

Technical Report 1404

Articulating the Competencies for Scout Platoon Leaders

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February 2022

**United States Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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This Technical Report has been submitted to the
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>		
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) February 2022		2. REPORT TYPE Final		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) November 2019 – March 2021	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Articulating the Competencies for Scout Platoon Leaders				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Celeste N. Sanders and Randy J. Brou				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral & Social Sciences 6000 6TH Street (Bldg. 1464 / Mail Stop 5610) Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5610				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral & Social Sciences 6000 6TH Street (Bldg. 1464 / Mail Stop 5610) Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5610				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) ARI	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) Technical Report 1404	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT: Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ARI Research POC: Celeste Sanders, Fort Benning Research Unit					
14. ABSTRACT (200 words max) Multiple sources detail the leadership characteristics and behaviors expected of Army Leaders. However, these sources provide disparate descriptions of how an Army Leader achieves proficiency as it relates to his or her job role. Thus, the goal of this report was to find synergy between two sets of descriptors used to qualify reconnaissance leadership in the Army. Specifically, authoritative texts on Army and Scout Leaders were qualitatively compared with prior research to determine where relationships appeared to emerge among key concepts. Within each relationship, one or more themes were identified that exemplified the existing similarities. This resulted in the development of a framework showing 13 relationships that produced a total of 21 themes. More than half of these themes were supported by Army doctrine as having direct connections to behaviors exhibited according to the leadership role. In describing these outcomes, this report reveals how the Army can capitalize on opportunities to assess Scout Platoon Leaders' competence to lead in their unique capacities while simultaneously establishing benchmarks from which leadership development can be tracked over time.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Leadership, Leader Requirements Model, Attributes, Competencies, Scout Platoons					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified	Unlimited Unclassified		41
					19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER 706-545-2490

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank CPT Pultro, CPT Clark, MSG Pettinicchio, and the Scout Leader Course (SLC) cadre and instructors at Fort Benning for the privilege of partnering with them to conduct this research. We would also like to thank Dr. T. Rhett Graves for his contribution to the methods section of this report and Mr. Scott Flanagan for his subject matter expertise.

ARTICULATING THE COMPETENCIES FOR SCOUT PLATOON LEADERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

Reconnaissance tactics and techniques are well-documented in Army doctrine, taught extensively in institutional courses, and reinforced in homestation training. However, there is little known about the linkages between the leadership demands of those reconnaissance tasks and the standard of leadership that all Army Leaders must achieve. Without this knowledge, the Army is left with a fragmented understanding of the unique qualities that Platoon Leaders need to lead a scout platoon and how those qualities influence their development as junior leaders. Thus, the purpose of this research was to find synergy among previous research on reconnaissance leadership and doctrinal sources of Army and Scout Leaders.

Procedure:

Authoritative texts on Army and Scout Leaders were qualitatively compared with previous research to determine where relationships appeared to emerge among key concepts. A thematic analysis method described by Braun and Clarke (2012) was applied to identify similarities among behavioral indicators of leadership competencies and attributes. An initial thematic analysis allowed for the identification of common concepts described in both core texts. These common concepts, or themes, were further elaborated through association with discrete tasks and behaviors described in other Army doctrine and by subject matter experts.

Findings:

The result of this research was a theoretical framework specifying linkages among leader attributes, doctrinal concepts, and associated roles and responsibilities of Scout Platoon Leaders (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). In total, there were 13 relationships and 21 themes included in the framework (see Appendix A), which primarily included leader behaviors that would be evident in a field training environment.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

These findings allow for a more integrated and granular understanding of Scout leadership by relating it to the standard to which all Army Leaders are held and evaluated as they progress through their careers (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019a). However, there are implications from this research that can be generalized to other branches of the Army; specifically, by establishing relationships between Soldier tasks and Army doctrine that concerns leadership, meaningful measures of leader behaviors can be tracked longitudinally and incorporated into developmental programs.

ARTICULATING THE COMPETENCIES FOR SCOUT PLATOON LEADERS

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ARTICULATING THE COMPETENCIES FOR PLATOON LEVEL SCOUT LEADERS

Introduction

Career advancement for the Army Officer is becoming more complex. Though the transitions from a Second Lieutenant (O-1) to First Lieutenant (O-2) remain relatively automatic, Officers must be selected for promotion to higher grades (e.g., O-3 and above). And, more than before, leadership competence is integral to this selection process (Martinez et al., 2020). Army doctrine describes the leadership qualities and behaviors required of Army Leaders, but the generalities that are often characteristic of such descriptions can make it difficult for an individual Officer to understand what leadership looks like at his or her level. This level of specificity may be included in military training, but this often results in disparate descriptions of what is needed to be proficient and excel as an Army Leader. This is particularly problematic during the early stages of an Officer's career because the salience and perceived relevancy of key opportunities to hone leadership skills may be lost in the minutia of day-to-day tasks thereby hindering expedited growth and development across the career lifecycle.

Efforts needed to prevent this are gaining momentum given the charge to identify and leverage the unique strengths that Soldiers have as they progress in their careers (i.e., The Army People Strategy; Department of the Army, 2019). This has resulted in a number of Army talent management initiatives, including the creation of various command assessment programs as well as a marketplace where both Soldiers and units can showcase their strengths and their preferences (IPPS-A, n.d.). In support of these initiatives, research is needed that analyzes the various standards and facets of Army leadership, specifically in the different Branches, to elucidate the synergy which exists among them. Armed with this information early in their careers, Officers could be self-aware and facilitate their own targeted development well in advance of promotion. This is a rich area of exploration that will, no doubt, require a longitudinal investigation, which is beyond the scope of this report. However, as a contribution towards this endeavor, this report focuses on the leadership competence of Platoon Leaders. Specifically, the goal of this report is to ascertain the similarities between the doctrinal standards of Army Leadership and the role of a Platoon Leader. Determining the aspects of Army Leadership that are most salient at this level will provide a baseline from which development can be monitored over time.

The earliest document on Army leadership doctrine was released in 1946, which introduced the idea that "leadership is the art of influencing human behavior" (FM 22-5; U.S. Department of the Army, 1946) and established a set of qualities and responsibilities that military leaders should possess. Two years later, two documents with the same title, *Leadership* were published that fleshed out leader characteristics even further (DA PAM 22-1; U.S. Department of the Army, 1948a; TC 6; U.S. Department of the Army, 1948b) before being subsumed by Field Manual 22-10 (FM 22-10) in 1951. The FM 22-10 extended the earlier publications by describing leadership techniques as they pertained to various contexts and groups (U.S. Department of the Army, 1951), and it was soon replaced by iterative versions of FM 22-100 that were released between 1953 and 1999. The series of FM 22-100 publications introduced the idea of leadership attributes and the "Be, Know, Do" framework, until FM 6-22 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2006) replaced them towards the end of 1999. FM 6-22 was pivotal because it added the concept of leadership competencies to its predecessors and ultimately led to

what is now known as the Army Leadership Requirements Model (LRM) in the Army Doctrine Publication 6-22 (ADP 6-22; U.S. Department of the Army, 2019a), which currently stands as the authoritative text on Army leadership.

Likewise, reconnaissance training for the Scout Leader progressed through a series of refinements. In the 1960s, an indoor simulator, called the Armored Cavalry Trainer (Baker & Cook, 1967; Cameron, 2010), was piloted to supplement the scant classroom instruction on reconnaissance skills offered to Soldiers in the schoolhouses (Goldsmith & Hodges, 1987). Thus, reconnaissance training was largely the responsibility of each individual Soldier's unit, until the late 1980s; this is when the Scout Platoon Leaders Course was developed for Officers and the Scout-specific version of the Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Course was created for NCOs. However, the instruction offered in these courses was platform-specific, which was viewed as a disadvantage in that it hindered Soldiers from flexibly meeting the demands of varied reconnaissance mission contexts. Therefore, in 2009, the Army Reconnaissance Course, which is now known as the Scout Leader Course (SLC), was created as an amalgamated training course for those slated for leadership positions in a reconnaissance billet, particularly at the platoon level. The course is a requirement for Armor Basic Officer Leader Course graduates, usually Second Lieutenants who are likely to become Platoon Leaders (Zang, 2018). SLC begins with classroom instruction, which is followed by a series of field training exercises (FTXs), and, during the culminating FTX, students are evaluated in at least one of four Scout Leader roles: Platoon Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Section Leader, and Squad Leader. Generally speaking, the Platoon Leader receives orders directly from the Troop Commander and is responsible for everything that happens in the platoon, and the Platoon Sergeant advises and leads alongside the Platoon Leader, issuing orders to the Section Leaders and Squad Leaders (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

Early in the inception of SLC, a set of leadership attributes were adopted to be developed by the course based on the intangible attributes which were a tenant of the Outcomes Based Training and Education initiative (the use of these attributes by SLC instructors is mentioned in Constanza et al., 2009). Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command implemented the Army Learning Model (U.S. Department of the Army, 2011), which placed an emphasis on reinforcing similar Soldier attributes in its Centers of Excellence. Though these attributes (see Table 1) were adequately operationalized within the context of the course, objective and systematic assessment was difficult; therefore, research was conducted to develop behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS), which outlined both positive and negative behaviors for each attribute (Ratwani et al., 2016). In the project, these scales were used by course cadre as an evaluation metric during the culminating FTX.

