

**A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF PROBATION OUTCOMES AND LEADERS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership

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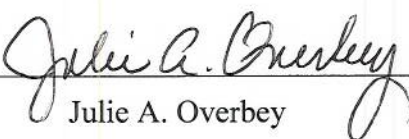
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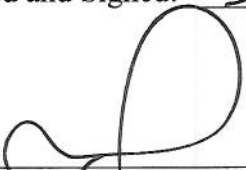
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## Abstract

In this quantitative correlation research study, the researcher investigated the degree to which perceptions of evidence-based practices of executive probation leaders influence probation exits. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits utilizing a Likert-type survey and probation exit data. A correlation analysis was used to investigate the following two hypothesized relationships: (1) the relationship between perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits, and (2) the relationship between perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits. The overall results of the study indicated that a significant relationship did not exist between leaders perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation exits. A relationship exists between successful probation exits and six items of perceptions of evidence-based practices: (1) usefulness of literature and research, (2) agency promotion of evidence-based practices, (3) ability to access databases and the internet, (4) lack of research skills is a barrier, (5) insufficient time is a barrier, and (6) lack of information resources. A relationship also exists between unsuccessful probation exits and four items of perceptions of evidence-based practices: (1) encouraging probation officers, (2) confidence in ability to review literature, (3) ability to access databases and the internet, and (4) lack of information resources. Future research is recommended to explore and identify additional variables related to leadership, probation exits, and evidence-based practices.

## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mom, Ofelia Aguilar, who taught me the value of education, hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. Her unconditional love, trust, and encouragement pushed me forward to succeed in everything I set my mind to. This study is also dedicated to my children, Joseph and Jacqueline, who have experienced time management, sacrifice, and being raised in a learning environment since they were born. It has been a long 14 ½ years for Joseph, and 5 ½ for Jacqueline. Joseph and Jacqueline, I hope to be a great part of your educational journey as you have been part of mine. To my loving partner, Carlos Hernandez who helped me juggle countless hours of family time so I could enjoy the beauty of life, our family, and the smiles and laughter of our children; your support, love, and patience encouraged me when I was most tired during the midnight hours to continue moving forward. Dr. Laseanda Wesson and Dr. Michael Nnamani thank you for your support during my most stressful times of dissertation approval. Your kind and supportive words along with your prayers always revived my spirit. To my sister, Lydia Aguilar-Avila who instilled the value of not settling for second best when it came to my education and career. Lastly, to my friends who have stood by my side throughout all these years and were understanding when I had to balance school deadlines with recreation. I love you all. Thank you for believing in me, encouraging me, and for your patience during the last 16 years of my academic studies.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices within their probation department and successful and unsuccessful probation supervision exits of probationers. Probation leaders can utilize the information gathered from this study to examine how they can improve the culture within their organization to influence probation supervision outcomes in the number of individuals placed on probation supervision. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (2010), from 1999 to 2009, the probation population in the United States had a continual growth. With a continual increase in the probation population and an overall growth of 27% from 1999 to 2009 in the United States, probation leaders must reexamine the manner in which they conduct business in relation to the supervision practices of probationers (BJS, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) (2009), probation leaders must invest time and effort to go through significant changes in their business practices and organizational culture with an identified framework to guide the change process.

Implementing programs that claim to decrease recidivism is not sufficient for probation officers to be able to assist probationers to a drug and crime free lifestyle (Tong & Farrington, 2008). Since the inception of probation supervision in the United States, it has been a common practice for leaders to foster a culture that yields unsuccessful outcomes because the foundation of probation practices do not consist of research-proven methods. According to Wilkniss and Zippel (2009), scientifically proven practices that work are evidence-based. The use of research-proven methods are known as evidence-

based practices; which are the objective, balanced, and current use of research coupled with the best available data to guide policy and practice decision making, so that outcomes for consumers are improved (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). In chapter 1, the discussion focuses on the problem, purpose, significance, nature, definitions, and methods of this quantitative correlational research study.

## **Background of the Problem**

### **Social Concern**

Historically, leaders in public safety agencies have functioned on hierarchical or other stratified command-control management models that have slowed down the process of successfully implementing evidence-based practices (USDOJ & NIC, 2009).

Supervision of offenders in the community continues to be a critical component of the criminal justice system in the United States (Seiter & West, 2003). Taking the punitive approach with supervising criminals in the community has proven unsuccessful. By the end of calendar year 2009, more than 4,000,000 individuals were under some form of community supervision in the United States (BJS, 2010). According to the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) (2008), a willingness to punish individuals who break the law has long been rooted in the American culture.

Nationwide, community corrections agencies face the challenge of doing more for supervision and rehabilitation with fewer resources (Beto, Corbett, & Dilulio, 2000; USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Over the past thirty years, the probation population in the United States has increased by 389% from 1979 to 2009, an average rate of 324% each decade (BJS, 2010). In Arizona, over the past thirty years, the probation population has increased 718% from 1979 to 2009, an average rate of 497% each decade (BJS, 2010).

As crime rates continue to grow, criminals are placed on probation at a rate of one in every 45 adults in the United States (BJS, 2009). According to The PEW Center for the States (PEW) (2011), an analysis of Arizona's probation system identified that a major contributor to the prison growth rates were probation failures.

As probation leaders across the United States attempt to do more for criminals with fewer resources, implementing evidence-based practices with the hopes of increasing successful probation exits puts hope in the hands of leaders. However, probation leaders are confronted with figuring out how to implement evidence-based practices throughout their organization with limited resources. In addition to the issue of how probation officers supervise offenders, little is known about the variables that influence supervision styles of probation officers (Seiter & West, 2003). Providing education and training department-wide on evidence-based practices comes with a price and a mindset that leaders must sell to staff to gain organizational buy-in. Probation leaders cannot expect to educate staff on evidence-based practices without getting employee buy-in on numerous changes involved straight across to affect a cultural change throughout the entire organization.

### **Theoretical Concern**

There is a positive perception of leadership if employees perceive that the communication from leadership is effective (Neufeld, Wan, & Fang, 2010). Leaders must build trust with and amongst employees. Communicating the principles of evidence-based practices effectively throughout probation departments is of theoretical interest to all probation leaders in the criminal justice system because evidence-based practices provide probation officers with skills that are necessary to assist criminals in

living a drug and crime free life style (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The communication from leaders must take place throughout the entire organization horizontally and vertically to gain trust and confidence from staff (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Aligning evidence-based practices with probation management and leadership practices are of theoretical interest to all leaders since evidence-based practices results in successful outcomes (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). If probation leaders expect to see successful probation exits increase, they must change their perceptions of what probation supervision practices entail on an individual and collective level throughout their organization.

Latessa, Cullen, and Gendreau (2002), stated that in order to see successful outcomes, probation leaders must break away from the correctional quackery. Correctional quackery is the use of treatment interventions not based on actual knowledge of the causes of crime nor knowledge of what programs have proven to change offender behavior (Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002). Despite what the statistics may reveal in some jurisdictions regarding probation success rates, probation leaders have continued to train probation officers with the same techniques of enforcement and incarceration. Leaders must reinvent probation supervision with new strategies that equip probation officers so that probation becomes an effective alternative to prison (Clear, 2005). Probation leaders must prove to the public and lawmakers that they can flush out chronic offenders who destroy communities from the offenders who are in need of treatment; and that they can provide quick and effective intervention (Wooten, 2000).

## **Problem Statement**

The general problem is a high increase in the rate of individuals placed on probation supervision. Despite the numerous programs available to probationers, there are still those probationers who re-offend after attending programs (Day, Bryan, Davey, & Casey, 2006). According to the BJS (2010), 4,203,967 individuals in the United States were on some form of community supervision at the end of calendar 2009. A punitive culture has developed within probation departments that have proven to be ineffective but is still in practice (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). According to the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADOC) (2010), during March 2010, 13,540 offenders were admitted to prison. Of the 13, 540 offenders who were admitted to the ADOC, 30% (n=4,062) were admitted because they had their community supervision revoked for not complying with court orders or because they committed a new crime (ADOC, 2010). Approximately two thirds of parolees are re-arrested within three years after being released from prison (Petersilla, 2001). The James F. Austin (JFA) Institute projects that the prison population in Arizona will increase by 50% by 2017, which could add approximately 17,000 criminals to the state corrections system; this figure could undoubtedly impact the number of individuals being placed on community supervision upon release from prison (PEW, 2007). Although punishment and incarceration may look good on political agendas, it has proven costly for society (USDOJ & NIC, 2007).

The specific problem are the perceptions probation leaders have about probation supervision which creates a punitive culture that negatively affects a probationer's ability to complete probation supervision successfully (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Many of the current practices, which foster a punitive culture, are not evidence-based. In 2006,



approximately 50% of prison incarcerations were due to offenders violating their probation or parole supervision (PEW, 2007). If probation leaders expect to improve and understand outcomes, they must manage the problem as interdependent department systems (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). A quantitative study, with a correlational design was used to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices within their organization and actual probation exits. Using probation leaders as the unit of analysis, this study compares executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices with archived performance data on successful and unsuccessful probation exits from various adult probation departments throughout Arizona.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the quantitative correlational study was to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits utilizing a Likert-type survey and probation exit data. A quantitative method was appropriate for this study because an examination was completed to determine if there was a relationship between the participants (probation leaders) and probation outcomes (successful and unsuccessful) (Creswell, 2009). Using a correlational design, data were collected on the specific exit types from probation supervision in relation to successful and unsuccessful probation exits. Evidence-based practices provide probation leaders with the assurance that the strategies used will result in an increase in successful probation exits and increased public safety (USDOJ & NIC, 2009).

## **Variables**

The independent variable was the executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices measured by a Likert-type scale survey developed by the researcher. The dependent variable was dichotomous and was statistical data that measured the rate of successful and unsuccessful probation exits in various probation departments throughout Arizona. Using probation leaders as the unit of analysis, the researcher, through this study identified how different executive probation leaders' perceptions are associated with an organization's performance. The study compared executive probation leaderships' perceptions in relation to evidence-based practices of chief probation officers, deputy chief probation officers, division directors, managers, and supervisors in various adult probation departments throughout Arizona.

## **Significance of the Study**

### **General Importance**

It is important for probation leaders to identify and implement strategies to increase the rate of successful probation exits. Probation leaders must embrace a culture that is reflective of a sincere desire to assist criminals with a successful reintegration into society. Probation leaders must be willing to take on the challenge of restructuring the organization's current culture to align with evidence-based practices by adjusting their infrastructure to support the new business practice (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Probation employees are aware of the complexity of the crime problem and understand that economic insecurity, unemployment, low incomes, and poor housing contribute to the growth and spread of crime (Mead, 2005).

Citizens want assurance of their safety and it is the responsibility of probation leaders to put public safety first on their agendas. This study can contribute to future leaders' ability to explore the impact that perceptions of evidence-based practices have on successful probation exits and organizational culture. Implementation of evidence-based practices requires a large investment in staff and time, but yields dividends through improved outcomes (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The statistics compiled from this research study can be used by leaders in probation departments around the country to help decipher if they are interested in implementing evidence-based practices throughout their organization.

### **Significance of the Study to Leadership**

The principles of evidence-based practices provide for probation leaders to take a proactive approach with reducing recidivism while successfully reintegrating the probationer back into society. Probation leaders should examine how to align current leadership practices with evidence-based principles to increase successful completion of probation supervision (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Probation leadership practices have been affected by the construction of community supervision due to policy and legislation that has resulted in negative outcomes (Dale & Trlin, 2007). Strong and flexible leadership is critical to the success of the organization while changing the culture and management practices (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). This study contributes to the leadership literature by examining how probation leaders can improve the culture within their organization and identify the necessary leadership behavior for transforming an organization for improved probation outcomes.

### Nature of the Study

In this quantitative study, a correlational design was conducted to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits. Leaders play a critical role in creating the culture of their organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Using probation leaders as the unit of analysis, this study compared executive probation leaders' (chief probation officers, deputy chief probation officers, division directors, managers, and supervisors) perceptions of evidence-based practices with successful and unsuccessful probation exits using archived performance data from various probation departments throughout Arizona. A quantitative method was appropriate for this study because it studied the relationship of the participants (probation leaders) and probation outcomes (successful and unsuccessful exits) (Creswell, 2009). A correlational design allowed the researcher to collect data on the specific exit types from probation supervision in relation to successful and unsuccessful exits.

Executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices were collected using an online survey, via SurveyMonkey, which was administered to 173 probation leaders (chief probation officers, deputy chief probation officers, division directors, and managers) from various adult probation departments throughout Arizona. The survey used was a Likert-type scale survey developed by the researcher that measured executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices. The survey was designed using statements from an assessment tool developed by Bezyak, Kubota, and Rosenthal (2010). The assessment tool developed by Bezyak et al. (2010) was modified to reflect probation practices and was piloted for validation using experts.

Four questions were added to the survey regarding the difficulty of the survey, length of the survey, ease of readability, and challenges of the survey to validate it. “Likert-type attitude scales are quite reliable and valid instruments for the measurement of attitude” (Arnold, McCroskey, & Prichard, 1967, p. 31). A Likert-type scale is appropriate for evaluating and quantifying the leaders’ identified perceptions of evidence-based practices because it is based on summarizing and quantifying the attitude in a brief statement based on the level of agreement (Maxfield & Babbie, 2001).

Actual probation exit data were collected from various archived fiscal year reports that were provided online from various probation departments throughout Arizona and online data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Additional data on probation exits were provided by the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, the Adult Probation Services Division. The data included probation exit types for each adult probation department in relation to successful and unsuccessful exits from probation supervision. In chapter 4, the results of the study are presented in the form of tables, counts, and texts of paragraphs.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Contrary to the historical practices of probation supervision, which are hierarchical and controlling, evidence-based practices are focused on collective and transformational methods for probation supervision practices (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the association between executive probation leaders’ perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits. The study seeks to expand the knowledge of

probation outcomes in relation to perceptions of evidence-based practices. To accomplish this, the research questions that guided the study were:

Research Question One: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Research Question Two: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Recognizing change and the ability to adapt to environmental changes inside and outside the organization are critical factors that probation leaders must be able to recognize along with the needs of the followers. It is important to keep in mind the role

that followers play in the leadership process. Wren (1995) stated that leadership was not restricted to the influence exerted by someone in a particular position or role, but that followers were also part of the leadership process. Human behavior and life experiences dictate the type of leadership individuals embrace and practice. Leaders uniquely react to their environment. No one style of leadership fits all organizations. The leader's leadership style guiding the organization should be based on the internal and external environmental needs of the organization. Leadership should align with the vision, values, and mission of the organization.

Strang (2005) classified leadership as the ability to lead (a characteristic or trait), a behavior required to get work done (a role), the application of power, or as a process. Many leadership theories are approached from a leader to follower causality; this approach is taken with this research study. This research study focuses on executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits. Less than two percent (1.73) of Arizona adult probation leaders do not provide direct supervision of probationers. However, the leaderships' perceptions are what contribute to the culture of an organization. In turn, the culture of the organization is what has an effect on the supervision style of probation officers. The basis for the theoretical framework of this quantitative correlational research study was to focus on three theories: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and change management.

### **Transactional Leadership**

The study of transactional leadership focuses on an exchange between the leader and follower wherein the leader offers rewards or punishments for the performance or lack of performance of desired behaviors and the completion of tasks (Clawson, 2006;

Zagorsek, Dimovski, & Skerlavaj, 2009). Burns conceptualized the concept of transactional leaders (Hater & Bass, 1988). Transactional leadership is based on bureaucratic authority and legitimacy within organizations (Emery & Barker, 2007). Transactional leadership tends to be autocratic (dictatorial) as it ignores organizational issues (Clawson, 2006). Although transactional leadership may result in compliance from employees, motivation and enthusiasm is not likely to be generated for a commitment to tasks (Zagorsek et al., 2009). Transactional leadership is equally as important as transformational leadership as both styles are used to achieve a desired outcome (Ismail, Mohamed, Mohamed, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2010). Transactional leadership should be displayed with transformational leadership to achieve effective leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership focuses on an all-inclusive structure for the organization (Clawson, 2006). Building trust with and amongst employees is critical. Clawson stated that transformational leaders put the interest of the organization above their own and are able to inspire trust, loyalty, admiration, and motivation (2006). Effective leaders show an understanding of teams and are able to bring out the best in their staff while working with them in such a manner to bring them together as a team (Dale & Trlin, 2007). Transformational leaders recognize the need to transform; this type of leadership style is found throughout the entire organization and not only with upper or top management. Employees are empowered and transformational leaders build relationships based on trust with the followers. As stated by Wren (1995), “the transformational leader has transformed followers into more highly motivated followers



who provide extra effort to perform beyond expectations of leader and follower” (p. 104). Transformational leaders recognize the important role of individual employees. Sarros and Santora (2001) stated, “individualized consideration deals with the fundamental transformational leadership behaviors of treating individuals as important contributors to the work place” (p. 385). By combining transformational leadership with transactional leadership behaviors, leaders can optimize their role (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009).

### **Change Management**

Management differs from leadership. According to Clawson (2006), “management is about coping with complexity, and leadership is about coping with change” (p. 382). Recognizing change and the ability to adapt to environmental changes inside and outside the organization are critical factors probation leaders must recognize along with the needs of followers. The vision is what invents the future and enabling allows others to share their power and knowledge (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). It is important for leaders to recognize that management and staff are part of leadership as well. Employees lead by individual conduct on a daily basis, and as individual leaders, can assist with the change process to gain employee buy in from peers. Wren (1995) stated, “leadership is not restricted to the influence exerted by someone in a particular position or role; followers are part of the leadership process too” (p. 43).

Recognizing the role that employees play in change management can assist leaders so their organization can adapt and survive during difficult times. Yukl (2010) stated, “the survival and prosperity of an organization depends on adaptation to the environment and the acquisition of necessary resources” (p. 19). Leading employees down the path of organizational change requires management and leaders to take risks.

According to Kouzes and Posner (1997) for people to take risks, they must have trust and confidence because without trust and confidence people do not take risks; without risks, there is no change; without change, organizations and movements die.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this research study definitions of various operational terms used throughout the study are provided. Although some of the terminology used in the research is common to individuals who work in the criminal justice field, terminology are defined to provide clarity of the terms and how they are used throughout this research study.

***Absolute exits.*** A probationer who is exiting probation supervision on all cases and counts wherein the probationer will no longer be under probation supervision (Administrative Office of the Courts, 2011).

***Completion.*** Probation exits of probationers who are an absolute exit from probation supervision are discharged via a full termination or who were discharged early (BJS, 2008).

***Evidence-based practices.*** The objective, balanced, and responsible use of current research and the best available data to guide policy and practice decision, such that outcomes for consumers are improved; and the approached used focuses on effective empirical research and not anecdote or professional experience alone (USDOJ & NIC, 2009).

***Executive probation leadership.*** For the purposes of this research study, the definition of executive leadership is borrowed from James MacGregor Burn's definition of transformational leader. In his seminal work, Burn stated transformational leaders

“have the ability to share purpose with their followers and to use the power of that collective purpose to create change” (Burns, 2003; Mann, 1988, p. 8).

**Probation.** Probation refers to adult offenders placed on supervision in the community through a probation agency, most often in lieu of incarceration. While on probation, offenders are required to fulfill certain conditions of their supervision (e.g., payment of fines, fees or court costs, participation in treatment programs) and adhere to specific rules of conduct while in the community (BJS, 2010).

**Probationer.** A criminal offender placed on supervision in the community through a probation agency, most often in lieu of incarceration through the courts (BJS, 2010).

**Probation exit.** A termination of an individual on probation supervision who is released by the court from community supervision (BJS, 2010).

**Probation officer.** The officer of the court who supervises individuals placed on supervision in the community (Princeton University, 2004).

**SPSS.** A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences that is a computer program used for statistical analysis (SPSS Inc., 2007).

**Successful probation exit.** For the purposes of this research study, a successful probation exit is defined as the absolute discharge of probation supervision through an exit categorized as early termination, earned timed credit, or full termination.

**SurveyMonkey.** An online database used for the development, distribution, and analysis of surveys (SurveyMonkey, n.d.).

**Unsuccessful probation exit.** For purposes of this research study, an unsuccessful probation exit has been defined as the discharge of probation supervision

through an exit categorized as revoked to prison, revoked to jail, revoked with a fine, and revoked with no incarceration.

### **Assumptions**

A primary assumption of this study was that participants provided honest answers about his or her perceptions of evidence-based practices and respondents did not attempt to be misleading or deceptive by providing false responses since the survey was anonymous. A second assumption was participants fully understood participation in the research study was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous to provide the opportunity for truthful responses. Additionally, the researcher assumed participants had the basic knowledge and experience for accessing and using an online survey, since participants use computers daily to access e-mail. According to Maxfield and Babbie (2001), it is unlikely when using surveys that the researcher will achieve a 100% response rate. The assumption was made that not all participants would respond. Lastly, it was assumed the statistical data collected was current and reflected the actual figures reported for statistical analysis on probation exits.

### **Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations**

The scope of this quantitative correlational study consisted of a sample size of 173 adult probation leaders from 15 adult probation departments in Arizona who implemented evidence-based practices in their probation department. The methods for collecting data consisted of two methods: statistical reports and an online survey. Data were analyzed performing statistical tests to determine the relationship between leaders' perceptions and probation outcomes.

## **Limitations**

This study addresses executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices with archived performance data (probation exit types) from various adult probation departments throughout Arizona who implemented evidence-based practices. A possible limitation of this study was the instrument used. The instrument was designed as a self-report survey, which presents a degree of bias and error that should be taken into consideration. This study was limited to probation leaders in adult probation departments throughout Arizona who were willing to participate in the research study. A possible limitation to the sample size of this research study was participation from all 15 adult probation departments. If leaders in the largest county in Arizona did not participate in the proposed research study, this could have significantly affected the sample size as it accounts for 65% of Arizona's probation population, and has the largest number of employed executive leaders. The other 14 counties in Arizona comprise 35% of the probation population and vary in the number of employed executive leaders. If only the adult probation departments with a probation population of 1,200 probationers or less participated in the proposed study, the results of the study could not have been generalized on a statewide level in Arizona. The researcher attempted to minimize the limitations of the study by keeping personal biases out of the survey, out of the introductory letter emailed prior to the survey, and out of all follow up emails.

## **Delimitations**

Delimitations of the study included the use of a Likert-type survey administered to adult probation leaders throughout Arizona who implemented evidence-based practices within their organization since Likert-type surveys consist of close-ended questions.

Only adult probation departments who implemented evidence-based practices were included in the research study. Having access to probation data in Arizona narrowed the study's focus on executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation exits.

### **Chapter Summary**

The probation population in the United States has experienced a 389% increase from 1979 to 2009 (BJS, 2010). This quantitative correlational study examined the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits. A Likert-type survey was developed by the researcher to obtain information on the perceptions of evidence-based practices from adult probation leaders throughout Arizona. Departmental outcomes in relation to probation exits available on probation departments and the Arizona Supreme Court website was used to collect information on successful probation exits. Supplemental probation data were collected from the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, the Adult Probation Services Division, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

In chapter 2, an explanation is provided which details a review of the literature used to support this quantitative correlational research study. The literature review focuses on probation supervision, transactional and transformational leadership, change management, and evidence-based practices. Theories explored in detail include change management, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research questions studied in this research study were what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits; and what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits? The use of evidence-based practices within probation departments requires leaders to change the business practices and culture of the organization to effect change. Leaders must consider the type of evidence used to inform policy and practice, barriers to achieving evidence-based practices, and identifying the necessary skills to implement evidence-based practices (Gerrish et al., 2007). Evidence-based practices are the objective, balanced, and use of current research coupled with the best available data to guide policy and practice decision making, so that outcomes for consumers are improved (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The uses of evidence-based practices in probation are programs proven to have effective results and not based on anecdotal information (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Historically supervision techniques of probation officers have consisted of enforcement and surveillance. Probation officers provide surveillance and enforcement to ensure compliance of court ordered conditions by offenders placed on probation supervision through the Court. If probationers are not complying with court ordered conditions of probation, probation officers will enforce the court order through a probation revocation, which could result in incarceration to prison or jail.

