronyms and jargon are types of communication the general public doesn't understand. Troop (2018) stated, "People see an acronym...they want to know what it stands for" (pg. 1). This causes issues in organizations that use acronyms, since it will take time for newcomers to learn the acronym meanings. In addition, organization's communication of symbols and messages frame the day to day of that group (Anderson, et al., 1999). Therefore, understanding the messages and communication style of the organization are crucial factors for a member to function and assimilate into the group.

Language and socialization. The assimilation that newcomers go through has many

variables, and one aspect of this socialization is understanding the group's language. It is

important for newcomers to interpret the group's language. By doing this they are showing the

full-fledged members they desire to become a part of the group. (Van Swol & Kane, 2019; Burt,

Kraut, & Joyce, 2010). Learning acronyms is a key aspect of socialization in groups. Moreland

and Levine (2001) support this belief, through their explanation that an understanding of "shared

knowledge" (i.e. customs, jargon, symbols) is vital for a newcomer to be accepted into the group.

When newcomers actively ask questions to learn about the group, they are heightening the

group's efficiency, because they can better support the group due to their gained understanding,

(Anderson et al., 1999; Gibson & Papa, 2000; Kane & Rink, 2016). This explains why

understanding the group's language is important for the development of the group; without these

steps' groups will not form a cohesive team. Therefore, this hypothesis was analyzed:

H1: Knowledge of acronym meanings positively relates to a group member's

socialization.

Language and identification. Another example of language research that has been

popular in communication studies is pronoun research. Kane and Rink (2015) looked at

newcomers and their use of "you" versus "we" in group discussion, and the impact on group

dynamics; they concluded when newcomers merged their identity with the group's by using

plural pronouns, they were accepted more (pg. 94). The group may have been more comfortable

with the newcomers because the full-fledged members were able to anticipate the newcomer's

actions due to their desire to identify and belong (Gibson & Papa, 2010). It is important for

newcomers to identity with the group, and a way for newcomers to show this to the group

members it to utilize the same group language. Van Swol and Rink (2019) stated group language

can be used by individuals to develop assimilation and unity. This is due to language aiding in understanding of societal cognition (Van Swol, Prahl, Kolb, Lewis, & Carlson, 2016). Through these research findings one can understand the important role language plays for newcomer's identification in groups. Considering this, the below hypothesis was posed:

H2: Knowledge of acronym meaning positively relates to group members' identification.

Time. For assimilation, the longer amount of time a newcomer has for identification (Bayazit & Maanix, 2003) and socialization processes (Moreland & Levine, 1982), the more likely the individuals will identify the newcomer as a member. Therefore, time is a factor that must be considered for the assimilation of newcomers into groups. Moreland and Levine (1994 & 2001) stated socialization is a process that develops over time, which will allow newcomers to influence the group and be influenced by the group. Considering this, a key concern for members entering an organization and not knowing the language is that newcomers are hesitant to fail (Anderson et al., 1999). Due to this, newcomers will not be comfortable using a specific jargon and will be dissuaded from clarifying the language. Therefore, the longer a newcomer is a part of a group and the more involved that new member is, the more likely they will socialize and identify with the group. Consequently, the following hypothesis were investigated:

H3: Length of membership in ROTC has a direct positive relationship to knowledge of acronym meaning.

H4: Length of membership in ROTC has a direct positive relationship to group member's socialization.

H5: Length of membership in ROTC has a direct positive relationship to group member's identification.

Methods

Sample

ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) is one of the four avenues to become a commissioned military officer in the United States. According to Today's Military.com the other options are through military academies, Officer Candidate/Training School, and direct commission (2019). By selecting ROTC, a college student becomes a cadet and balances the daily tasks of military training with their college courses. AROTC (Army Reserve Officer Training Corps) at the University XXXXX requirements include: a military training academic course (topic dependent on year), physical training, a weekly leadership laboratory, and a summer military training. AFROTC (Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps) at the University XXXXX follows the same requirements except less frequent physical training.

The ROTC courses are not required unless the participant has already contracted into their military branch. In this instance if the ROTC program was not completed the individual would incur financial penalties or time commitments in the military (BestColleges.com, 2019). The longer a member is involved in ROTC the more involved and more intensive their leadership roles become (Holm Center T-508, 2016; cadetcommand.army.mil, 2018). For both ROTC programs leadership roles become more time intensive in the junior and senior years. Each ROTC branch training varies due to different Cadre (Officers and Enlisted who train cadets) and environments the cadets are placed in.