In the LRM, attributes are defined as features of one's personality that are influenced by experiences whereas competencies are abilities that one can be trained to perform (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019a). Though the LRM Attributes are separate and distinct from the LRM Core Competencies (LCCs), they are related such that the attributes serve as building blocks upon which the competencies can grow and thrive. Because the SLAs were established in an effort that was separate from the development of the LRM, this distinction between attributes and competencies is not evident in the SLAs. Given the expectation that the LCCs (see Table 2) respond more readily to a training program interventions, it is anticipated that an investigation into the relationships between these LCCs and the SLAs will facilitate leadership development

programs by identifying redundancies, allowing for more systematic and expedited development. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to determine where overlap exists between the LCCs and the SLAs.

Table 1

SLC Leader Attributes

Leader Attribute	Definition
Accountability	Takes responsibility for own and team’s actions and consequences
Adaptability	Manages changing requirements for balancing unit recon, surveillance, and security with mission accomplishment
Anticipation	Foresees future requirements and conditions
Confidence	Believes in own and team’s ability to handle tactical situations
Initiative	Thinks and acts without being urged
Problem Solving	Solves problems by applying deliberate thought
Risk Management	Assesses the situation against the mission and makes a decision – effectively balances mission requirements and risk

Note. Taken from Ratwani and colleagues (2016).

Method

Authoritative sources on Army Leaders and reconnaissance tasks along with prior research on Scout leadership were analyzed to identify shared meanings among descriptions of the requisite behaviors for leaders in a reconnaissance platoon. The texts analyzed included the SLA BARS (Ratwani et al., 2016), the LCCs (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019a), and other Army doctrine detailing the roles and responsibilities of Scout Leaders (U.S. Department of the Army, 2018; U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b). A method of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2012) was applied to identify similarities among the behavioral indicators described in the SLAs and the LCCs documents (see Appendix B). An initial thematic analysis allowed for the identification of common concepts described in both core texts. These common concepts, or themes, were further elaborated through association with discrete tasks and behaviors described in other Army doctrine as well as by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). The result is a theoretical framework (see Appendix A) specifying linkages among leader competencies, doctrinal concepts, and associated roles and responsibilities of Scout Leaders (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

First, the definitions of the SLAs were compared to the LCCs to ensure that each term described meaningfully related concepts. Definitions were already established for the SLAs; however, this was not the case for the LCCs. For the LCCs, summary statements were used (see Table 2) in the place of definitions. Once similarities were identified between a SLA definition and a LCC summary statement, the behavioral anchors of that SLA were cross-tabulated with the sub-components of the LCC, specifically sub-competencies or descriptive statements, to ascertain where overlap appeared to occur.

Because the LCCs were positively defined (i.e., they described what behaviors ought to be performed), the anchors at the low (i.e., negative) end of the scale for the SLAs were converted into positive statements (Appendix B: cf. Ratwani et al., 2016). Then, the anchors were collapsed into key features for that SLA, which were then used to compare against either sub-competencies or descriptive statements of the LCC.

Table 2

LRM Core Competency Summary Statements

LRM Core Competency	Summary Statement
Leads others	Leading others requires that leaders influence others to conduct tasks, make decisions, and perform their duty in ways consistent with Army standards.
Builds trust	Leaders build trust with their followers and those outside the organization by practicing the leadership competencies and demonstrating character, presence, and intellect. Leaders need to be competent, of good character, and fair and reliable to generate trust.
Extends influence beyond chain of command	Leaders need to influence beyond their direct lines of authority and beyond chains of command to include unified action partners.
Leads by example	Leaders serve as role models by maintaining standards and providing effective examples through their actions.
Communicates	Leaders communicate effectively by clearly expressing ideas and actively listening to others.
Prepares self	Leader preparation begins with self-awareness about one’s strengths and limitations, followed by focused self-development. Leaders maintain self-discipline, physical fitness, and mental well-being. They continue to improve their technical, tactical, and leadership expertise.
Creates a positive environment	Leaders establish and maintain positive expectations and attitudes to support effective work behaviors and healthy relationships.
Develops others	Leaders encourage and support others to grow as individuals and teams. They facilitate the achievement of organizational goals through developing others. They prepare others to assume new positions elsewhere in the organization, making the organization more versatile and productive.
Stewards the profession	Leaders take care of the Army profession by applying a mindset that embodies cooperative planning and management of all resources, but especially providing for a strong Army team both now and in the future. Leaders actively engage in sustaining full military readiness and preventing the loss of effectiveness as far into the future as possible.
Gets results	Gets results is the single achieves competency and relates to actions of leading to accomplish tasks and missions on time and to standard.

Note. Taken from ADP 6-22 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019).

These descriptive statements, identified as ‘descriptors’ in Appendix B, were used as alternatives when sub-competencies for that core competency were not related to any of the key features of the SLAs. Once all similarities between a SLA and a LCC were identified, one or more themes were created that exemplified those similarities. Afterwards, where possible, behaviors specific to the Platoon Leader role, according to the Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-20.98 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b) and the Graphic Training Aide (GTA) 07-

71-001 (U.S. Department of the Army, 2018), were linked to each theme as their actions are paramount in leading the Scout Platoon. SMEs, who were both retired and active duty Soldiers who were involved in training Scout Leaders, also reviewed the themes and identified behaviors and tasks associated with each theme. Specifically, the SMEs indicated whether they agreed with the themes, and, where possible, provided examples that exemplified the themes in the context of how a Scout Leader may demonstrate them.

Categories of Scout Platoon Leader Behaviors

In the sections to follow, each SLA is described in terms of the LCCs to which it is related by first providing an overview of the leader attribute according to the SLC and Ratwani and colleagues (2016); next, themes are highlighted that exemplify each relationship (see Table 3).

Accountability

Scout Platoon Leaders demonstrate Accountability when they take responsibility for what their platoon does or fails to do. They do this by appropriately delegating tasks and authority, effectively managing their timeline, ensuring that mission objectives are met, and taking action that demonstrates they understand the bigger picture as opposed to merely conducting a series of tasks. This SLA shared similarities with 4 LCCs, which generated the following 5 themes.

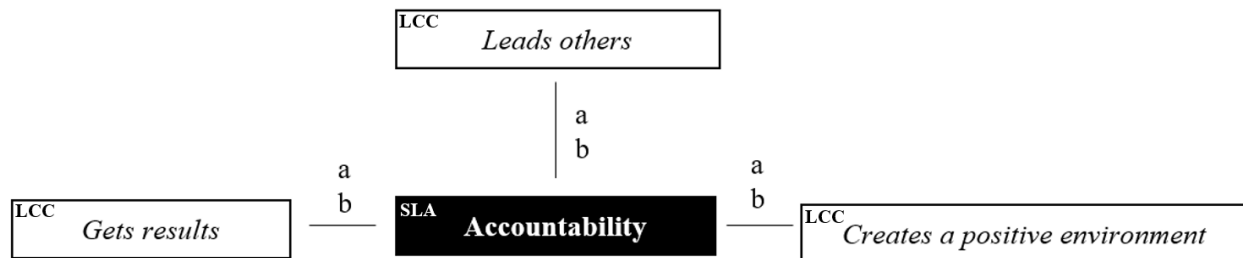
Delegation and Task-Mission Congruence (Figure 1)

Scout Leaders are most effectively accountable for the actions of the platoon when they lead scouts in the context of a positive environment that facilitates getting results (see Table B1). This can be done by:

- a) delegating tasks and authority appropriately, and
- b) ensuring that tasks meet the objectives of the mission.

Figure 1

Comparing Accountability with Leads others, Creates a positive environment, and Gets results



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; a = delegation; b = task-mission congruence

How tasks and authority are delegated is dictated by the Troop Leading Procedures, and congruency between tasks and mission objectives is ensured by developing plans in accord with the Commander’s intent. Army doctrine states that the Platoon Leader conducts pre-combat

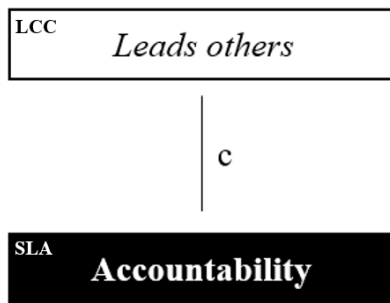
inspections, which are formal and ensure that the Scouts, their equipment, and the vehicles are prepared for the impending mission (U.S. Department of the Army, 2018; U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b). Platoon Leaders also make sure all Scouts in the platoon understand their specific role in planning for and accomplishing the mission while allowing them enough time to plan and develop items such as their scheme of maneuver (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

Owning Failures (Figure 2)

Leading Scouts and being accountable for their actions includes accepting responsibility when desired results are not achieved and mistakes are made (theme ‘c’; see Table B2). Ultimately, this burden lies with the Platoon Leader. Despite the nature of the deficiency, the Platoon Leader should recognize that an intimate knowledge of doctrine, the platoon, and the mission, coupled with a unique capability to lead, has direct implications on whether the task assigned to them will succeed or fail. When mistakes are unavoidable, the Platoon Leader needs to have the fortitude to accept it as a learning opportunity that will enable him or her to avoid similar missteps in the future. In the instructional environment, this theme can be demonstrated during After Action Reviews and formal course evaluations.