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to describe any correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes as measured by correlating successful and unsuccessful

probation exits of probationers during one year prior and one year after the implementation date of evidence-based practices from which data are collected. In chapter 2 a presentation of the literature review is provided on the history of probation supervision; the theoretical framework of this research study in relation to transactional leadership and transformational leadership, change management, evidence-based practices, and quantitative correlational methods. The role and purpose of the literature review is to understand the importance of prior research, and strengths and weaknesses of existing research studies and their meaning (Boote & Beile, 2005). Through the exploration of the literature in chapter 2, a foundation for understanding probation supervision, leadership styles, evidence-based practices, and correlational methods can be gained.

A thorough exploration of dissertations, peer reviewed journals, government reports and related books provided the basis for this literature review. The literature review is organized into four sections followed by a summary of the gaps in literature and the conclusion. The first section is on the history of probation supervision in the United States. The second section is about the theoretical framework in relation to the proposed study by providing a summary of literature on the theories of transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and change management. The third section consists of evidence-based practices and its origin, and the fourth section outlines quantitative correlational research methods.

### **Documentation**

In chapter 1, the foundation for this quantitative correlational study was provided and three theories identified for the theoretical framework in chapter 1: transformational



leadership, transactional leadership, and change management. The researcher used various search engines to gather supporting literature for the proposed research along with books from public libraries. Three search engines were used in this research: EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Gale Power Search. All search engines were available through the University of Phoenix. The amount of supporting literature used for this research is in the following areas: (a) 210 peer-reviewed articles (78%), (b) 0 dissertations (00%), (c) 22 books (10%), (d) 17 government reports (8%), and (e) 7 websites (3%). Sixty-seven percent (n=142) of all references are dated 2007 or newer, and 32% (n=68) are dated 2006 or older. Titles searched used in the search engines included key terminology such as evidence-based practices, probation supervision, community supervision, surveillance, community corrections, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, recidivism, change management, Bernard Bass, James MacGregor Burns, and John Augustus.

### **History of Probation Supervision**

Probation supervision is a form of community supervision in the United States and is generally an alternative to imprisonment (Bonta, Rugge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008). Many jurisdictions throughout the United States allow probation leaders to determine the intensity of the probationers' supervision, and levels of supervision vary (Jalbert, Rhodes, Flygare, & Kane, 2010). One of Arizona's first documented probation cases began with the juvenile reform in 1907; 20 years later adult probation supervision was established in Pima and Maricopa counties (Pima County Adult Probation, 2009). Over the years, leaders, citizens, and professionals have politicized and de-professionalized probation supervision (Treatwell & Mantle, 2007).

John Augustus, a Bostonian shoe cobbler, now known as the father of probation, is accredited with the origins of probation supervision in the United States (Bonta et al., 2008; Clear, 2005; Zimring & Hawkins, 1991). In 1841, Augustus convinced a judge of the Boston Police Court to release an adult male drunk into his care in lieu of sending the drunk to prison (New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, n.d). As leaders focus on social control, offenders go through the system with a focus on monitoring with zero tolerance (Taxman, 2009). A “trail-em and nail-em” approach has been concrete in probation and ends by concerted actions of the probation officer; making the officer feel more effective and in control over case outcomes (Clear, 2005). A willingness to punish individuals who break the law has long been rooted in the American culture, and emphasized through punishment policies that focus on incarceration (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Crime & Justice Institute, 2008; Taxman, 2009).

Understanding criminal behavior has long been a challenge causing probation officers to supervise probationers according to their own morals and values of life (Ives, 1963). There is no guarantee that being hard on criminals lowers their likelihood to reoffend (Hesseltine, Sarre, & Day, 2011; Noonan, & Latessa, 1987; Nutley & Davies, 1999; Senese, 1992; Taxman, 2010). Augustus promised the judge if the drunk were released to him, he would be accountable to the Court for the drunk’s sobriety and fidelity of every charge for which he was released on bail (Clear, 2005). Augustus’ efforts proved to be successful at rehabilitating the drunk and by 1843 August had broadened his rehabilitation efforts to include juveniles and females (NYSDCJS, n.d). Learned behavior can result in conforming, deviant, or delinquent behaviors, which are impacted by four variables: differential association, definitions, reinforcement, and

modeling (Chappell & Piquero, 2004). Based on the amount of positive or negative feedback individuals receive from those they associate with, they will reinforce their notion of right and wrong as to what is acceptable behavior that they have come to define to model.

Many individuals view the practices of probation supervision as being negative with the belief that supervision tactics are soft on criminals; however, probation supervision is cheaper than incarceration (Hagan, 1979). Because of these perceptions of lax enforcements and supervision standards, many view the system as part of the problem and not the solution (Wooten, 2000). The correctional population in the United States has experienced a steep increase since the 1980s as a result of the war on drugs in conjunction with get tough tactics of lock 'em up and throw away the key because nothing works (Ostermann, 2009). Traditionally probation supervision was for nonviolent and less violent offenders; however, with the increase of offenders coming out of prison, probation caseloads have increased to include violent offenders (Paparozzi & Demichele, 2008).

Historical probation practices have been guided by buzzwords in the field; such practices have included nothing works, restorative justice, community justice, probation works, and partnerships (Clear, 2005; Paparozzi & DeMichele, 2008). Most recently, the popular approach has been termed evidence-based practices (Jalbert et al., 2010; Kvernbekk, 2011). Some factors supporting the negative views of probation include: “unsafe communities with open drug markets”, probationers reoffending while on probation supervision, high revocation rates of probationers which are seen as the revolving door syndrome, inadequate rehabilitative services, lack of resources, large

unmanageable caseload, and low morale in probation departments (Wooten, 2000). Many argue on the lack of empirical evidence that supports the effectiveness of probation supervision and its effect on recidivism (Bonta et al., 2008).

The role of the probation officer has never been clearly defined and falls somewhere in between casework and surveillance (Burton, Latessa & Barker, 1992; Klockars, 1972; Seiter & West, 2003). Little progress has been made with supervision techniques and meeting the goals of mission statements within probation supervision (Beto et al., 2000). Some practitioners have argued that the field of probation supervision should fall under social work and not criminal justice (Dale & Trlin, 2007). Since the 1960s, role clarification for probation officers has created a division of roles for the probation officer: problem-solving casework or let the punishment fit the crime supervision style (Ives, 1963). However, the goal of probation supervision is to punish offenders, limit liberty and incapacitation, protect the public, reduce recidivism, rehabilitate offender into the community, and offender reparation to the community (Nutley & Davies, 1999). The primary purpose of probation supervision is to work with offenders in the community to resolve their problems and keep them in the community (Paparozzi & DeMichele, 2008). Probation supervision has been an essential part of corrections since its establishment over 150 years ago (Bonta et al., 2008).

Not much is known about the caseloads of probation officers or how probation officers organize the supervision aspect of probation (Clear, 2005). Various types of supervision styles have been put in place in an attempt to meet the demands of probation supervision (Janetta & Halberstadt, 2011; Taxman, 2008; Walters, Vader, Nguyen, Harris, & Eells, 2010). Two goals should be central to the roll of the probation officer: to

rehabilitate treatable probationers, and to protect the community from at-risk individuals (Burton as cited in Seiter & West, 1992). Traditional methods for organizing caseloads for supervision has historically proven to be weak; when recognized and changed, a different model with caseload at its core replaces it (Clear, 2005). Eisler and Carter (2010) argued that “effective leaders and managers are not cops or controllers whose commands must be unquestioningly obeyed, but people who facilitate, inspire, and elicit from others their highest productivity and creativity” (p. 100).

Three critical components of effective supervision include treatment, surveillance, and enforcement (Barnes, Ahlman, Gil, Sherman, Kurtz, & Malvestuto, 2010; Paparozzi & DeMichele, 2008). According to Skeem and Manchak (2008), effective probation supervision requires surveillance and treatment. Surveillance alone is not sufficient to generate successful supervision outcomes. Offenders can benefit more from probation supervision as opposed to prison incarceration (Bonta et al., 2008). Skeem and Manchak (2008), examined offenders supervised by officers with various supervision styles. Skeem and Manchak found that offenders supervised by officers with skills of supervision styles mixed with surveillance and treatment were less likely to have their probation revoked than those who were supervised by officers who only had the skills of surveillance supervision or treatment supervision (2008). The results of the study by Skeem and Manchak were consistent with Klockar’s model of supervision and Andrews and Kiessling’s (1980) finding that a firm but fair approach to supervision is more effective. An effective way of decreasing recidivism is to intervene at the human service level (Bonta et al., 2008). Working in partnerships with others will strengthen the work of probation staff in working with offenders (Treadwell & Mantle, 2007). The role of the

probation officer appears to have shifted during the 1980s from welfare and rehabilitation to punishment and public safety based on the notion that “nothing works” (Nutley & Davies, 1999). Since practitioners create and implement intervention methods, it is critical for them to have a working knowledge and be educated in practices that are empirically supported (Flores, Russell, Latessa, & Travis III, 2005). Probation leaders will need to learn to work smarter by seeking ways to justify supervision strategies related to research that validates meaningful practice (Beto et al., 2000).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The researcher has drawn from the literature on transactional and transformational leadership styles, and change management. Leadership has existed in all cultures regardless of economic social makeup for as long as people have interacted (Stone & Patterson, 2005; Trottier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008). Through the late 1970s, leadership theories established centered on supervision to improve performance of work units (McLaurin & Amri, 2008). Older approaches to leadership theories focused on what one way was the best way to lead (Hoagland, 2008). The purpose of a leader is to move others to serve a purpose, because if you serve a purpose, that purpose will come first (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Evidence to support the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm comes from all over the world (Bass, 1997). Burns (1978) classified leadership behavior into two types: transactional and transformational (George & Sabhapathy, 2010). Bass and Avolio later elaborated on the categories of transformational and transactional behavior of leader (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Burns (2003) distinguished between transactional and transformational leadership with the verbs change and transform; to change is to give

and take, to exchange one thing for another; transforming is to create a metamorphosis in form or structure. Bass developed the full range leadership model on the belief that transactional and transformational leadership are not ends on a single continuum, but are leadership patterns that all leaders have and use in varying amounts (Trottier et al., 2008). Bass identified the transactional-transformational paradigm as either a “matter of contingent reinforcement of followers by a transactional leader or the moving of followers beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society by a transformational leader” (1997, p. 130).

In transactional leadership, the leader offers rewards or punishment for performance of a desired behavior (Clawson, 2006; Trottier et al., 2008). With transactional leadership, rules and regulations dominate the organization (Bass, 1997). Throughout the literature of research, transactional leadership is defined on the basis of the influence or providing rewards for compliance and transformational leadership is defined on the basis of transforming followers’ values and priorities so they perform beyond the leader’s expectations based on the effects of the leader (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Practitioners have given a great amount of attention to transactional and transformational leadership styles (Sosik, Potosky, & Jung, 2002). During the past 20 years, transactional and transformational leadership has become the focus of research and controversy (Burns, 2003).

**Change management.** Leadership differs from management as it involves a different set of functions; leadership is about delivery of change, and management about implementation of order and consistency (Towl, 2004). Leadership is intertwined with change, and change is intertwined with the dynamics of wants and needs (Burns, 2003).

Creating change requires making numerous actions and decisions by the leader during times of uncertainty and ambiguity (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). When the current operations of an organization are working, employees have little desire for change; however, smooth operations of the existing system do not eliminate the need for assessment (Matesic, 2009). Changing individual human behavior is difficult; it is even more difficult to change the behavior of many individuals within an organization (Latessa, 2004). People issues are the greatest obstacles that arise during organizational change (Mclean, 2011). Managing change is not sufficient, to lead an organization in a new direction, leaders must manage through change (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999). Due to the rapid changing effects of technology in the work environment, leaders face the challenge of remaining competitive during a time unlike any other throughout history (Christian, 2010). Leaders who want to make changes must consider the organizational performance as well as the impact of change on the followers (Jamaludin, Rahman, Makhbul, & Idris, 2011). The evolution towards change itself is ongoing, adaptive, and renewable, requiring continuity and flexibility (Burns, 2003). Debating the difference between management and leadership is nothing new and is a topic debated in academics and the media for decades (Gifford & Davies, 2008). There is a fundamental difference between management and leadership; management is more about controlling and predicting while leadership is the spirit of creation (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). Management is the ability to direct people and resources towards an established goal (Willink, 2009). Even a well planned change management strategy and a readiness for change, resistance to change during the implementation phase will arise (Sutanto, Kankanhalli, Tay, Raman, & Tan, 2009). Managers deal with complexity while leaders



deal with change; however, both are critical functions to the organization: deciding what needs to be done, making sure the job gets done, and developing networks of people and relationships to accomplish a mission (Clawson, 2006). The foundation of an organization is its leadership, which encompasses leaders and followers (Willink, 2009). Although leadership differs from management, because of the overlap and relationship, the two are often confused and misplaced within organizations (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). Aside from being involved in the daily operations of the organization, managers must provide an effective vision that can lead, inspire, and motivate employees (Bennett, 2009).