Participants

For this study, participants were gathered through convenience sampling. The survey was sent out to cadets through emails, texts, and group applications. An AFROTC and AROTC letter of approval was created by the Commanders. Both AFROTC and AROTC cadets at the University XXXXX had access to the survey, which resulted in a total of 80 voluntary participants. While being a member of ROTC is voluntary, for those who are contracted and

having their school funded ROTC courses are non-voluntary. The majority of participants were

contracted (*n*= 55; 69%) and there were some non-contracted cadets (*n*= 25; 31%). Most of the

participants were male (*n*=55; 69%), but there were several female participants (*n*= 25; 31%).

The respondents ranged from 18 to 33 years old and the average age was 20 (*SD*= 2.423).

Measures

Participants in the survey first shared demographic information for gender, age, semesters

in ROTC, and contract status. Secondly, the cadets were asked to do a self-reported measure on

their understanding of a set of popular acronyms. Thirdly, the participants responded to two

scales, organizational identification questionnaire (OIQ) and small group socialization scale

(SGSS). All sections of the survey are attached in Appendix A.

Acronyms. In order to gauge the knowledge of acronyms, a self-reported measure was

utilized, created by the researcher. The popularity/knowledge of the acronyms was determined

with the help of the Commanders of both ROTC programs. It should be noted that the usage of

the acronyms did have a varying frequency in the programs, so there was an original

understanding that some acronyms were more popular thus more familiar than others. Each

participant stated the acronym's meaning and used it in a sentence. An example of is "Physical

Training…We do PT in the morning." The acronyms were chosen to represent the overall

acronym understanding of the cadets. By asking cadets to state what the acronym stands for and

use it in a sentence, it ensures they can use it in the group. The cadets appeared to have a sold

understanding of the 10 acronyms and the correct sentence usage of the acronyms. When an

acronym was defined or used correctly it was coded with a one, and incorrect answers were

coded with a zero. Therefore, the maximum number that could be reached was 20. However, the

highest a participant scored was 19, and the minimum score was a 1. The mean of all 20

questions was 12.28, there was a range of 18, and *SD*= 4.79.

Organizational identification. To measure how the group members identified in the

group the organizational identification questionnaire (OIQ) from Mael and Ashforth's (1992)

was used. This scale measures the "perception of oneness with or belongings to an organization,

where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a

member" (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, pg. 104). This identification scale is a self-reported

questionnaire, and participants respond strongly disagree to strongly agree based on a 7-point

Likert-type scale. The cadets responded to six questions . A sample question is: "When someone

criticizes ROTC, it feels like a personal insult." These responses will be used to evaluate the

members' feelings of identification in ROTC. The identification survey has been modified from

its original form to fit this particular sample. All six questions for the OIQ were used, the term

"school" in the original survey was replaced with ROTC (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Additionally,

OIQ was based on a 5-point Likert scale, whereas, in this survey the responses were based on a 7

point-likert scale. The scale was reliable (*a*= .87).

Small group socialization scale. In order to measure group socialization, the small

group socialization scale (SGSS) was developed by Anderson, Riddle, and Martin (1999). SGSS

is a tool "that measures people's perceptions of the communication effectiveness of group

socialization that includes task and relationship dimensions" (Riddle, Anderson, & Martin, 2000,

pg. 555). The SGSS is a self-reported questionnaire, that asks participants to respond on a 7-

point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There are 14 questions,

which were used to analyze how well cadets are socialized and have assimilated into the

organization. A sample question is: "I was clear what was expected of me in ROTC." The SGSS

has been modified from its original form to fit this particular sample. All fourteen questions of the scale were used, the term "group" in the survey questions was replaced with ROTC (Riddle, Anderson and Martin, 2000). Additionally, SGSS was based on a 5-point likert scale, whereas, in this survey the responses were based on a 7 point-likert scale. The scale was reliable (a= .88).

Content Analysis. In order to test a participant's acronym knowledge, the participants had to fill-in their definition of an acronym and use it in a sentence. The acronyms were selected by the researcher's knowledge of popular acronyms used in both programs. The popular acronyms list was then confirmed by the AFROTC and AROTC Commanders. A code book was created for the two researchers in this project, by taking examples from the responses for each of the 20 acronym questions. A coder training occurred for the two involved researchers to clarify any questions before coding took place. Through this training "1" was determined to mean the acronym was correct and used correctly in a sentence, and "0" meant the acronym was not correct and used incorrectly in a sentence. Next an inter-coder reliability test was run, by selecting 10% of the acronym responses. Two researchers completed this inter-coder reliability which resulted in 95% agreement, and a Cohen kappa of .83.