Figure 2

Comparing Accountability with Leads others



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; c = owning failures

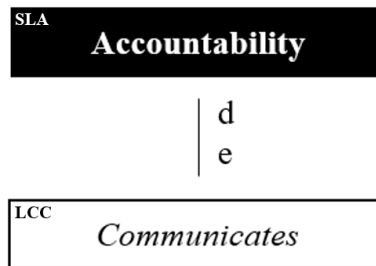
Timely Information Transfer and Mission Comprehension (Figure 3)

Related to the ability to be and hold others accountable is the skill to communicate effectively for the sake of creating a shared understanding. These two concepts share the following themes (see Table B3):

- d) relaying information to appropriate parties in a timely manner, and
- e) understanding the larger directive or mission as intended.

Figure 3

Comparing Accountability with Communicates



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; d = timely information transfer; e = mission comprehension

Platoon Leaders can ensure the timely transfer of information when they report information rapidly and accurately. Furthermore, Army doctrine describes how Platoon Leaders can demonstrate these two themes in at least three ways. First, they can plan backwards from the Latest Time Information Is of Value, which would allow them to prioritize and allot the appropriate amount of time to certain activities. Second, they can back brief the Commander on their plan to verify that it still meets the intent of the mission. Third, they can develop their plans in parallel with other leaders in the platoon (e.g., simultaneous issuances of warning orders and fragmentary orders in preparation for the operations order) to allow for real-time mission planning (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

Adaptability

It is not unusual for situations to unfold in a manner that is unexpected or undesired; thus, Scout Platoon Leaders should be able to demonstrate Adaptability, flexibly meeting demands as circumstances evolve. This can be done by taking action and making decisions that appropriately address changes as they emerge. This SLA shared similarities with the 'Gets results' LCC, which resulted in the following 2 themes.

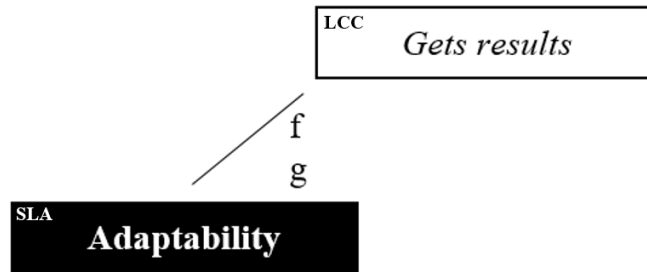
Assess Information Correctly and Adjust Behavior Quickly (Figure 4)

In order to get the desired result, Scout Platoon Leaders could identify changes that affect the mission and adapt accordingly. Common themes shared here are the (see Table B4):

- f) correct assessment of new information, and
- g) ability to quickly adjust behavior in accord with doctrine as conditions change.

Figure 4

Comparing Adaptability with Gets results



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; f = assess information correctly; g = adjust behavior quickly

The Platoon Leader is likely to encounter a constant stream of information, and its relevancy, congruence with the current circumstance, and effect on the mission should all be evaluated. To do this, they respond to the Priority Information Requirements outlined by the Commander and develop indicators. Once the incoming information has been adequately assessed, the Platoon Leader can then accurately discern whether changes must be made to the plan (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b) to better support a favorable outcome.

Anticipation

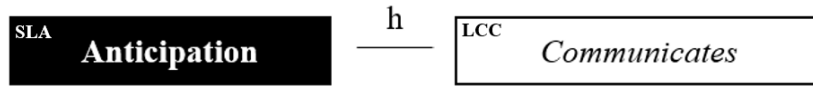
In addition to being adaptable in response to ever-changing tactical situations, Scout Platoon Leaders should also be able to anticipate these changes, whether favorable or otherwise. This act of Anticipation requires Scout Leaders to consider the second- and third-order effects of both their own and the enemy's actions such as anticipating the location and manner in which the enemy will emerge prior to being engaged in contact (Perry & McEnery, 2009). This SLA shared similarities with 2 LCCs, which led to the identification of the following 3 themes.

Prepare for Communication Challenges (Figure 5)

Because Scouts are often geographically separated from the platoon and from support units, it is critical that they be able to communicate with one another. However, just as the Platoon Leader understands how vital it is for the platoon to communicate with him or her and with one another, the enemy is likely aware of this fact also. Thus, the prudent Scout Leader should anticipate communication hindrances and prepare his or her platoon to deal with it effectively (i.e., theme 'h'). This can be done by conducting rehearsals, particularly with regard to how to maintain communication when situations do not proceed as planned (e.g., lost communication plans and communication checks; see Table B5).

Figure 5

Comparing Anticipation with Communicates



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; h = prepare for communication challenges

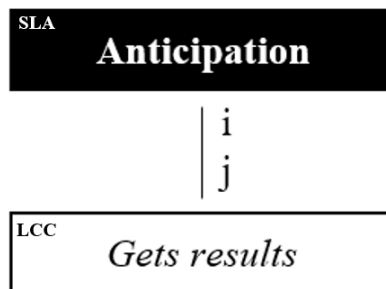
Consider Consequences and Resource and Staff Availability (Figure 6)

Anticipating how a situation may transpire may also be integral to achieving the desired outcome. Scout Platoon Leaders can demonstrate this by doing at least two things (see Table B6):

- i) considering the implications of all courses of action, and
- j) assuring the appropriate resources and personnel are available when needed.

Figure 6

Comparing Anticipation with Gets results



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; i = consider consequences; j = resource and staff availability

When a decision is made or an action is taken, whether by the enemy or by friendly forces, Scout Leaders should think ahead to if and how that choice or occurrence will affect how the mission objective is met. This should prompt Platoon Leaders to identify what provisions need to be in place to address those influences, which is informed by a variety of factors to include the Commander’s Reconnaissance Guidance, the Commander’s Security Guidance, the Most Likely Course of Action, the Most Deadly Course of Action, and task organization. Furthermore, according to Army doctrine, it is the role of Platoon Leaders to stay at least one phase ahead of the execution by monitoring the plan and reassessing its viability. They should also be well-acquainted with both the terrain and the probable actions and locations of the enemy as they plan far enough into the execution to counteract potential problems (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

Confidence

Scout Platoon Leaders may encounter challenges and stressors that tempt them to second-guess their decisions and actions. Often, these challenges can be associated with uncertainty,

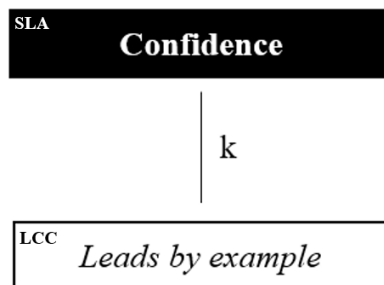
ambiguity, or lack of information, all of which tend to be synonymous with conducting reconnaissance. Even so, Scout Platoon Leaders can demonstrate Confidence by not allowing such circumstances to impede their ability to plan and effectively execute a mission. Furthermore, Scout Platoon Leaders can show Confidence in their fellow and subordinate leaders; this could be done by the Scout Leader being receptive to their input, particularly when matters become problematic, which affirms their ability to contribute to mission success. However, the Scout Platoon Leader should not allow these suggestions to stifle or usurp the timely decisiveness that he or she is expected to demonstrate, and, once a decision has been made, the Scout Leader should be able to justify it. This SLA was associated with 4 LCCs, which generated the following 4 themes.

Model Command Presence (Figure 7)

When executing a reconnaissance mission, a Troop Commander often wishes to gather information that will give the unit an advantage in meeting a set of objectives, which may involve eliminating or circumventing an opposing force. With so much at stake, Scout Leaders can benefit from both emotional and mental fortitude to perform in accordance with the Commander’s intent despite ambiguity and adversity. Though this can have implications for mission success, it can also serve to influence subordinates and fellow leaders in adopting the same resolve (i.e., theme ‘k’; see Table B7). The Scout Leader should model control over his or her emotions and state of mind such that, when the situation is not going as planned and chaos is ensuing, there is clarity of thought from which clear direction can be given. When it is not evident which course of action is most appropriate, the Scout Leader executes Requests For Information. Subordinates tend to reflect their leaders; thus, Scout Platoon Leaders would do well to demonstrate the confidence they wish to see in their Scouts.

Figure 7

Comparing Confidence with Leads by example



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; k = model command presence

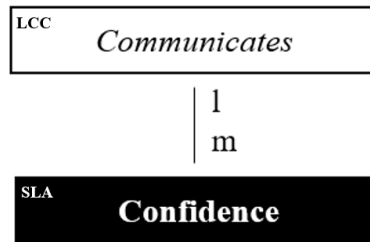
Clear Communication and Decision Justification (Figure 8)

Scout Leaders can also demonstrate confidence by how they communicate (see Table B8). Specifically, these two concepts share the following themes:

- l) the decision is described clearly, and
- m) the rationale, along with any associated evidence, for the decision is provided.

Figure 8

Comparing Confidence with Communicates



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; 1 = clear communication; m = decision justification

Scout Platoon Leaders should be able to express ideas and plans in a manner that is easily understood by subordinates as well as provide justification when asked. Communicating in this way not only supports the transfer of information but also indicates that the Scout Platoon Leader believes the subordinates are capable of meeting the demands of what was communicated in the plan. In a very practical sense, this can be demonstrated by proper radio etiquette and reporting, and, in the instructional environment, completing the Information Collection Matrix as well as accounting for time and space in the planning phase.