Recognizing change and the ability to adapt to environmental changes inside and outside of the organization are critical factors probation leaders must recognize along with the needs of the followers. Leaders must see change as a process of enriching values through change as opposed to replacing one value or behavior with another (Woolliams, 2003). Change not only requires innovation, but also the desire and willingness to go in a different direction (Wooten, 2000). If there exists a lack of willingness to implement change, leaders must be able to tailor the efforts to the strengths and deficiencies of the implementation process for quality improvement (Hamilton, 2009). A collective desire for change is what drives the change process (Denning, 2008). Leaders and followers become agents for change who are capable of self-determination of transforming possibilities into destiny (Burns, 2003).

Organizations need management practices to keep systems in place and direct the necessary energy to overcome any existing disorder in the system (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). Organizational change requires support at all levels within the organization,

which in turn requires that all staff have an understanding of what the change process will entail (Latessa, 2004). Training and development on organizational change is necessary if leaders expect to have successful long-term results (Christian, 2010). Probation officers report that they would be more effective in their work if provided more training (Attebury, 2007). A key element for success is for leaders to be able to manage and motivate their employees to reach their full potential, engage them, have them embrace change, and to make good decision (Bennett, 2009). If leaders prepare their organization for change, they have a higher chance of the change process being successful (Latessa, 2004). Leaders must lead the change process regardless of the resistance received from their management team (Erwin, 2009).

It is important for leaders to recognize that staff are part of the leadership process as well and that they can step up in individual roles as leaders based on individual conduct on a daily basis (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leaders and followers are defined in terms of costs and benefits associated with intra organizational exchanges (Manz, Bastien, & Hostager, 2002). The role of leadership is not restricted to the power or influence an individual holds based on position, followers play a critical role in the leadership process as well (Wren, 1995). Individual leaders can assist with the change process to gain employee buy in from their peers. Leaders and followers co-create and co-constitute leadership; the two are dependent on one another (Kellerman, 2004). Effective implementation of evidence-based practices in probation supervision requires a significant amount of change and development on organizational level is required (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Employees who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of

the organization need to be involved in the designing, implementing, and operations of the change process affecting their programs (Latessa, 2004).

If change is to be successful, leaders must practice what they are talking because resistance from all levels of the organization will surface (Erwin, 2009; Latessa, 2004). Leaders need to provide guidance to employees that empower them to take ownership over their decisions and issues and to be able to self-sacrifice at times for the greater good of the team and company (Bennett, 2009; Willink, 2009). Empowerment is not one-directional; if leaders evoke positive motives in followers, followers can satisfy self-directed motives of the leader while achieving a common purpose (Burns, 2003). A true leader, leads from the front (Palmisano, 2008). Within organizations, empowering employees can be defined as encouraging and allowing employees to take personal responsibility for their contributions to the organization (Kuokkanen et al., 2007). Effectively managing change requires knowing the current culture of the organization, putting checks and balances in place, and being measurement oriented (Bonn & Pettirew, 2009; Orme, 2009; Rahman & Schnelle, 2008; Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2003).

Recognizing the role that employees play in change management can assist organizations to adapt and survive during difficult times. Adaptation to the environment and acquisition of necessary resources is critical to the survival and prosperity of an organization (Yukl, 2010). Leading employees down the path of organizational change requires managers and leaders to take risks. A true leader will never ask employees to take risks that he or she is not willing to take (Palmisano, 2008; Willink, 2009). Leaders, who take the same risks that they ask of their followers, inspire and energize their followers (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999).

There are certain qualities that are essential for leaders to have to manage organizational change: “ability to reflection; acknowledgment of personal strengths and weaknesses; willingness to take risks and receive feedback; the ability to motivate others; and demonstration of the fundamental principles of honesty, openness, respect, and trust” (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 33). Trust is a critical element that enables others to act (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). For people to take risks, they must have trust and confidence in those with whom they are taking a risk because without trust and confidence, people do not take risks; without risks, there is no change; without change, organizations and movements die (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). Zagorsek et al. (2009) stated that leadership influences behavioral and cognitive changes in two ways: behaviorally and cognitively. A leader is not a narrow-minded person (Palmisano, 2008). “By facilitating or impeding information processing in an organization, leaders encourage or impede changes in the mentality or behavior of organizational members to address changes in the internal or external business environment” (Zagorsek et al., 2009, p. 158).

Trompenaars and Woolliams (2003) argued that organizational cultural change is a contraction in terms because cultures form because of preservation of one’s existence. Changing an organization’s culture is contrary to the preservation of its existence. Kuokkanen et al., (2007) stated that organizational change contributes to employee dissatisfaction, burnout, and absenteeism. Trompenaars and Woolliams argued that to minimize the resistance to organizational change, leaders must align change with continuity, if they expect to preserve an evolving identity (2003). When major change occurs, the normal incentives in place may not be sufficient to minimize resistance from employees (Manz et al., 2002). Leaders and work teams in the organization should

ensure they have “planned strategies for overcoming resistance to change” by employees (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 39). A leader must realize that resistance to change is inevitable and sometimes necessary (Burns, 2003). Leaders need to create opportunities for employees to meet and talk, be alert to changes in the internal and external environments, and above all create an open organizational culture where trust and cooperation are core values (Zagorsek et al., 2009, p. 161).

When compared to transactional leadership, transformational leadership has a higher correlational for employee satisfaction, for employees going above and beyond, and for effectiveness (Bennett, 2009). However, leaders should not only promote transformational leadership and discourage transactional, but should take into account psychological empowerment of employees and not view transactional and transformational leadership as mutually exclusive (Jamaludin et al., 2011; Pieterse, Van Knippenberg Schippers, & Stam, 2010). As individuals come together to achieve their needs, their collective efficacy unites them into a transforming force that may exceed the expectations of the leader (Burns, 2003; Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008). Throughout the change process, managers must keep in mind that employees make the organization run (Schein, 1996).

**Leadership styles.** According to Strang (2005) for leaders to be effective, they must use enthusiasm, encouragement, and charisma with their followers to build enthusiasm and to sustain momentum. Leadership is an important element necessary to ensure the sustainability of an organization, to reduce turnover rates, and increase employee satisfaction (Boseman, 2008; Jamaludin et al., 2011). Leaders are not afraid of taking risks or failure; they see it as an opportunity to learn and teach (Palmisano, 2008).

Transformational leaders are organized by the needs of people, and is shaped by the values of their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness (Burns, 2009).

Manz, Bastien, and Hostager (2002) state that a leader doesn't always have to be the individual who occupies an elevated position in a hierarchy; but rather one who is in a central position in the cycle of ongoing exchange relationships in the organization.

Leadership impacts change (Steppe & Jones, 2007). Leadership has to do with influencing others and not simply exerting power over others (Hoagland, 2008). Success does not equal leadership (Palmisano, 2008). Leadership is a relationship between the individual who chooses to lead, and the individual who chooses to follow (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leadership is a dynamic relationship and a collective process that extends far beyond the sum of individual motivations and efficacies (Burns, 2003; McLaurin & Amri, 2008). The focus of leadership began to change from leaders being required to measure work and ensure effectiveness and efficiency to a leader's active involvement with followers to achieve the goals of the organization (Stone & Patterson, 2005).

Leadership is not restricted to a field of study but is also a master discipline that highlights some of the most challenging problems of human needs and social change (Burns, 2003). Leadership is a process, not a rank; it can be observed understood, learned, and practiced (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999). Leadership practices in probation have been affected by the construction of community supervision due to policy and legislation that has resulted in negative outcomes (Dale & Trlin, 2007). Communication is a critical factor for effective leadership and requires communication competence (Flauto, 1999). Leaders must be aware of the organization's existing subculture because they may impair valid communication amongst employees when resistance surfaces

(Schimmel & Muntslag, 2009). The personal traits of people and leadership styles are irrelevant when communication is absent (Hoagland, 2008). Effective communication can shift the identities and relationships during organizational change (Karp & Helgo, 2008). Leadership is most effective when enabling conditions such as inspiration, truthfulness, and listening are in place (Denning, 2008).

Effective leaders and managers are not cops or controllers who unquestioningly must be obeyed, rather they are people who inspire, facilitate, and elicit from people their highest productivity and creativity (Eisler & Carter, 2010). The ability to influence others is the core of leadership (Yukl, 2007). Leadership is the relationships between leader and followers that has at its affective core efficacy and self-efficacy, individualism and collectiveness, self-confidence, hope and the expectation that problems get resolved and goals attained through individual or collective leadership (Burns, 2003). A strong sense of self-worth and self-esteem is a good measure of confidence in one's ability to cope with change, develop new skills, and to seek out more feedback (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004).

According to Palmisano (2008), leaders are seen within the organization. The strength of a leader is dependent on how he or she gains support from followers (Jamaludin et al., 2011). It is through the efforts of the followers that leaders succeed (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999). Transforming leaders define the public values that embrace the supreme and long lasting principles of humanity (Burns, 2003). Leadership creates a new way of doing business that fosters change, takes risks, and accepts responsibility for making change occur (Kouzes & Posner, 1997). Leaders make emergency decisions according to the information available to them (Palmisano). Leadership broadens

individual aspirations to embrace social change and builds societies that respond to human wants, needs, and values (Burns, 2003). Historical practices of probation supervision have been built on transactional leadership styles. Leadership is not static based on specific roles; rather a process that must be lead to exchange individual costs and benefits (Manz et al., 2002). Leadership is about challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (Denning, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 1997). However, having a shared vision does not prevent tension from rising (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999).

Leaders should be truthful and pursue truth despite the challenges encountered (Palmisano, 2008). Leaders must establish credibility by doing what they say they will do (Hesslebein & Cohen, 1999). Leading is a prerequisite that requires trust to get anything done (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). A new leadership style built on respect, accountability, and empowerment is necessary for economic productivity (Eisler & Carter, 2010). The new models of organizational leadership call for a new type of leader who is concerned about the human aspect of the follower and not only the control and task of operation (Trapero & De Lozada, 2010). In addition to taking the initiative to engage with followers, empowering leaders must also engage creatively in a manner that responds and recognizes the material wants of potential followers, their psychological wants for self-determination, and for self-development (Burns, 2003). Leaders need to provide guidance that will encourage employees to take ownership of problems and issues, to think outside the box, and to show willingness to self-sacrifice for the greater good of the team and organization (Bennett, 2009). Leaders must concern themselves



with the future and ensure that their organization will be in better shape in the future than when they found it (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Although leadership is necessary at all stages of change and functionality, its role should be to create and expand opportunities that empower individuals so they can pursue happiness for themselves (Burns, 2003). The old paradigms of task-oriented, directive, and autocratic leadership theories did not address the effects of leader-follower relations in regards to shared vision, symbolism, imaging, and sacrifice (Bass, 1997). Over time, a better understanding of the characteristics of transactional and transformational leadership has been gained to make people in those roles more effective (Orme, 2009).

***Transactional leadership.*** The focus of transactional leadership is to maintain the status quo and to manage the daily business operations (Stone & Patterson, 2005). In 1973, James Victor Downton proposed a theory of transaction leadership in which the term transactional was an “economic exchange process” in which the fulfillment of mutual transactional commitments formed the basis of trust (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). In 1978 James MacGregor Burns published a book titled *Leadership*, which pioneered the transactional and transformational leadership paradigm (Jamaludin et al., 2011; Kellerman, 2004). The focus of the study of transactional leadership is on an exchange between leader and follower that can be conceptualized into a two-factor model: passive or active (Emery & Barker, 2007).