Results

First, tests were run to confirm there was not a significant difference between Air Force ROTC participants and Army ROTC participants. No differences were found. However, there was a vast majority of participants that were contracted, versus non-contracted. Hypothesis one and two were analyzed using a simple linear regression. Hypothesis one was computed predicting there is a positive relationship between group member's socialization and knowledge of acronym meaning. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 78) = 11.72, p < .05$, Adj. R^2 = .12. Participants' predicted acronym knowledge of meaning is equal to .06

(Socialization) + 5.03. As knowledge of acronym meaning increases, so does socialization.

Hypothesis two was computed predicting knowledge of acronym meaning related to how

identified a member feels to the group. An insignificant regression equation was found (F(1, 78)

= .063, $p < .05$, Adj. R^2 = -0.01. Participants' predicted acronym knowledge of meaning is equal

to .00 (Identification) + 5.27. As knowledge of acronym meaning increases, identification does

not increase.

Hypothesis three, four, and five were computed using a one-way ANOVA. Hypothesis

three compared length of membership in ROTC to knowledge of acronym meaning. There was

no significant difference found (F(8, 71) = 1.96, $p < .05$). Hypothesis four compared length of

membership in ROTC to group member's socialization. There was a significant difference found

(F(8, 71) = 2.28, $p < .05$). The Games-Howell post hoc test revealed there were significant

differences between 1 (M = 5.58, sd = 0.70) and 9 (M = 6.75, sd = 0.15 semesters, 3 (M = 6.03,

sd = 0.73) and 9 semesters, 5 (M = 5.44, sd = 0.95) and 9 semesters, and 6 (M = 6.14, sd = 0.10)

and 1 semesters. Hypothesis five compared length of members in ROTC to group member's

identification. There was no significant difference found (F(8, 71) = 2.02, $p < .05$).

Discussion

This project explored assimilation of ROTC cadets. It revealed that aspects of

socialization and knowledge of acronym meaning played a significant impact on group members.

While the group members understood the acronyms and didn't feel identified with the

organization, they were still able to complete the processes of socialization to the group.

Theoretical Implications

Socialization. The hypotheses in this study related to socialization were supported and

align with the previous socialization work on group membership. Moreland and Levine (1982)

and Anderson et. al (1999) stated groups evolve over time. The time frame studied focused on

the socialization and identification of the members to the group, but many other individual transitions in the group (i.e. antecedent, encounter, and exit) were also occurring. Therefore, while one can determine having knowledge of acronym meaning and spending time in a group lead to heightened socialization, there are other factors that may contribute. This study was successful in fulfilling Levine and Moreland's (1984) request of doing more research on how groups evolve across time, since there was a correlation found between length of membership and socialization.

Knowledge of group language benefits the socialization process. Anderson et. al (1999) stated the better an individual understands the 'group talk' of the organization the stronger their socialization to the organization is. According to Van Swol and Kane (2019) an individual adjusting their language to fit the group means the member wants to assimilate. These conclusions about an individual's socialization were again proven through the significance of hypothesis one in this study, that knowledge of acronym meaning does have a positive relationship to socialization. Paugh (2005) explained learning language during childhood development is an important key to societal socialization, one may draw the same comparison for group socialization. While understanding language is key to socialization, are other important aspects to socialization.

Hypothesis three stated length of membership has a positive relationship to knowledge of acronym meaning. This hypothesis resulted in insignificant results. These results combined with the significance of hypothesis one and four shows that socialization is more than solely learning the group language. The participants knew the acronyms starting from a brief length of membership but did not feel fully socialized until they had been a part of the group for an extended time. They may have known the acronyms due to their prior knowledge of the military.

Paugh (2005) explained how learning language is a part of socialization, and that parents

socialize their children to their culture through language. Since a vast number of participants had

family members who had served in the military, they may have already known the acronyms

before starting the ROTC program. But since socialization is a specific group process (Vinton,

1989) previous experience with the military versus ROTC, does not expedite the process for

those members who had family in the military. While the participants knew a large number of

the acronyms and their meanings from military jargon, they had not experienced the process of

socializing with a military organization for themselves.

      Identification. Identification is how you uniquely feel about the group. The hypotheses

for this study were all insignificant when the identification variable was included. This may have

been due to testing two different groups as one, and the members identifying with the profession

of a military officer over the ROTC group. Additionally, the OIQ used the term 'ROTC' instead

of AFROTC and AROTC for the respective groups. Cadets may feel a stronger sense of

identification to their specific ROTC program, versus the ROTC program in general. Abrams,

Hogg, Hinke, and Otten (2005) stated social identity "is a self-conception as sharing a category

membership with a set of other people" (pg. 117). Considering this, both ROTC programs have

two different set of people, so it's logical one group may feel a strong sense of identity and the

other not feel the same sense of identity. However, it's understandable the individuals in each

group would still have a strong sense of socialization, because the processes for each group are

very similar.