Input Receptivity (Figure 9)

Given the high-stakes environments that many reconnaissance platoons operate in, Scout Platoon Leaders can benefit from being receptive to ways of approaching a situation that may differ from their original plan, as appropriate. To do this, Scout Platoon Leaders would need to have the discernment to know when there are other viable alternatives to meet a mission objective, and they would need to have confidence that their subordinate leaders can independently make sound decisions that fit squarely within the Commander's intent (i.e., theme 'n'; U.S. Department of the Army, 2019c; see Table B9).

Figure 9

Comparing Confidence with Creates a positive environment and Gets results



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; n = input receptivity

Initiative

Earlier in this report, the idea that Scout Platoon Leaders could be proactive about foreseeing and addressing problematic situations was introduced. Additionally, they can plan ahead and show Initiative by taking advantage of opportunities, wielding situations in their favor. This could include making effective use of downtime and taking every opportunity to make improvements. Also, a strength of Platoon Leaders is their keen ability to act without extensive

guidance once the mission has been disseminated. Overall, this SLA shared similarities with the LCC *Leads by example*, which resulted in the following two themes.

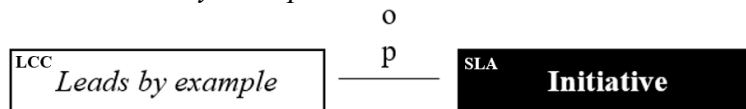
Independent Action and Strategic Advantage (Figure 10)

For the Scout Leader, taking initiative can be related to setting an example for others to follow and is likely displayed in at least two ways (see Table B10):

- o) acting without guidance, and
- p) gaining an opportune, time-sensitive advantage over the enemy.

Figure 10

Comparing Initiative with Leads by example



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; o = independent action; p = strategic advantage

Scout Platoon Leaders understand that detailed guidance, beyond the Commander’s Guidance, will not always be available when planning for or executing a mission. This may be due to a number of factors to include the inability to obtain key information and disruptions in communication. Thus, they can aim to model how Scouts take initiative when it is appropriate to do so (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019c). Platoon Leaders may do this by having a solid understanding of the Commander’s intent and addressing the Priority Information Requirements, which allows them to take actions that satisfy the mission when additional guidance is not given or available (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

Problem Solving

To solve a problem, one would need to recognize it as such when it emerges and then seek to take appropriate action. Scout Platoon Leaders, in particular, can take appropriate features of the terrain and other relevant factors into account in their Problem Solving ability, and they could employ creativity by seeking new or alternative ways to address problems. This SLA shared linkages with 2 LCCs and generated the following 4 themes.

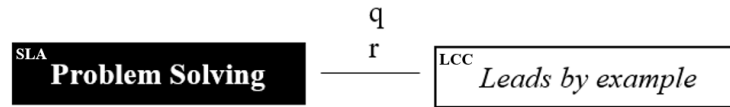
Incorporate Assets and Solve New Problems (Figure 11)

Scout Platoon Leaders can implement and model a manner of solving problems that takes the following into consideration (see Table B11):

- q) understanding the capabilities of all available assets and incorporating them accordingly, and
- r) utilizing solutions that are appropriate for new and challenging problems.

Figure 11

Comparing Problem Solving with Leads by example



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; q = incorporate assets; r = solve new problems

Scout Platoon Leaders are expected to have a thorough understanding of every resource available to them, which is often achieved by consulting those who are better acquainted with certain assets (e.g., attachment units). This knowledge assists them in developing appropriate solutions by recognizing how what they know might be related to the unique features of a particular problem. For example, Scout Leaders develop Named Areas of Interest and assess the threat potential. Once done, the Platoon Leader can determine what resources and equipment are needed, acquiring them, and then employing them appropriately (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b).

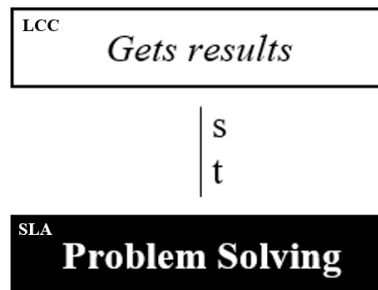
Recognize Problems and Actively Seek Solutions (Figure 12)

Scout Platoon Leaders should be able to solve problems in a way that achieves desired outcomes. To do this, Scout Platoon Leaders (see Table B12):

- s) recognize problems as they arise, including the circumstances that contributed to and will result from them, and
- t) actively seek solutions.

Figure 12

Comparing Problem Solving with Gets results



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; s = recognize problems; t = actively seek solutions

A Scout Platoon Leader should understand the mission and the plan well enough to identify when something occurs that will interfere with mission success. And, prior to formulating a solution, it is important that he or she understands as much about the problem as possible in order to develop appropriate solutions. To do this, the Scout Platoon Leader may execute Requests For Information, develop Named Areas of Interest, or engage the Troop Commander or their peers.

Risk Management

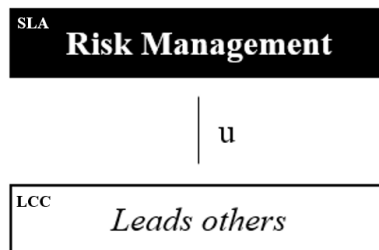
Given the ubiquity of risk in reconnaissance operations, Scout Platoon Leaders should be able to manage it effectively, as illustrated by the SLA attribute Risk Management. This can be done by investigating what risks are present and then implementing the proper measures that mitigate them. Scout Platoon Leaders can also seek to understand the costs and benefits of their plans as they generate various contingency plans. This SLA shared similarities with the *Leads others* LCC, which resulted in the following theme.

Cost-Benefit Analysis (Figure 13)

Responsibly managing risk can show subordinates that their Scout Platoon Leader has carefully weighed the benefits against the costs of a particular decision, which allowed him or her to determine a course of action that would best serve both the platoon and the mission (i.e., theme ‘u’; U.S. Department of the Army, 2019c; see Table B13). Thus, subordinates can have assurance in being led by the Scout Leader since concern for their welfare has been demonstrated in the effort to achieve mission success.

Figure 13

Comparing Risk Management with Leads others



Note. LCC = LRM Core Competency; SLA = SLC Leader Attribute; u = cost-benefit analysis

Discussion

The goal of this report was to ascertain the synergies among Army leadership doctrine, previous research on Scout leadership, and the role of Scout Platoon Leaders as outlined in doctrine. This research was performed in order to determine which facets of leadership were most salient during the early stages of an Armor Officer’s career. Ongoing formative assessments of these identified facets, especially when employed early in their careers, can provide insight into the systematic development of leader competencies.

Overall, a total of 13 relationships were discovered between the SLAs and the LCCs. These relationships represent discrete categories of leadership behaviors most salient for Scout Platoon Leaders. Within these relationships, 21 themes were identified of which 12 were found to be supported by Army doctrine as behaviors expected of Platoon Leaders (see Table 3). All SLAs were found to be related to at least one of the LCCs, and it is interesting to note that the LCC *Gets results* was related to all but two of the SLAs, which seems to suggest that there is an

emphasis in achieving specified outcomes that likely informs a Scout Platoon Leader's competence to lead.

Given these relationships and their associated themes, which appear to emerge from comparing the SLAs with the LCCs, it is now possible to conceptualize how an Army standard intended for "all leaders across all levels and cohorts" (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019a) applies specifically to Scout Platoon Leaders. This affords the Army an opportunity to assess Scout Platoon Leaders' competence to lead in their unique capacities at a single point in time, such as during SLC. At the time of this report, Officers are evaluated based on the LRM in the Officer Evaluation Report; thus, knowing how the LRM is related to the duties and responsibilities specific to the Platoon Leader role can aid in tracking how they develop over time as Army Leaders. Furthermore, such a tracking approach can provide insight into targeted developmental opportunities in Scout leadership, which may allow Scout Platoon Leaders to reach higher levels of proficiency earlier in their careers.

LCCs Unrelated to the SLAs

Of the 13 relationships identified, 5 of the 10 LCCs were not included: Builds trust, Extends influence beyond chain of command, Prepares self, Develops others, and Stewards the profession. This is not surprising given that the LRM is intended to describe leadership in a way that is generalizable to all Army Leaders whereas the BARS for the SLAs pertain specifically to behaviors exhibited by SLC students in FTXs. Nonetheless, this does not mean that these core competencies are not necessary for the Scout Platoon Leader (see U.S. Department of the Army, 2019c). To address the limitation of utilizing the SLA BARS, which are specific to the instructional context, future research could include a more in-depth investigation to uncover what other connections exist between the LCCs and SLAs in contexts other than FTXs.

As an example for why this warrants further investigation, few would argue that Scout Platoon Leaders are not in need of the LRM's Builds trust core competency (see U.S. Department of the Army, 2019c). It is absolutely vital that all members of a platoon establish trust with one another; however, it is worth considering that this may be a skill that is best developed prior to executing missions in a field environment given the outcomes described in this report.