Transactional leadership is based on a set of clearly defined exchanges between the follower and leader (Orme, 2009; Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Transactional leaders are individuals who are focused on motivation of followers through rewards or discipline; these leaders actively monitor deviant behavior from standards, mistakes, and errors

(Bass & Avolio as cited in George & Sabhapathy, 2010; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). The relationship between most transactional leaders and followers encompasses the leader approaching followers with the notion of exchanging one thing for another; leaders will stress efficiency, planning, competency, goal setting, structure, and maintaining the organization (Beinecke, 2009). Transactional leadership is associated with legislative, group, bureaucratic, and reforming leadership (Clawson, 2006). The concept of transactional leadership is based on a contract of economic (i.e., reward contingent job) as opposed to relationship (i.e., follower development) (Ismail et al., 2010). Some transactional behaviors include contingent reward, passive management by exception, active management by exception, and laissez-faire leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Clawson, 2006; Trottier et al., 2008). Transactional contingency reward leadership should relate positively to follower performance when leaders clarify expectations and recognize individual achievement that positively contributes to higher levels of performance and effort (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). The leader's effectiveness with the follower is dependent on how long the reward is able to provide motivation (Trapero & De Lozada, 2010).

The transactional leaders functions as a broker (Burns, 2003). Transactional leadership is characterized by swapping, trading, or bargaining motive for an exchange that lacks strong commitment between leaders and follower (Jamaludin et al., 2011). Positive transactions occur when the follower receives a reward that is contingent upon achieving a desired outcomes; and lack of achievement results in a negative transaction (punishment); these transactions are seen as contingent rewards (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007; Clawson, 2006). Transactional leaders have limited influence on higher-order

motives of followers and do not typically motivate followers intrinsically or develop leader follower bonds; thus, they are left to influence followers through rewards and sanctions (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

Transactional leaders exert a great amount of power over their employees and control the rewards and punishments of tasks within the organization with very little input from employees (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Dambe & Moorad, 2008).

Transactional leadership focuses on behavioral compliance and manages outcomes and not the ideals of the follower (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). In the minds of many, management is about creating the right incentives and rewards so that employees will do what leaders need them to do (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999). The moral legitimacy of transactional leadership depends on granting the same opportunities and liberties to followers that the leader claims for his or her self, telling the truth, keeping promises, employing legitimate incentives and sanction, and distributing to each person what is due (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Transactional leaders typically focus on task completion and compliance; passive management by exception becomes the focus (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Clawson, 2006; Emery & Barker, 2007). In transactional management by exception the leader does not maintain or encourage personal relationships with followers; trust then is based on functioning of control mechanisms and effective applications of punishment and not between leader and follower (Trapero & De Lozada, 2010).

Transactional leader do not seek to unify employees needs and values to achieve integrated action during change (Manz et al., 2002). The trail-em nail-em method of supervision historically used in probation supervision practices “is concrete and ends by

concerted action of the probation officer”, however, at the individual level of supervision the “practice supports a control course arising from the technical uncertainty of supervision methods” (Clear, 2005, p. 177). Active management by exception is seen in the trail-em nail-em method of supervision because the focus becomes monitoring probationers to ensure that deviations from expected performance does not occur and control and punishment are used to leverage a change in the collaborators’ attitude (Clawson, 2006; Trapero & De Lozada, 2010). Prior to the implementation of evidence-based practices in one large county in Arizona, through the use of a Likert-type survey that assessed organizational culture, “the Department was perceived largely as a benevolent-authoritative system, characterized by a lack of communication among various levels, a lack of interaction, and a lack of trust” (Maricopa County Adult Probation, 2010, p. 7).

Transactional leadership styles are typically seen in management due to objectives being set and managed (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Although transactional leadership may result in compliance from employees, motivation and enthusiasm are not likely to generate a commitment to tasks; this can be compared to probationers who comply with court ordered conditions of probation and who successfully terminate from probation supervision, but who reoffend (Zagorsek et al., 2009). Transactional leadership can be argued that it negatively relates to innovative behavior because of its focus on role performance and less of a focus on stimulation of new activities (Pieterse, Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010). Transactional leaders prevail in steady environmental organizations that are highly structured and have routine tasks and functions (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007).

In a study conducted by Flauto (1999) and Patrick, Scrase, Ahmed, and Tombs (2009), the results indicated that the single predictor of communication competence is a leader-member exchange and that transactional leadership is a third predictor of communication competence. Clear and unequivocal communication is necessary for effective leadership (Palmisano, 2008). Although transactional leaders may evoke effectiveness and satisfaction from employees, they are less likely to motivate employees to put in any extra effort on the job (Bennett, 2009). However, this is not to say that transactional and transformational leadership are unrelated; both approaches are used to achieve a goal or objective (Hater & Bass, 1988). Leadership is a matter of how to be and not how to do (Hesselbein & Cohen, 1999). In addition to the traditional technical and managerial skills, leaders also need transformational competencies to emphasize mission articulation, vision, and to inspire follower motivation (Orme, 2009; Trottier et al., 2008).

When mixed with transformational leadership, transactional leadership elicits positive follower behavior (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Bass (1978) argued that transactional leadership is necessary for effective leadership and should be displayed with transformational leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Transformational leadership adds to the effects of, but does not substitute, transactional leadership (Bass, 1997). Developing a mixture of transactional and transformational leadership behavior can help leaders optimize their leadership role (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). At the individual level, each leader has a profile of transactional and transformational traits (Bass, 1997). Researchers have found that transformational leadership compliments transactional leadership (Jamaludin et al., 2011). Transactional leaders work within the constraints of

the organization while transformational leaders change the organization (Bass as cited in Bass, 1997).

***Transformational leadership.*** Transformational leadership represents a new leadership genre (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Developing transformational leaders does not mean that leadership styles needs to depart entirely from transactional and managerial behaviors (Willink, 2009). The concept of transformational leadership was first coined by James Victor Downton and was first conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns over 25 years ago and expanded upon by Bernard Bass (Avolio, 2008; Dambe & Moorad, 2008; Emery & Barker, 2007; Goa & Bai, 2011). Derived from the Latin word transformance, transform means to “change the nature, function, or condition of, to convert” (Hacker & Robert, 2004). Transformational leadership is critical as it links follower behavior to management strategy (Strang, 2005). The theory of transformational leadership is based on the notion that the leader who behaves in a transformational manner is able to evoke high levels of effort and dedication from followers (Ayman & Korabik, 2010).

Transformational leadership consists of changing and transforming individuals (Bailey & Azelrod, 2001; Boseman, 2008; George & Sabhapathy, 2010). The transformational leadership theory is based on a set of approaches for understanding leadership and not management in relation to understanding how leaders foster high performance and develop emotional bonds between leader and follower (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Transactional leadership is associated with intellectual, heroic, executive, ideological, and revolutionary leadership (George & Sabhapathy, 2010). The transformational leader stresses teamwork, autonomy, creativity, personal relationships,

honesty, continuous learning, has a vision of the future and believe in proactive change (Beinecke, 2009).

The concept of transformational leadership is based on a contract of relationships as opposed to economic, wherein it takes on the form of a social exchange between leader and follower (Ismail et al., 2010). The relationship between transformational leaders and followers are characterized by four factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Transformational leadership is a higher order construct of components idealized influence that entails servicing as a role model and sacrificing self-gain for collective gain, which results in stimulating followers to do the same (Pieterse et al., 2010). Transformational behaviors include idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation (George & Sabhapathy, 2010). Transformational leaders attempt to instill respect, faith, and pride in their followers (George & Sabhapathy, 2010). Transformational leaders must be able to envision a new future while being able to analyze what the current situation is (Hacker & Thomas, 2004).

Clawson (2006) identified seven attributes of transformational leaders:

- they see themselves as agents of change;
- they are not afraid to take risks;
- they believe in people and are attentive to their needs;
- they are able to identify and articulate their own set of core values;
- they are flexible and open to new ideas;
- they are careful, disciplined thinkers; and
- they trust their own intuitions.

Leaders who bring in transformational leadership into their organization attempt to change the culture (Gellis, 2001). The transformation of an organization requires that leaders have the following qualities to lead organizational change: ability critically think, self-assesses strengths and weaknesses, risk taker, open to feedback, motivational, visionary, and have principles of honesty, openness, respect, and trust (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Being a truthful leader earns respect and trust, and attracts followers (Palmisano, 2008). A leader is at their personal best when they are able to challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Willink, 2009).

Seidman and McCauley (2011) identified two approaches of transformational leadership that can be used to impact organizational change: leading a single initiative and as a core competency. The use of evidence-based practices in the field of probation supervision would utilize the two approaches of transformational leadership to impact organizational change. Transformational leadership is based on an all-inclusive structure for the organization (Clawson, 2006). Transformational leaders recognize the need to transform; this type of leadership style is throughout the entire organization and not only with upper or top management (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Seidman and McCauley stated that using transformational leadership for single initiatives consisted of four components: setting the bar, motivating change, sustaining change, and scaling to enterprise.

Transformational leadership as a core competency consists of the same four components that are used in the single initiative but are used for developing transactional managers into transformational leaders (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). After the



implementation of evidence-based practices, in one large probation department in Arizona, a Likert-type survey was used to assess the culture of the Department. Having been perceived as a benevolent-authoritative Department with lack of communication, interaction, and trust, it was now perceived “as much more consultative characterized more by increased communication, interaction, and involvement, as well as a greater degree of trust” (Maricopa County Adult Probation, 2010, p. 7).

Seidman and McCauley (2011) stated that transformational leadership is used for two purposes, a single initiative and as core competencies. Using transformational leadership for single initiatives involves setting the bar, motivating change, sustaining change, and scaling to enterprise, while using transformational leadership for core competencies involves using the four criteria outlined for single initiatives but based on developing transactional managers into transformational leaders (Seidman & McCauley). Transformational leaders help followers find a sense of purpose in the organization’s mission; their behavior has positive impact on the follower’s value commitment and commitment to stay with the organization (Gao & Bai, 2011; Pinos, Twigg, Parayitam, & Olson, 2006). Building trust with and amongst employees is critical (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Clawson stated that transformational leaders put the interest of the organization above its own and “has the ability to inspire trust, loyalty and admiration” along with motivation (2006, p. 392). Inspirational motivation implies a different and challenging vision for the future (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Eeden, Cilliers, & Van Deventer, 2008). Employees are empowered and transformational leaders build relationships based on trust with the followers (Clawson, 2006). Leadership empowers followers by intensifying and nurturing self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Burns, 2003). The trust is two way

between the leader and follower and must be nurtured and sustained after it is established (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Transformational leaders transform followers into more motivated employees who perform at levels that are beyond the expectations of the leader and inspire others through developing collaborative networks and followers to be creative and innovative (Pinos et al., 2006; Wren, 1995). Transformational leaders provide a sense of mission, stimulate learning experiences, and arouse new ways of thinking (Hater & Bass, 1998). Transformational leaders develop followers so they believe in themselves and their mission (Bass et al., 2003). “Transformational leaders are called upon to help others access the power from within themselves through clarity of purpose and self-awareness and to manifest that power through their unique talents and gifts” (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). Many have argued that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership in creating follower innovative behavior (Pieterse et al., 2010). Transformational leadership is a powerful form of influence that has the ability to activate the relational and collective levels of individuals (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007). Transformational leader recognize the need for change and can be found throughout any level of an organization (Clawson, 2006).

Transformational leadership is not limited to executives or world leaders; it is practiced from the most senior levels down to the supervisors and amongst teams (Bass, 1997; Hater & Bass, 1988). When teams collectively enact transformational leadership, they are more likely to ask questions, encourage innovation, be creative, and move beyond self-interest (Gupta, Huang, & Yayla, 2011). A transformational leader’s role is to empower others and to transcend power to others (Hacker & Roberts, 2006). True

empowerment provides people with the competence, confidence, resources, and freedom to act on their own judgments resulting in a distinct set of moral understanding and commitment between leader and follower (Ciulla as cited in Burns, 2003).

Transformational leaders recognize the important role and contributions of individual employees to the organization (Sarros & Santora, 2001). Leaders who practice transformational leadership on at least a moderate level are more successful and more effective and efficient with organizational level deliverables (Strang, 2005).

Individuals who seek personal enrichment on the job, who are eager to apply and develop their abilities on the job are more likely to perform better and find personal enrichment under a leader who has transformational qualities (Hater & Bass, 1988).

Planning leadership is a collective combination of a leader who empowers and moves followers, and in turn the followers empower and impel the leader; making the followers leaders as well in the complex dynamic transformation of leadership (Burns, 2003).