      Another consideration is that the participants may align their identity with the profession

of a military Air Force or Army officer versus the training program of ROTC. This conclusion

can be supported by Russo's (1998) work, which used mixed methods to analyze 281 editors'

experiences at their newspaper company; the study found there was a stronger identification with the journalism profession over the news organization. Similarly, to the news organization, the ROTC program is a means to an end, with the end goal being to join the military as a profession. Therefore, some cadets may not identify with the ROTC program itself but continue to commit to the program due to their desire to become a military officer.

These cadets may have chosen the military as their future profession due to their family history. As stated above the majority of participants had some measure of familiarity with the military. This most likely played an effect on their knowledge of acronyms, and it may have an impact on their desire to join and identify in the ROTC program. Meisenbach and Kramer (2014) found that "a third of our participants expressed a music identity as closely tied into their sense of who and what their family was and did. Thus, their identification with music was embedded within their family identity" (pg. 200). Considering most of the participants family identities may have aligned with the military, it's probable the participants felt a stronger identity with the military over the ROTC program. In the future when studying ROTC cadets and other programs where the individuals may have multiple connections and investments with the group being studied, it would be best to consider the 'nested identities' of those individuals (Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014). By considering the 'nested identities' the researcher would analyze the multiple contributing factors to an individual's identification.

Appendix

Demographic Questions

1. Are you a member of ROTC at the University XXXXX? ____Yes _____ No

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your gender?

___ Male ___ Female ___ Other ___ Prefer Not to Respond

4. What year did you start at UTK? _____

5. Are you in Air Force ROTC or Army ROTC?

___ AFROTC ___ AROTC

6. How many full semesters have you been in ROTC?

___ 1 Semester ___ 2 Semesters ___ 3 Semesters ___ 4 Semesters ___ 5 Semesters

___ 6 Semesters ___ 7 Semesters ___ 8 Semesters ___ 9 Semesters

7. Are you contracted to enlist in the military upon commissioning? ____ Yes ____ No

8. What prior military familiarity do you have? (Please select all that apply)

____ self ____ parents ____ siblings ___ grandparents ___ others (please specify)

Acronym Knowledge

Below you will see 10 acronyms used in ROTC regularly. For each acronym you will first type

what it stands for, then you will be asked to use the acronym in a sentence.

THIS IS NOT A TEST. We are interested in your experiences with ROTC.

9. What does COB stand for?

10. Please use COB in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

11. What does NLT stand for?

12. Please use NLT in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

13. What does SA stand for?

14. Please use SA in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

15. What does FIDO stand for?

16. Please use FIDO in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

17. What does FOB stand for?

18. Please use FOB in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

19. What does DoDMERB stand for?

20. Please use DoDMERB in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

21. What does PT stand for?

22. Please use PT in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

23. What does POC stand for?

24. Please use POC in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

25. What does AAR stand for?

26. Please use AAR in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

27. What does V/R stand for?

28. Please use V/R in a sentence you would use in ROTC.

Identity

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements. (Seven Point Likert

Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree)

29. When someone criticizes ROTC, it feels like a personal insult.

30. I am very interested in what others think about ROTC.

31. When I talk about ROTC, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'.

32. ROTC's successes are my successes.

33. When someone praises ROTC, it feels like a personal compliment.

34. If a story in the media criticized ROTC, I would feel embarrassed.

Socialization

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements. (Seven Point Likert

Scale from strongly disagree to Strongly Agree)

35. I understand what appropriate dress for ROTC meetings is.

36. I understand the authority ROTC has for doing its work.

37. I did not see myself as an effective ROTC member.

38. I understand the "group talk" ROTC used to do its work.

39. I found someone in ROTC who could provide me with emotional support.

40. It was clear what was expected of me in ROTC.

41. I found someone in ROTC with whom I could talk about career plans.

42. It was not at all clear what was expected of me in ROTC.

43. I depend on other ROTC member for support in ROTC.

44. I found someone in ROTC who could help me adjust to ROTC.

45. I found someone in ROTC on whom I can depend for support.

46. I had no clear idea of what ROTC was to accomplish.

47. I found someone in ROTC with whom I could discuss personal matters.

48. There was no one in ROTC on whom I could depend for support.

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