Also, both the *Prepares self* and *Develops others* core competencies include remedial or improvement strategies that can be employed at the individual level. To prepare one's self, there must be an awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses which would then lead to plans for self-development, and, likewise, to develop others, one must discern the needs of their subordinates and facilitate their growth through actions such as counseling, coaching, and mentoring. Given that the SLA BARS were specifically designed to assess performance in SLC students during FTXs, there was limited synergy between these core competencies and the SLAs.

Additional Leader Characterizations in Scout Platoons

Because this paper mainly focused on the relationship between the SLAs and the LCCs, features not related to either of these concepts were not investigated. Thus, there are likely other behavioral manifestations of scout platoon leadership that were not described. For example, one

leadership behavior not effectively captured by either the LCCs or the SLAs is the idea of having competence in shared leadership. Though the Platoon Leader is ultimately in charge, he or she must work together with the Platoon Sergeant to plan how the mission will be executed as well as to manage the Scouts and other subordinate leaders in their tasks and sustainment measures (U.S. Department of the Army, 2019b). This idea also includes partnering with other platoons, units, attachments, and foreign nations to accomplish a mission. Thus, in addition to investigating what linkages between the SLAs and LCCs were not accounted for in the BARS, which are specific to SLC, more research is needed to identify leader behaviors for Scouts that are not currently described in Army doctrine.

Future Directions

The relationships and themes described in this report are only a first step of a larger investigation that is needed. Future research should seek to validate these outcomes by gathering data using direct measures of them. Particularly, future research could investigate whether the nine themes that were not supported by Army doctrine are linked to some specific duty of Scout Platoon Leaders. Also, research could capture other features of leader behaviors associated with scout platoons that are not currently described in authoritative texts for Army Leaders but that are noted in academic literature on leadership. Doing this will allow for the generation of formative assessments that provide benchmarks of leadership competence to which subsequent assessments can be compared. In this way, leadership development can be monitored and supported.

Although this report focused on leadership competencies as demonstrated by Scout Platoon Leaders, the method described in this report can be generalized to other Army Branches and Military Occupational Specialties. By establishing relationships between course metrics and Army leadership doctrine, leader behaviors can be assessed more accurately and be tracked longitudinally. Ultimately, the data from these assessments could be incorporated into developmental programs so that more tailored training could be designed and the individual competency requirements of Leaders could be targeted.

Table 3

Scout Leader Competency Matrix

		SLC LEADER ATTRIBUTES						
		Accountability	Adaptability	Anticipation	Confidence	Initiative	Problem Solving	Risk Management
LRM CORE COMPETENCIES	Leads others	(a) Delegation (b) Task-mission congruence (c) Owning failures*						(u) Cost-benefit analysis*
	Leads by example				(k) Model command presence*	(o) Independent action (p) Strategic advantage	(q) Incorporate assets (r) Solve new problems	
	Communicates	(d) Timely information transfer (e) Mission comprehension		(h) Prepare for communication challenges*	(l) Clear communication* (m) Decision justification*			
	Creates a positive environment	(a) Delegation (b) Task-mission congruence			(n) Input receptivity*			
	Gets results	(a) Delegation (b) Task-mission congruence	(f) Assess information correctly (g) Adjust behavior quickly	(i) Consider consequences (j) Resource and staff availability	(n) Input receptivity*		(s) Recognize problems* (t) Actively seek solutions*	

Note: *This theme did not have a direct connection to ATP 3-20.98 or GTA 07-71-001.

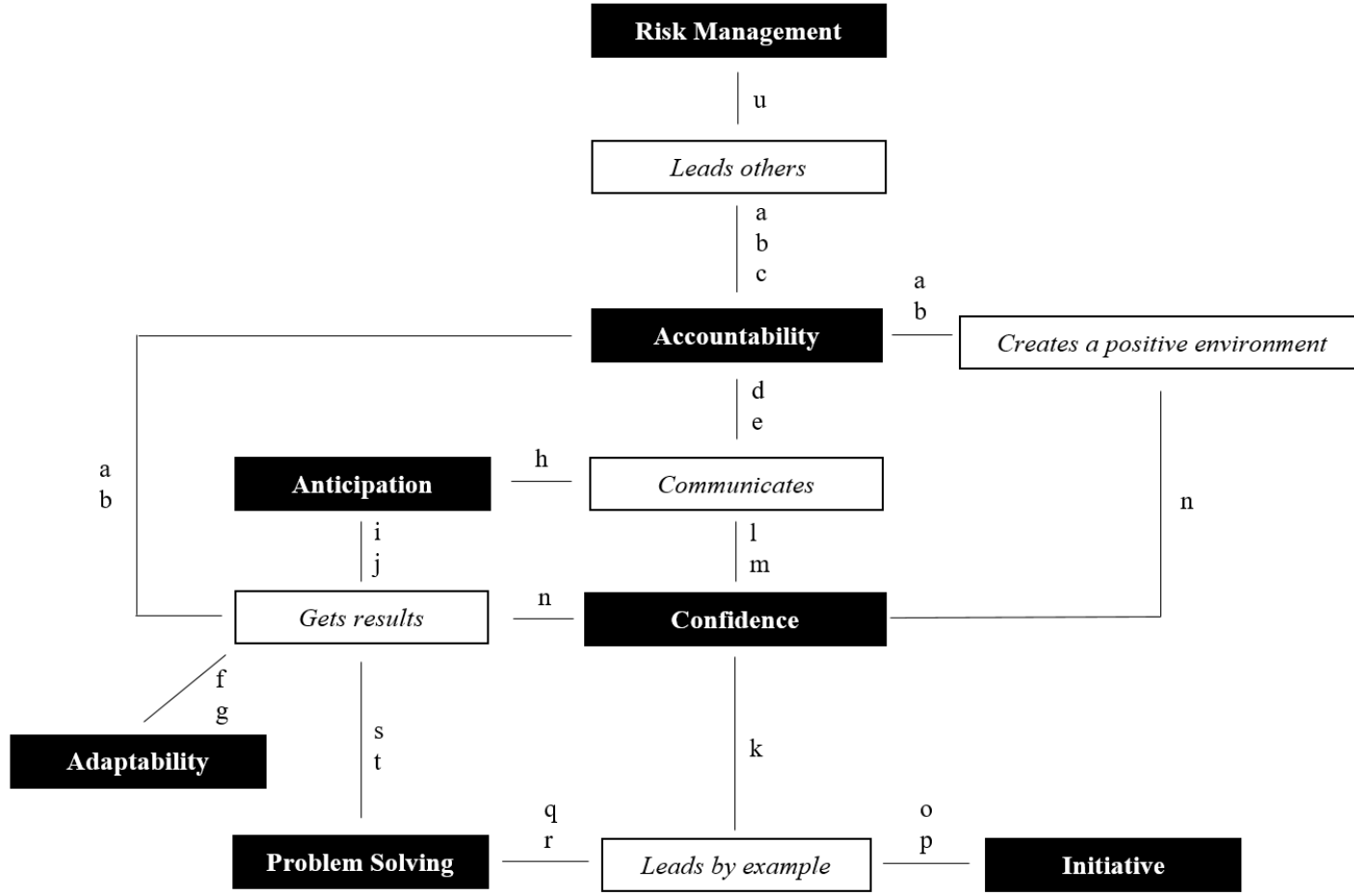
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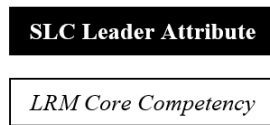
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Appendix A

Scout Platoon Leader Competency Framework



Legend



Themes

a	Delegation	h	Prepare for communication challenges	o	Independent action
b	Task-mission congruence	i	Consider consequences	p	Strategic advantage
c	Owning failures	j	Resource and staff availability	q	Incorporate assets
d	Timely information transfer	k	Model command presence	r	Solve new problems
e	Mission comprehension	l	Clear communication	s	Recognize problems
f	Assess information correctly	m	Decision justification	t	Actively seek solutions
g	Adjust behavior quickly	n	Input receptivity	u	Cost-benefit analysis

Appendix B

Comparison Tables for Scout Platoon Leader Competency Themes

Table B1

Comparison among Accountability, Leads others, Creates a positive environment, and Gets results

		LRM Core Competencies				
		Leads others	Creates a positive environment	Gets results		
SLC Leader Attribute Accountability <hr/> Takes responsibility for own and team’s actions and consequences		Leading others requires that leaders influence others to conduct tasks, make decisions, and perform their duty in ways consistent with Army standards. (ADP 6-22, para 5-6, p. 5-2)	Leaders establish and maintain positive expectations and attitudes to support effective work behaviors and healthy relationships. (ADP 6-22, Table 6-2, p. 6-8)	Gets results is the single achieves competency and relates to actions of leading to accomplish tasks and missions on time and to standard. (ADP 6-22, para 7-1, p. 7-1)		
↓		↓	↓	↓		
Behavioral Indicator	Verifies that tasking/authority is delegated appropriately and meets mission objectives by engaging in a timely follow-up	Sub-Competencies				
		<i>Enforces standards</i>	<i>Encourages subordinates to exercise initiative, accept responsibility, and take ownership</i>	<i>Providing direction, guidance, and priorities</i>	<i>Identifies and accounts for capabilities and commitment to task</i>	<i>Prioritizes, organizes, and coordinates taskings for teams or other organizations structures/groups</i>
		Mission specific checks and inspections minimize the chances of neglect or oversight that result in mission failure or needless casualties. (ADP 6-22, para 5-36, p. 5-7)	Allocates decision making to the lowest appropriate level (ADP 6-22, Table 6-2, p. 6-8)	Leaders ensure tasks are within the capabilities of the organization and do not detract from the ability to accomplish the mission (ADP 6-22, para 7-5, p. 7-1)	Considers duty positions, capabilities, and developmental needs when assigning tasks. (ADP 6-22, Table 7-1, p. 7-3)	Ensures subordinates can execute all tasks in the time available and in the correct sequence (ADP 6-22, Table 7-1, p. 7-3)