Followers' personality influences the perception of transformational leadership and their commitment to supervisors (Felfe & Schyns, 2010). Managers should be aware of the importance that their behavior (transactional or transformational) influences subordinates' perceptions of work behavior, job satisfaction, and personal well-being (Mancheno-Smoak, Endres, Polak, & Athanasaw, 2009; Nielsena, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2009; Nielsena, Yarker, Brenner, & Borg, 2008; Yang, 2009).

Although transactional and transformational leadership are different paradigms, some authors have argued that both types are necessary to be an effective leader (Jamaludin et al., 2011). In a study conducted by Aaron (2006), employees indicated that managers whose leadership style was associated with transformational and transactional

leadership had a positive effect on the employees' attitude of accepting and implementing evidence-based practices. Transformational leadership and transactional leadership both appeal to values, however transactional leadership appeals to values related to exchanges (Clawson, 2006). The transformational leader can be autocratic and directive or democratic and participative; the degree of participative or directive behavior practiced will depend on the level of authority and situation (Bass, 1997). Transforming from a transaction manager to a transformational leader requires believing in one's vision and self, and establishing trust with peers and self to gain commitment and to grant freedom to other (Willink, 2009). The findings of studies signify that transformational leadership alone is not sufficient to garner employee innovation (Pieterse et al., 2010). Therefore, transformational leadership should not be seen as a straightforward plan for innovation (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009).

### **Evidence-based Practices**

Historically the field of community supervision lacks research that identifies proven methods that reduce recidivism and increase public safety (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Various reports, literature syntheses, and related publications have attempted to define and determine what evidence-based practices are (Smith & Okolo, 2010). Although there is a large amount of interest in evidence-based practices, there is little agreement, as to what it really is (Trinder & Reynolds, 2000). Evidence-based practices, by definition, are scientifically proven practices that work (Wilkniss & Zipple, 2009). Within the field of community supervision, the USDOJ, and the NIC defined evidence-based practices as the objective, balanced, and responsible use of current research and the best available data to guide policy and practice decision, such that outcomes for consumers are improved; and

the approach used focuses on effective empirical research and not anecdote or professional experience alone (2009). Additionally, evidence-based practices are designed to address distribution issues by determining what works to improve probation outcomes by classifying them according to risk of recidivism and identifying needs by tailoring a case plan to meet their individual risk and needs (Joplin et al., 2004). The goal of probation supervision through the use of evidence-based practices should also be to reduce crime and not only to rehabilitate probationers; this may mean some shorter probation terms for some offenders and longer prison terms for others (The PEW, 2009). Leaders must take risks with implementing evidence-based practices to see outcomes (Lucero, 2011). Some critics argued that evidence-based practices focus too much on the importance of scientific evidence at the expense of professional knowledge, experience, and reflection (Kvernbekk, 2011; Trinder & Reynolds, 2000).

The origins of evidence-based practices are rooted in the medical field. “Starting around the mid-1930s, a growing minority of clinicians began to use science not only as a source for new weapons against disease, but to measure how far those weapons were effective” (Hart, 1997, p. 623). Archibald Cochrane and Thomas McKeown were the early pioneers who questioned all traditional medical practices (Hart, 1997). During the 1950s Meehl argued that a “formal statistical approach to clinical judgments could lead to improved decision making” (Elstein, 2004, p. 184). Although decision analysis appeared in clinical literature in 1973, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the medical field began to advocate the approach of evidence-based medicine (Elstein, 2004). “Evidence-based approaches have been developed in most health fields, including evidence-based dentistry, nursing, public health, physiotherapy, and mental health” (Trinder & Reynolds,

2000, p. 1). The primary reason for the rapid use of evidence-based practices in the medical field was due to lack of research-based information to support clinical decision-making (Sackett as cited in Xiaoshi, 2008). Within the clinical field, evidence-based practices have progressed to where instruments developed are used to measure evidence-based practices within organizations (Pierson, Liggett, & Moore, 2010). Implementing evidence-based practices throughout many disciplines has been a slow, yet ongoing process in the United States in comparison to many other countries (Johansson, Fogelberg-Dahm, & Wadensten, 2009; Shera, 2008; Waters, Crisp, Rychetnik, & Barratt, 2009; Xiaoshi, 2008).

“Evidence is information that comes closest to the facts of the matter. The form it takes depends on the context. The findings of high-quality, methodologically appropriate research are the most accurate evidence” (Carter, 2010, p. 438). The use of evidence-based practices has many advantages but also leaves one questioning what constitutes sufficient evidence (Kelly & Smith, 2011; Smith & Okolo, 2010). In the criminal justice field, varieties of research methods are used to discern what works within probation: qualitative field research, survey research, longitudinal research, experimental research, and meta-analysis (Nutley & Davies, 1999).

The challenge of using evidence-based practices became “the development of criteria for evaluating evidence from a range of sources including observational studies and qualitative research as well as non-scientific sources” (Carter, 2010, p. 438). When staff is provided the necessary skills to handle evidence, informed, and understand the process and benefits of collecting data, they are more likely to have ownership over the processes (Greenwood, & Cleeve, 2007). For leaders and followers working in

collaboration to transform a situation for real change can be mobilizing and empowering (Burns, 2003). A transformational leader can play a critical role in organizational development (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Janicijevic, 2010). In some studies, attitudes towards evidence-based practices are related to the organization's culture, climate, and leadership (Aarons et al., 2010). Leadership is important for shaping employees perceptions of organizational change and adoption of innovation such as evidence-based practices (Aarons, 2006). An integrated and strategic approach to using evidence-based practice and policy could bridge the gap between current probation practices and practices supported by evidence by translating research into practice (USDOJ & NIC, 2009; Van Acker, De Bourdeaudhuij, De Cocker, Klesges, & Cardon, 2011). Leaders must create an environment that emphasizes the value of research and evidence-based practices at the unit and organizational level and continuously looked at it (Staffileno & Carlson, 2010). Without continuous qualified supervision, leaders risk employees losing enthusiasm for the implementation of evidence-based practices (Gioia & Dziadosz, 2008).

The use of evidence-based practices “requires training and skills in the use of systemized approached to the critical appraisal of evidence from a range of sources to inform policy decisions” (Carter, 2010, p. 438; Xiaoshi, 2008). As leaders move toward implementing more scientific knowledge base program and practices, formal training on implementation strategies continue to be overlooked (Krauss & Levin, 2010). Staff must be provided the necessary tools for successful implementation and continuous use of evidence-based practices (Carise et al., 2009; Llerandi, Schardien, Sallustro, Staunton, & Cho, 2009; Martis, Ho, & Crowther, 2008). The greatest challenge with evidence-based

practices is the implementation (Trinder & Reynolds, 2000). Transforming an organization requires employees to find new ways of thinking about and responding to opportunities and problems (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). Leaders must be committed to implementing evidence-based practices if they expect to have an impact on the organizational culture (Shera, 2008). To promote the implementation of evidence-based practices, leaders should find ways to remove obstacles and provide a supportive culture that encourages positive attitudes towards evidence-based practices (Gioia & Dziadosz, 2008).

Evidence-based practices are being advocated in nonmedical fields such as social work, probation, education psychology, and human resource management (Alexander & Vanbenschoten, 2008; Jalbert et al., 2010; Luebbe, Radcliffe, Callands, Green, & Thorn, 2007; Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefler, 2010; Trinder & Reynolds, 2000; Wallen et al., 2010). Leaders within federal probation have worked on developing methods to measure outcomes rather than actions (Gregoire, 2008). Before evidence-based practices can be implemented within probation departments, leaders must address the issues of criminal justice politics, lack of research on organizational culture, and skepticism (Nutley & Davies, 1999). Barriers to implementing and continuously using evidence-based practices include fiscal budgets, insufficient time, difficulty applying research to current practice, education, and professional development (Al-Kubaisi, Al-Dahnaim, & Salama, 2010; Bezyak et al., 2010; Carstens, Panzano, Massatti, Roth, & Sweeney, 2009; O'Connor & Pettigrew, 2009). Although it is challenging to implement evidence-based practices, leaders who have a desire to continuously improve their operations, can succeed (Hillburn, McNulty, Jewett, & Wainwright, 2006; Xiaoshi, 2008). An



investment in community supervision utilizing evidence-based practices creates real results, long-term public safety, and healthier communities (Nagy as cited in Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, n.d.; Ostermann, 2009). Implementing evidence-based practices does not occur over night; few organizations can implement evidence-based practices organization wide in less than two years successfully, while larger organizations may take three to five years (Wilkniss & Zipple, 2009).

Transformation of an organization and the leader is challenging, as it requires remaking of employee skill sets and a radical change in the organization's culture (Hacker & Roberts, 2004). A true leader will persist and not give up when faced with challenges; he or she is relentless in pursuit of the intended goal (Palmisano, 2008). A leader cannot truly lead if he or she lacks the ability to produce the intended change through creative innovation (Burns, 2003). Implementing evidence-based practices in an organization requires transforming the organization's culture and building competence through development of employees' skill sets (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). "Transforming change transforms people and their situations" (Burns, 2003, p. 151).

Aligning "evidence-based principles with the core business practices of an organization is a significant challenge and will largely determine the impact the organization has on sustained reduction in recidivism" (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 21). Leaders need to ensure that middle managers are part of the change process with evidence-based practices, and that they have the skills to assist staff so that probation officers become interested in the probationer's changes instead of simply processing them through the system (Davidson, Crawford, & Kerwood, 2008; Taxman, 2009). Leaders need to focus on training for managers and supervisors as well as support staff

with evidence-based practice performance and hold them accountable for the quality of their work (Wilkniss & Zipple, 2009). Some practitioners argued that managers do not have sufficient knowledge of evidence-based practices and skills to pass on to their staff and that there is no immediate return on investment (Staffileno & Carlson, 2010; Xiaoshi, 2008).

Since leadership is associated with individual and organizational performance, it is likely that the leader's leadership style will influence employees' attitudes towards implementation of evidence-based practices (Aarons, 2006). Successful change involving evidence-based practices is dependent on the knowledge and expertise of staff, managers, and leaders (Gioia & Dziadosz, 2008). Leaders who are in the process of implementing evidence-based practices must realize that practitioners are critical stakeholders who can identify conditions that work to facilitate or impede the change process (Gioia & Dziadosz, 2008). Leaders must realize that implementing evidence-based practices requires giving up the current practices (Wilkniss & Zipple, 2009).

**Eight principles of evidence-based practices.** Evidence-based practices within probation supervision are guided by eight principles outlined in an integrated model developed by the CJI and its partners through an agreement with the NIC (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The eight principles of evidence-based practices are:

- assess actuarial risk/needs;
- enhance intrinsic motivation;
- target intervention;
- skill train and directed practice;
- increase positive reinforcement;

- engage ongoing support in natural communities;
- measure relevant processes/practices; and
- provide measurement feedback (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 11).

**Assessments.** The use of a standardized assessment tool is key to identifying the risks and needs of probationers to reduce recidivism (Bonta et al., 2008; Lowenkamp, Pealer, Smith, & Latessa, 2006; Taxman, Cropsey, Young, & Wexler, 2007). Timeliness and relevance on the use of an assessment tool are critical for implementing principles of best practices in community corrections (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Assessment tools should be reliable, valid, and require training for employees on their use. Third generation risk assessments are objective, empirically based, and are useful in capturing what the first and second-generation assessments lacked: risk factors and meaningful information for case planning for intervention methods (Lowenkamp, Holsinger, Brusman-Lovin, & Latessa, 2004). Probationers' risk level should be determined utilizing an actuarial risk and needs assessment that is current and has been validated on the targeted population it will be used with (Lowenkamp, Smith, and Bechtel, 2007; Taxman, 2009).

**Intrinsic motivation.** Probation officers should be interpersonally respectful to probationers and should provide constructive feedback in such a way that enhances inherent motivation from the probationer to evoke behavioral change (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 12). The use of motivational interviewing techniques is critical to the probation officer to enhance intrinsic motivation for behavioral change from the probationer (Taxman, 2009).