Table B2

Comparison between Accountability and Leads others

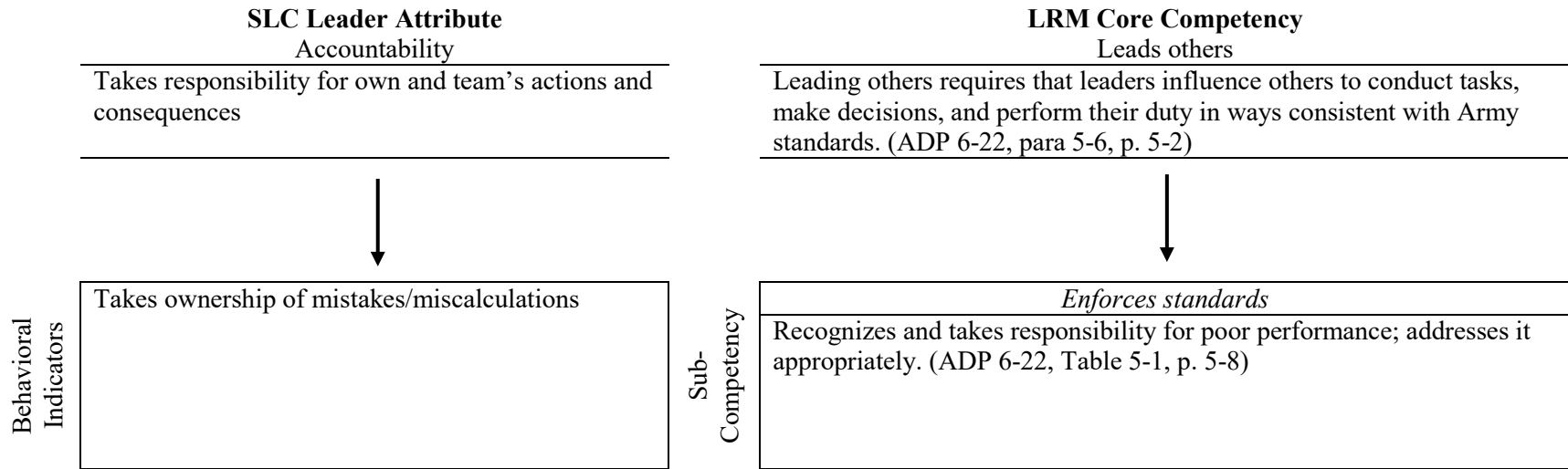


Table B3

Comparison between Accountability and Communicates

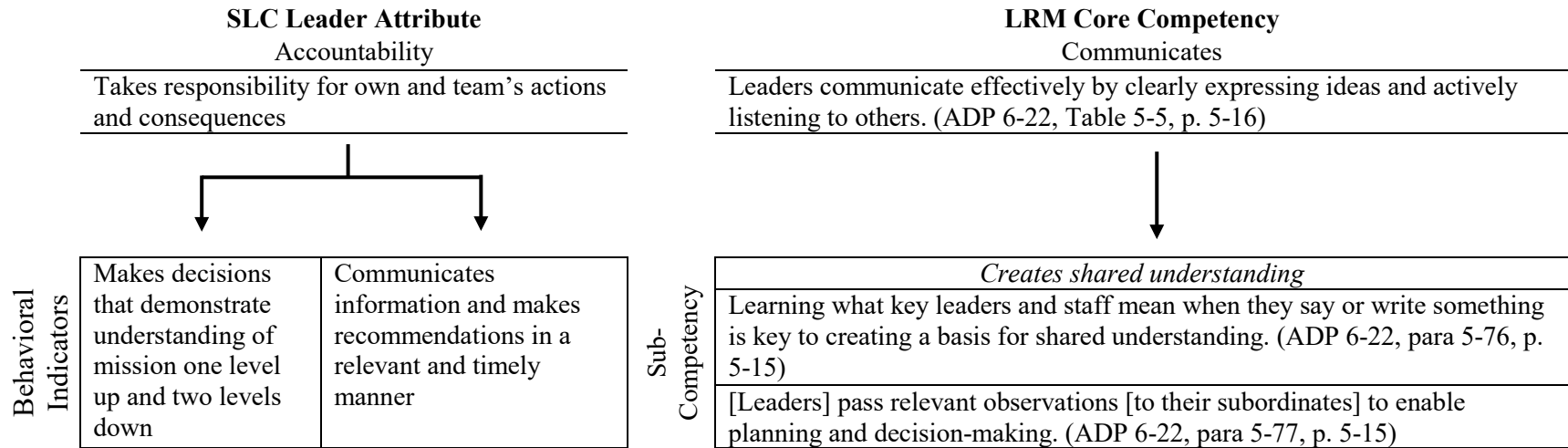


Table B4

Comparison between Adaptability and Gets results

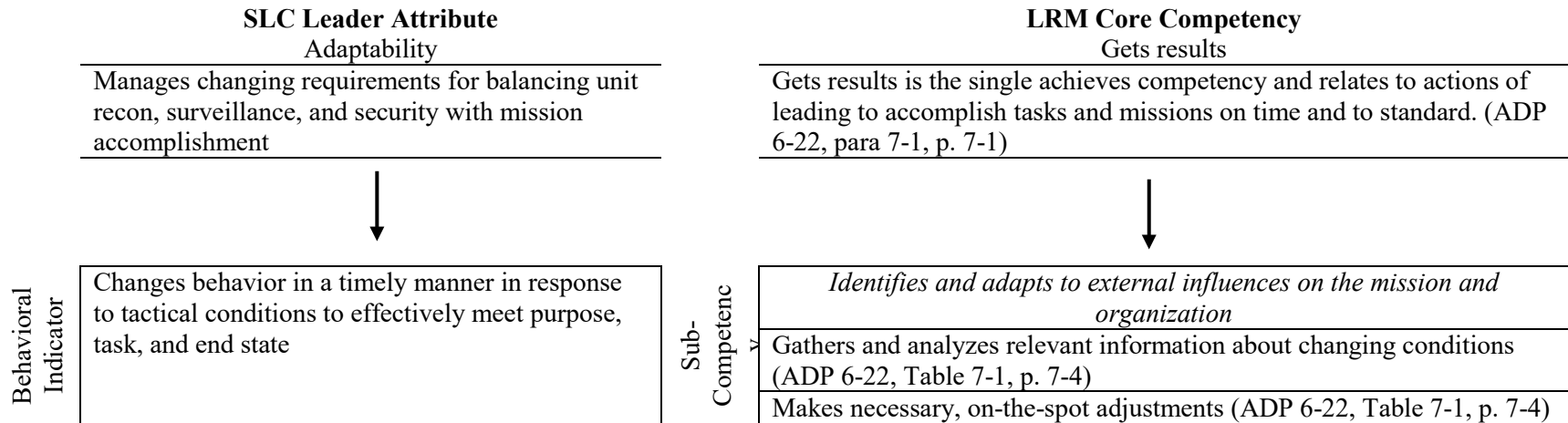


Table B5

Comparison between Anticipation and Communicates

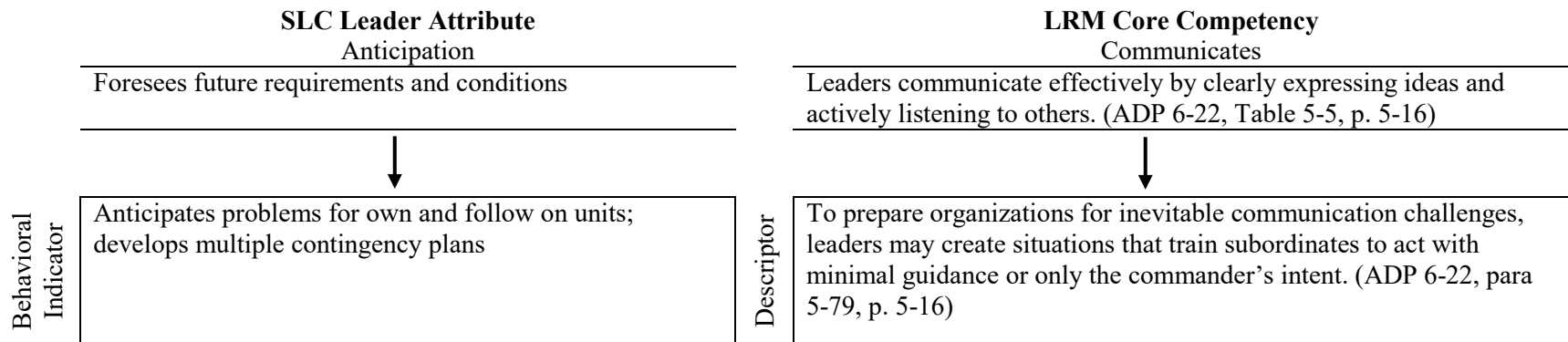