**Target interventions.** Targeting intervention is comprised of five sub-principles: risk, need, responsivity, dosage, and treatment. The focal point of the risk principle is on prioritizing supervision and treatment resources for the higher risk offender, while the need principle is on targeting interventions to criminogenic needs (Bracken, 2007; Taxman, 2009; USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Programs should target more criminogenic than noncriminogenic needs to reduce recidivism and services should be allocated in a manner that corresponds with the probationer's risk level (Bonta et al., 2008; Hanley, 2006; Lowenkamp et al., 2006). Research indicates that recidivism rates are reduced when funds are allocated to provide adequate services to high-risk offenders and not low risk (Hanley, 2006; Jalbert et al., 2011; Polaschek, Bell, Calvert, & Takarangi, 2010; Sinha, Easton, & Kemp, 2003). Probation officers should be responsive to the temperament, learning style, motivation, gender, and culture of the probationer when providing referrals to programs (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Treatment is critical to the success of probationers and should be integrated into the sentence and or sanction requirements (USDOJ & NIC). Probation leaders may want to consider performing evaluations and modifications to ensure that treatment and programs used for probationer rehabilitation and crime reduction comply with the research of what works on reducing recidivism (The PEW, 2009). A variety of methods should be used to target interventions (Huebner & Kantor, 2011; Roque & Lurigio, 2009; Witkiewitz & Marlatt, 2011).

It is critical that when probation officers make contacts with probationers who are receiving treatment or in need of treatment that the officer focus on treatment and not only on the supervision component of probation. In a study conducted by Haney on program contacts with probationers, the findings indicated that the emphasis of the

officer to probationer fact-to-face contacts focused on supervision and not treatment (2006). Targeted areas of treatment for probationers should be based on the criminogenic needs indicated through an actuarial risk assessment (Lowenkamp et al., 2007; Taxman, 2009).

***Skill train and positive reinforcement.*** Probation officers should engage in role-playing with offenders to carry out cognitive behavioral strategies for identifying and re-directing anti-social thinking successfully (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). The positive change in a probationer’s behavior should be positively reinforced at higher ratios than negative for achievement and sustained behavioral change (USDOJ & NIC). To be effective, the process must engage the offender in doing something about himself (Hughes, 2011).

***Support.*** Probation officers should assist probationers in establishing positive support systems within their communities. Probation departments should establish three-dimensional and sequential missions by establishing partnership with stakeholders in the community: public safety, crime reduction for at risk probationers, and a “long term crime prevention initiative at the local level” (Wooten, 2000, p. 37).

***Measurement and feedback.*** Probation officers should ensure that they are providing accurate and detailed case information to assess behavioral change of the probationer on a regular basis and employee performance should also be regularly assessed (USDOJ & NIC, 2009). Probation officers should provide feedback to offenders regularly regarding their progress. “Providing feedback to offenders regarding their progress builds accountability and is associated with enhanced motivation for change, lower treatment attrition, and improved outcomes” (USDOJ & NIC, 2009, p. 17). An advantage of evidence-based practices is that they are measurable, documented, and

standardized approaches with tools to assess organizational readiness for implementation and fidelity of evidence-based principles; feedback is quantifiable (Wilkniss & Zippel, 2009)

### **Quantitative Correlational Methods**

The independent ( $x$ ) variables in this study were executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices. The dependent variables ( $y$ ) were probation outcomes (successful and unsuccessful exits). Research data are a set of statistical data that "consists of numbers that represent measures of some property or phenomenon" (Elzey, 1974, p. 1). Quantitative approaches to research studies tend to or typically employ strategies of inquiry by surveys and employ numeric data methods (Creswell, 2009). A survey design provides a numeric description of data (Creswell, 2009). A correlational design will collect data on the specific exit types from probation supervision in relation to successful exits. According to Elzey, a correlation is a statistical technique used with scores for two variables for each individual in the group and the determination wants to be made if there is a relationship between these variables. A correlational design was appropriate for this research because the method allowed for a statistical analysis of numerical data that was collected for the hypotheses to determine the strength and the direction of the relationship of leaderships' perceptions to successful and unsuccessful probation exits (Steinberg, 2008).

### **Gaps in Literature**

According to Seiter and West (2003) there exist a gap in the amount of literature and research available on what parole and probation officers actually do, and what forces influence their activities. There has been very little research done in the area of probation

culture (Clear, 2005). There exist a handful of studies conducted in relation to transactional and transformational leadership and predicting outcomes (Bass et al., 2003). Probation literature has a focus on program evaluation and officer stress. The focal point of the leadership literature on transactional and transformational leadership is the relationship between leader to follower performance.

There is an absence in the literature on individual success of probationers, the impact of probation leaders on outcomes, probation leadership styles, and organizational change. Before a reliable evaluation of outcomes can be made, it is critical that probation leaders institute a thorough system of case study for probationers, and expand the focus to officers, management, and leaders (Mead, 2005). Practitioners within probation supervision are encouraged to conduct their own research and evaluations on offender programs of the effectiveness of the intervention methods being used to elicit behavioral change with offenders (Nutley & Davies, 1999). Mullen and Streiner (as cited in Krauss & Levin, 2010) suggested that in the future, government agencies, insurers, and accreditation bodies will require the use of evidence-based practices in their methodology from their practitioners and or funding recipients.

Few researchers have examined the relationship of evidence-based practices and transactional and transformational leadership (Aarons, 2006; Bezyak et al., 2010). There exists a need for research on evidence-based practices in the mental health field in relation to culture and climate which can be used to foster change and partnerships; this need exists in the probation field were evidence-base practices do not have the long standing roots of implementation (Gioia & Dziadosz, 2008). Probation leaders struggle with aligning probation practices with evidence-based practices (Carter, 2010). With a

lack of literature on evidence-base practices within probation supervision, “no plan of evaluation can be considered accurate which does not reveal what types of cases are better and worse in terms of social adjustment at the end of the probation period” (Mead, 2005, p. 2). To bridge the gap between research and practice, practitioners must improve and promote research application and dissemination (Bezyak et al., 2010). “Often the necessary relevant evidence is not available or accessible, and regardless of this problem, techniques for appraising evidence are not well developed” (Carter, 2010, p. 439). Until evidence-based practices become the norm for probation supervision practices, probation leaders can look to the medical field and other countries for practices on which to draw upon (Latessa, 2004; Waters et al., 2009).

### **Summary**

Historical probation supervision practices have created a culture that sustains transactional leadership and lacks transformational leadership. The use of evidence-based practices requires a paradigm shift from current supervision practices to new practices. A paradigm shift in probation supervision practices based on the eight principles of evidence-based practices can create a culture within probation supervision that fosters transformational leadership. Managing change during the implementation of evidence-based practices is critical to the success of organizational change. The current literature within the field of probation supervision lacks research on probation leadership and evidence-based practices. Because evidence-based practices are new to the field of probation supervision, literature from the medical field is useful to probation leaders as a foundation. In chapter 1, the research methods used in this quantitative correlational



research study were outlined. In chapter 3, a detailed description of the research design, methodology, population, sampling, and data collection are provided.

### Chapter 3: Research Methods

In chapter 1, a presentation of the purpose, structure, and rationale for the research study was provided. In chapter 2 a literature review was provided on the history of probation supervision; the theoretical framework of the proposed research study in relation to transactional leadership, transformational leadership, change management, evidence-based practices, and quantitative correlational methods. In chapter 3, an outline of the purpose of the research study, research design, population, sampling, data collection, informed consent, confidentiality, validity and reliability, and data analysis is provided.

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the association between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation supervision exits. A quantitative correlational study was determined to be appropriate to examine if a relationship exists between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits. A correlational design was appropriate for this research because the method used consisted of a statistical analysis of numerical data collected for the hypotheses to determine the strength and the direction of the relationship of leaderships' perceptions to probation outcomes (Steinberg, 2008). Steinberg (2008) stated that a *Pearson r* "is a measure of the linear relationship between two variables that have both been measured on at least an interval level" (p. 401). A *Pearson r* statistic measured the linear relationship between leaderships' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation exits. The variables, perceptions and exits, were scores. The independent variable defined as leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices included

chief probation officers, deputy chief probation officers, division directors, managers, and supervisors in various adult probation departments in Arizona. The dependent variable, probation exits, was a dichotomous variable. The dichotomous variable was used to indicate whether a probationer successfully or unsuccessfully exited probation supervision. For purposes of this research study, a successful exit from probation supervision was an absolute exit from probation supervision by means of an early termination, full termination, or earned time credit. An unsuccessful exit from probation supervision was absolute exit from probation supervision by means of a revocation to the department of corrections, revocation to jail, revocation with a fine, or a revocation with no incarceration.

### **Research Design**

The appropriateness of the method, design, and analysis strategies used for the proposed research study is outlined in this section. The research design was a quantitative analysis of numeric data collected via an online survey utilizing SurveyMonkey. The researcher developed the survey by modifying an existing evidence-based practices survey. The modified survey was administered to executive probation leaders of adult probation departments in Arizona. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher using a Likert-type scale. A Likert-type survey is comprised of scales that measure attitudes based on a series of declarative statements in which respondents rate their level of agreement or disagreement (Arnold et al., 1967). A survey design provides a numeric description of probation leaderships' perceptions of evidence-based practices (Creswell, 2009). To provide reliability of responses, reflected phrasing was used throughout the survey. Since validity and reliability of scores on instruments lead to

meaningful interpretations of data, Cronbach's Alpha was used (Creswell, 2009). The research study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question One: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Research Question Two: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

### **Methodology Appropriateness**

The three types of research design considered for the proposed study were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Although each of the three types of research methods were considered, it was determined that a quantitative correlational

study was the most appropriate for this research study. This research study is quantitative in nature based on the statistical data used pertaining to probation supervision exits and the scaled survey that was administered to executive probation leaders quantifying their perceptions of evidence-based practices. Quantitative approaches to research studies typically involve strategies of inquiry using surveys and employ numeric data methods (Creswell, 2009).

**Quantitative methods.** Quantitative research consists of quantifying the relationship between variables of numeric value and measurement to help describe and determine patterns using deductive logic (Salehi & Golafshani, 2010). “Quantitative designs focus on objectivity, control, precise measurement, and quantification of data to describe, predict, or determine cause-and-effect relationships” (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008, pp. 205-206). In general, a quantitative study has numerical data that is analyzed using quantitative analysis methods (Azorin & Cameron, 2010). According to Whittemore and Melkus, quantitative sampling plans are based on specific inclusion and exclusion of criteria to emulate the targeted population and to recruit a sufficient amount of participants to determine if a significant relationship or difference exists (2008).

**Mixed methods.** A mixed methods study is a multi-method study because it incorporates more than one type of method (Azorin & Cameron, 2010). Mixed methods research is an approach to research that encompasses qualitative and quantitative methods that involve philosophical assumptions and the mixing of both approaches in the study (Azorin & Cameron, 2010; Creswell, 2009). The use of mixed methods provides the opportunities for others to expand on the study for other opportunities and possibilities (Salehi & Golafshani, 2010). According to Azorin and Cameron (2010), mixed methods

are perceived to have more challenges because they are more time consuming, cost more, and require more work. Researchers using mixed methods can choose to give equal or less emphasis on qualitative or quantitative methods (Azorin & Cameron, 2010).

**Qualitative methods.** Qualitative methods provide researchers with necessary tools to examine human behavior and social settings (Jensen, 1989). Whittemore and Melkus (2008) stated that sampling plans for qualitative research are based on identifying specific groups of people who possess characteristics or live in conditions relevant to the social phenomenon being studied. Qualitative researchers attempt to interpret the meaning that people attach to their lived experiences and investigate the complexity, context, and process of the lived experience (Townsend, Cox, & Li, 2010). Qualitative designs focus on subjective experiences and aim to understand or describe a phenomenon within the context of which it occurs; they typically have a small sample size; and the collection of data is through interviews or field observations (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008).

### **Rationale for the Research Study**

This study was appropriate to the researcher's area of study because probation leaders have long struggled to develop a culture of probation practices that results in increased successful probation exits that sustains itself well over time. Over the last forty years, probation leaders have struggled with how they will respond to attacks on probation supervision with "nothing works" to "something works" (Trinder, 2000). Some probation leaders throughout the United States have implemented evidence-based practices; however, there is a lack of research supporting whether the implementation of evidence-based practices was successful or has proven results (Jalbert et al., 2011). This

research study focused on the impact that probation leaders may or may not have on the successful and unsuccessful exits of probationers from probation supervision. The focus on leaders is important to organizational change, since organizational change must occur from the top down and at all levels; therefore, the focus of this study is on probation leaders.