Table B6

Comparison between Anticipation and Gets results

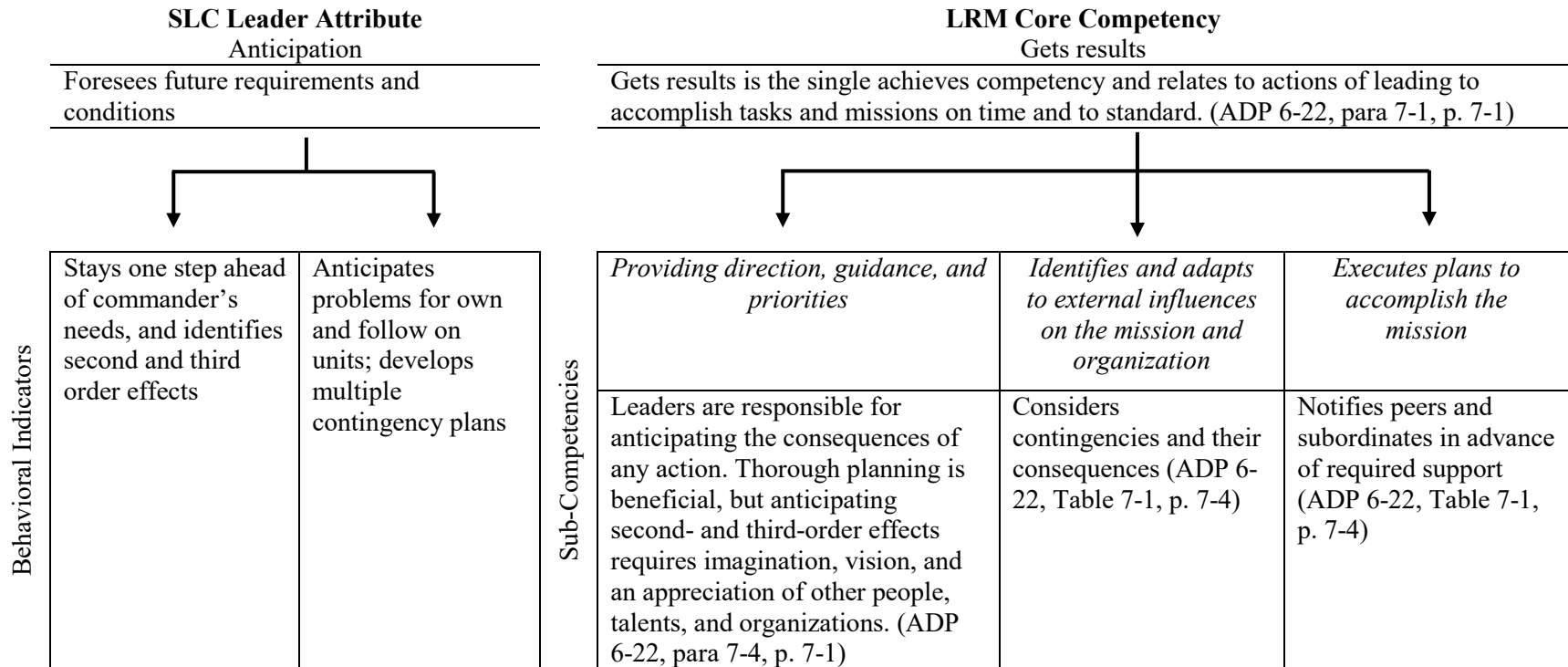


Table B7

Comparison between Confidence and Leads by example

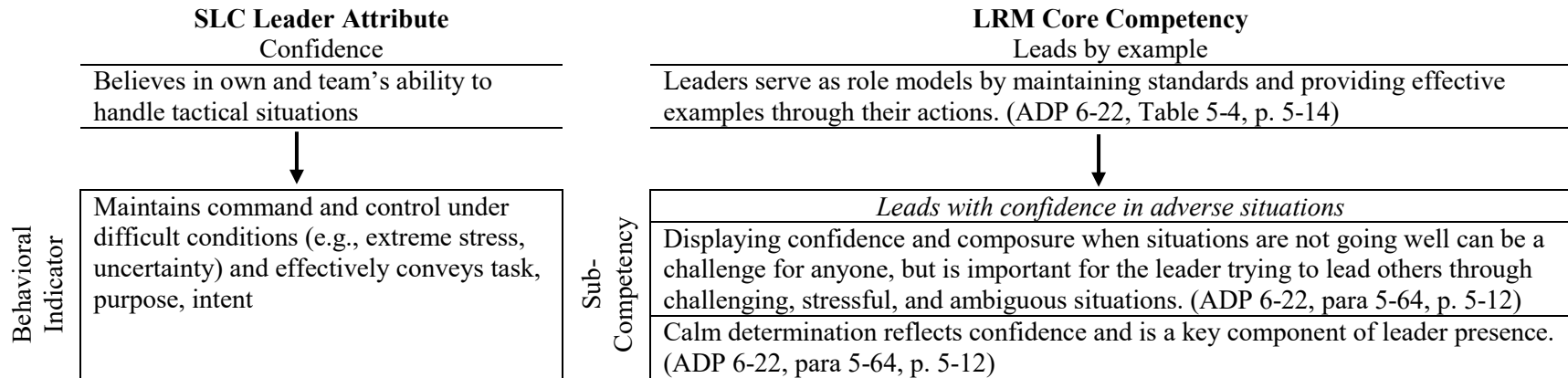


Table B8

Comparison between Confidence and Communicates

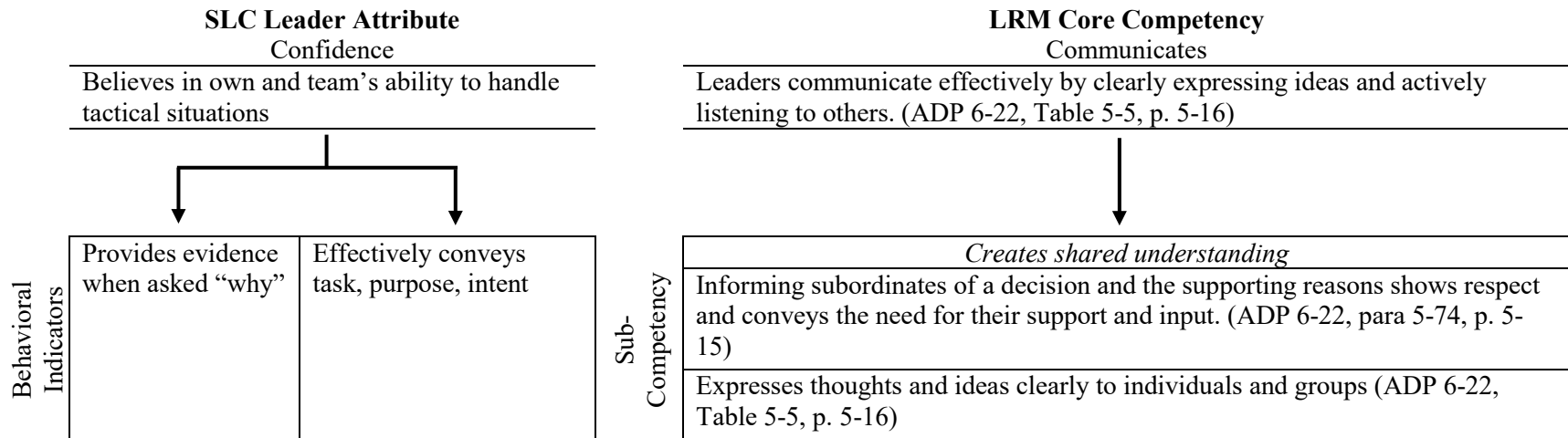


Table B9

Comparison among Confidence, Creates a positive environment, and Gets results

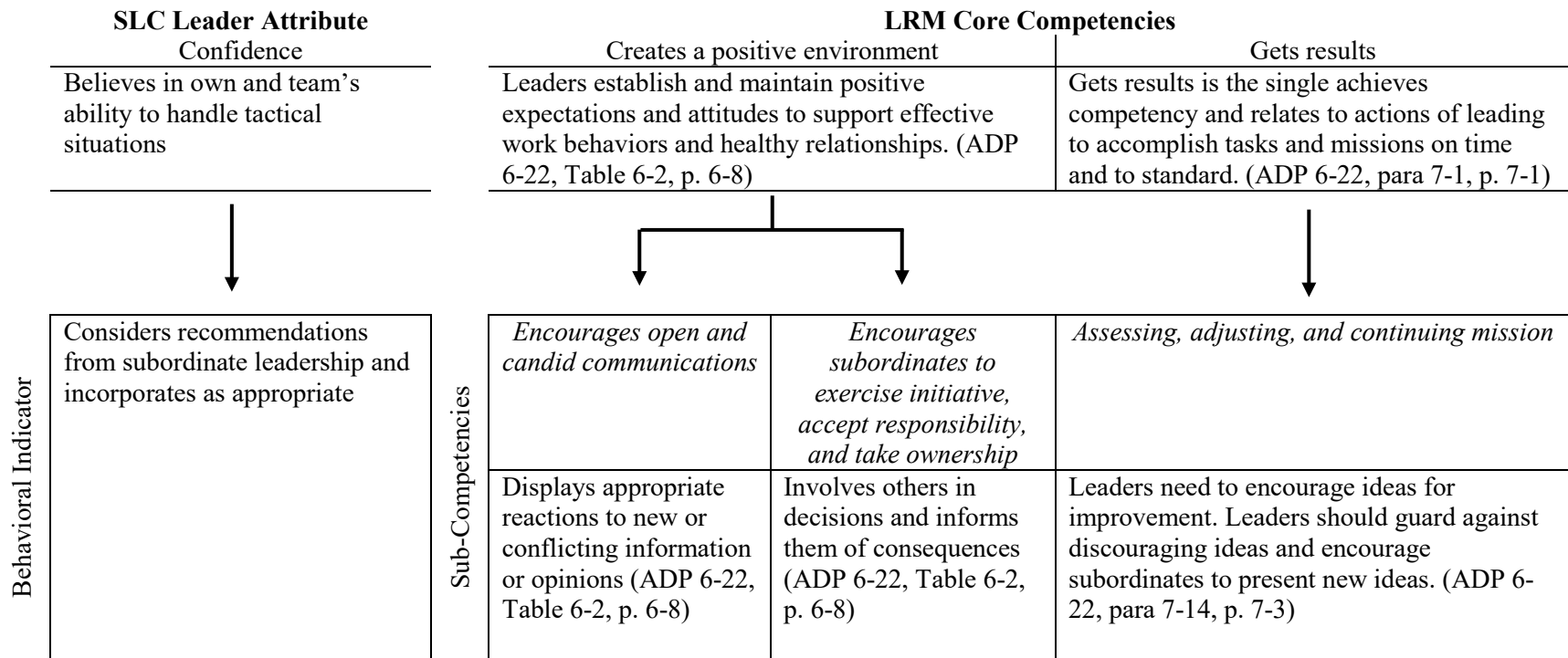


Table B10

Comparison between Initiative and Leads by example

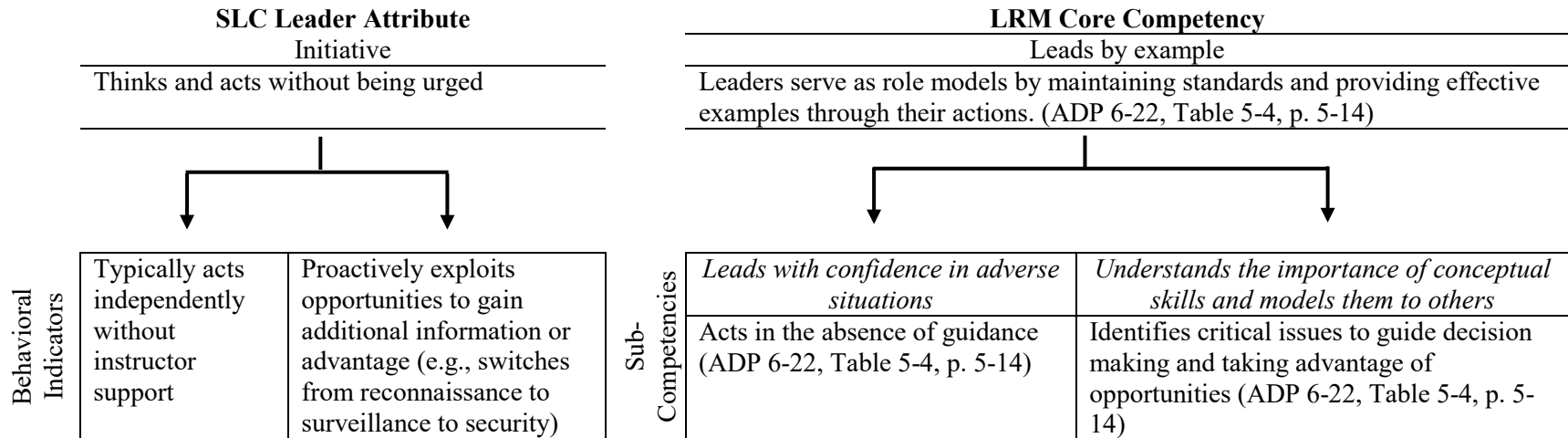


Table B11

Comparison between Problem Solving and Leads by example

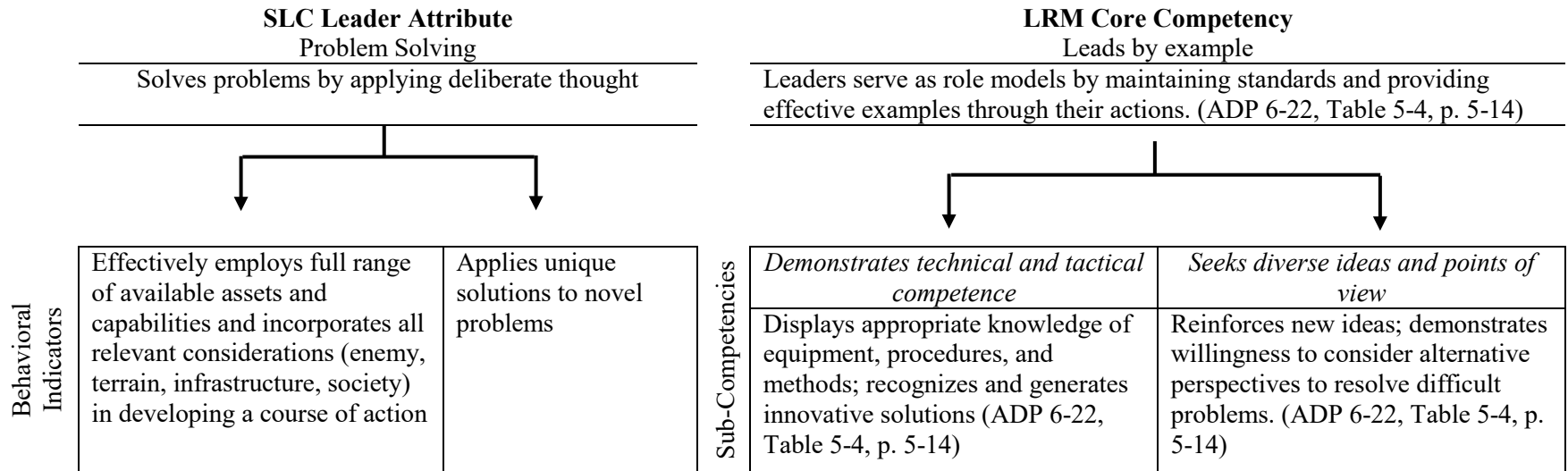


Table B12

Comparison between Problem Solving and Gets results

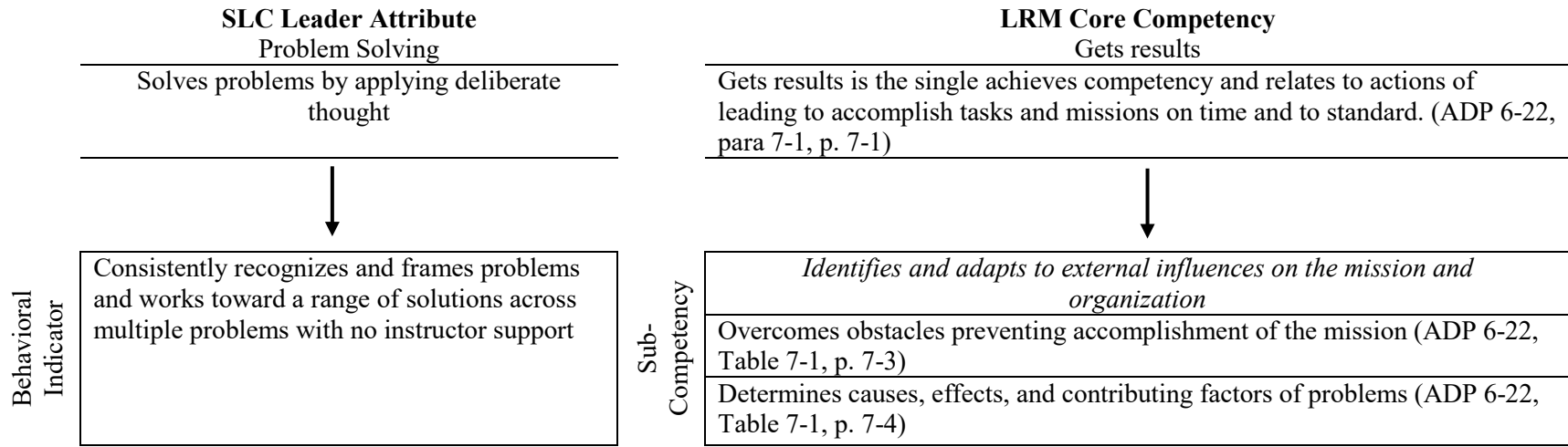


Table B13

Comparison between Risk Management and Leads others