### **Accomplishing the Study's Goals**

The selected research design was optimum for this research study because the outcome of the study yields results to determine if there was or was not a significant relationship between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits. The correlational statistic technique used provided a valuable benefit facilitating an understanding of executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and the relationship they had on successful and unsuccessful probation exits. In doing so, it may be possible to improve the success rate of probation outcomes. The information provided through this research study is important for leadership in probation supervision and the ongoing efforts within community supervision to increase the rate of successful probation outcomes.

### **Informed Consent, Confidentiality, and Geographic Location**

An Informed Consent form (Appendix A) developed by the University of Phoenix was provided to participants to sign. The informed consent form guaranteed their rights. Consent forms were provided to participants along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to mail back the consent form to the researcher. Anonymity was provided to probation leaders who choose to participate in the survey through the collection methods

of SurveyMonkey. IP addresses, identifying information (i.e. names, job titles), and geographic location (i.e. city, county) were not tracked. The results from the online survey via SurveyMonkey were stored on a thumb drive. After the analysis was complete, and all requirements were met to be bestowed the title of doctor, hard copies of the surveys and the thumb drive were sealed in an envelope, filed, and locked in a file cabinet and kept for three years. Four months after the survey results were analyzed, all online survey data in SurveyMonkey were deleted.

### **Population and Sample**

“The population is the entire group of individuals about whom the researcher is interested in gaining knowledge” about (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008, p. 209). The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of executive probation leaders in 15 adult probation departments in Arizona. Permission was granted by the director of the probation departments’ oversight agency to survey probation leaders (Appendix B). The eligible population consisted of leaders in probation departments who had implemented evidence-based practices. All leaders who fell into the category of executive probation leaders (chief probation officers, deputy chief probation officers, division directors, managers, and supervisors) were given the opportunity to complete a survey. Participants consisted of probation leaders who completed an online survey via SurveyMonkey voluntarily. To increase the credibility or validity of quantitative study results, a researcher must give a considerable amount of thought into the design of the study (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008). In this study, no distinctions were made according to job titles (chief, deputy chief, director, manager, and supervisor). For the purposes of this research study, leaders were comprised of one unit: executive probation leaders. A



request to use probation outcome data that are submitted annually to the Bureau of Justice Statistics was made to the probation oversight agency.

### **Data Collection Methods**

“Data collection refers to the sequence that the researcher uses to collect both quantitative and qualitative data” (Azorlin & Cameron, 2010, p. 98). Data collected from quantitative studies are collected from a large sample to be applied to a specific population (Azorlin & Cameron, 2010). The survey developed was administered to each participant via a web link to SurveyMonkey to capture executive probation leaders’ perceptions of evidence-based practices. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), two of the most commonly used websites for online surveys are Zoomerang (zoomerang.com) and SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey). A link to the survey was sent in an electronic e-mail with directions and the length of time that the survey was accessible by participants. The survey was accessible to participants for 21 calendar days. Probation chiefs were asked to serve as an intermediary prior to and after administering the survey. The purpose of asking probation chiefs to serve as an intermediary was to encourage participants to complete the survey. The purpose of asking probation chiefs to serve as an intermediary is to encourage participation with the intent that the response rate would increase. “In quantitative research, variables of interest are derived from the study purpose and questions with the goal of data collection to identify data sources that are quantifiable, objective, precise, and consistent” (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008, p. 210). Probation data pertaining to probation supervision exits were collected from the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, Adult Probation Services website, monthly statistical performance reports, and annual reports.

## **Instrument**

Instruments used to collect data should be able to answer the research question(s), be reliable, and easily understood by those using the instrument as well as needing the information from the instrument (Wade, 2004). The Perceptions of Probation Leaders Survey (P2LS) was designed specifically for this research study and developed by the researcher in July 2011 after examining assessment tools used in other professions to determine perceptions and practices of evidence-based principles. The P2LS was designed using statements from an assessment tool developed by Bezyak et al., (2010). The assessment tool developed by Bezyak et al. was modified to reflect probation practices. The P2LS was piloted for validation after the sample of the population was identified. Other instruments found during the literature review phase were not used because the information contained in the survey was not specific to perceptions of evidence-based practices.

The P2LS was based on a Likert-type scale format which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements (Lyons, 1998). The validation period for the P2LS was in the spring of 2012. The instrument consisted of three parts. The first part of the P2LS was comprised of the participant creating a code name, known solely by the participant. The purpose of the code name was to identify the survey in case a participant chose to withdrawal from the process prior to, during, or after data collection. The second part of the P2LS consisted of 30 declarative statement used to identify executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices using a Likert-type scale. The third part focused on demographic information and was voluntary. The demographic section was comprised of six categories: gender, ethnicity, age, level of education,

number of years of employment in community supervision, and number of years in current position. In an effort to cause an increase in completion of the survey items, the researcher opted to place the demographic section last on the instrument.

### **Likert-type Scales**

Likert-type scales are a popular method used to measure attitudes (Arnold et al., 1967). “Scales developed by the Likert method will ordinarily include from six to thirty declarative statements. Some of these statements will be worded in a positive manner and others will be worded in a negative manner” (Arnold et al., 1967, p. 31). The P2LS is based on a seven point Likert-type scale which the participants rated their level of agreement. Likert-type scales are comprised of a series of declarative statements in which the subject is asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement (Arnold et al., 1967). Rensis Likert first suggested the use of agreement and disagreement levels in 1932; his was a five-point scale configured from ‘strongly approve’ to ‘strongly disapprove’; later tinkering yielded ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’” (Lyon, 1998). Five common options are provided for subjects: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree (Arnold et al., 1967). The seven ratings on the P2LS include 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree, 4-Neutral, 5-Somewhat Agree, 6-Agree, and 7-Strongly Agree.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Internal, external, construct, and statistical conclusion are the types of validity researchers consider when designing quantitative research (Whittemore & Melkus, 2009, p. 205). “Validity should refer specifically to the use made of the data, and not to the data collected or the method used to collect those data” (Wade, 2004, p. 235). Chronbach

Alpha was used to establish the validity of the P2LS. “Instrument reliability refers to the extent to which a given instrument consistently measures an attribute, variable, or construct that it is supposed to measure” (Whittemore & Melkus, 2008, p. 210). The numeric range of Chronbach Alpha is from zero to one. The P2LS after piloted yielded a score of .819. The P2LS was piloted using 20 experts. Face validity is “the quality of an indicator that makes it seem a reasonable measure of some variable” (Maxfield & Babbie, 2001, p. 422). To face validate the P2LS during the pilot test, four questions were added to the survey regarding the difficulty of the survey, length of the survey, ease of readability, and challenges of the survey.

### **Data Analysis**

A *Pearson r* multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the correlation of the ordinal data of executive probation leaders’ perceptions of evidence-based practices with the interval data of and probation exits. A *Pearson r* “is a measure of the linear relationship between two variables that have both been measured on at least an interval level” (Steinberg, 2007, p. 401). A correlational is a statistical technique used with scores for two variables for each individual in the group and the determination wants to be made if there is a relationship between these variables (Elzey, 1974). The two variables, perceptions and exits, were scores. A survey was used to quantify probation leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices, and monthly statistical reports were used to capture quantitative data on probation outcomes. A multiple regression analysis using a *Pearson r* to test the hypotheses determined the strength and the direction of the relationship of leaderships’ perceptions to successful probation exits. According to Hagan, t-tests are commonly used within criminal justice (1982). T-tests are generally

used when comparing the sample means of two groups where the sample size is less than 30; and z-tests are used if the sample size is greater than 30 (Hagan, 1982).

### Summary

In chapter 3, an explanation of the methodology used in this quantitative correlational research study was provided. This quantitative correlational study explored the relationship between probation leaderships' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation supervision exits utilizing a Likert-type questionnaire and probation statistics. The statistics used were based on one year of outcomes prior to the implementation of evidence-based practices, during the year of implementation, and one year after the implementation. The research questions that guided this research study were: 1) what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits; and 2) what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits? By exploring the relationship between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits, it may be possible to improve the success rates of probation exits. A *Pearson r* correlation was conducted on the data collected. The information provided through this research study is important for leadership in probation supervision and the ongoing efforts within community supervision to increase the rate of successful probation outcomes. In chapter 4, the results of this research study are presented in the form of tables, counts, and texts of paragraphs.

## Chapter 4: Results

The results of the research are reported in this chapter. The findings are organized and reported by research questions, with the results of the hypotheses testing given. Chapter 4 contains the data collection process and validation methods used in the study. Chapter 4 is presented by order of each hypothesis. Chapter 4 concludes with a summary. The purpose of chapter 4 is to provide a detailed analysis of the statistical methods used to translate the collected survey data and probation exit data into a valid conclusion in response to the research questions and hypotheses. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to identify how probation leaders perceive evidence-based practices and if a relationship existed with the perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes. The intent of this study was to compare leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices in relation to probation supervision practices. The intent of the study was also to compare the perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes.

The USDOJ and the NIC (2009) defined evidence-based practices as the objective, balanced, and responsible use of current research and the best available data to guide policy and practice decision, such that outcomes for consumers are improved; and the approach used focuses on effective empirical research and not anecdote or professional experience alone. Evidence-based practices are designed to incorporate supervision strategies into the daily routine of probation supervision while focusing on the delivery of interventions with probationers who need and benefit from them in such a way that can be measured (Jalbert et al., 2010). The majority of the research related to

probation supervision and evidence-based practices focuses on programs, supervision, and tool kits for best practices (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008).

Some Arizona adult probation departments begin taking steps towards implementing phases of evidence-based practices into their department. The first of such an initiative was the implementation of an offender-screening tool followed by various types of cognitive education programs. However, the first judicial code adopting evidence-based practices in probation supervision in Arizona occurred in December 2008. The first department to meet the requirements for governance under the judicial code section occurred in August 2009. By February 2011, all 15 adult probation departments had transitioned to governance under the evidence-based supervision codes.

### **Instrument**

The modified survey titled, Perceptions of Probation Leaders Survey (P2LS), was offered to probation leaders employed at 15 county adult probation departments in Arizona: Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma. A total of 80 leaders responded, with 96.3% (N=77) of the completed surveys useable. All participants were classified as either a: supervisor, manager, director, deputy chief, or chief. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and correlations to examine the results and test the hypotheses.

The data were analyzed to identify whether a relationship existed between probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes. The research questions used as the framework for analysis are restated as follows:

Research Question One: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Research Question Two: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

### **Validation of the Survey Instrument**

A quantitative survey instrument consisting of 30 questions and six demographic questions was developed (Appendix C). A version of the Perceptions of Evidence-based Practices survey (Bezyak et al., 2010) was modified to fit the field of probation supervision. A 7-point Likert scale was used to gather responses to the questions. Responses were based on a scale of 1-7, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 =



somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. The survey contained three sections. The intent of Section I was to provide participants with the opportunity to have a code name that could be referenced, in the event the participant wanted to opt out of the research study. The intent of Section II was to address the participants' perceptions of evidence-based practices. The intent of Section III was to request demographic information about the participants.

After receiving approval from the University of Phoenix, Institutional Review Board for data collection, the survey for the current study was pilot tested with a sample population of 20 experts in probation supervision. Thirteen of the 20 experts selected responded to the pilot survey. The survey was emailed to each person selected to participate in the pilot study. Comments were encouraged regarding the difficulty of the questions, excessive amount of time needed to complete the survey, ease of reading, and challenges encountered while completing the survey. The pilot group completed the survey and supplied written feedback on the survey instrument. There were no suggested changes from the pilot participants but an observation was made to reorder the category of demographics with regards to years in current position to capture respondents who had been in their current position for less than one year. The instrument was revised prior to finalizing and distributing it to the sample in the study. Statistical testing of the results from the pilot study was completed using Cronbach's alpha.

“Cronbach's alpha should be calculated for each use of the instrument when used with different participants because alpha is not a test characteristic, but depends on, as well, on the sample of participants in the crossed design” (Wigley, 2011, p. 283). A Cronbach's alpha of .70 or greater is considered reliable (Blumberg, Cooper, &

Schindler, 2008). The Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on the results of the 13 participants from the pilot test and included all 30 questions related to evidence-based practices from the survey instrument using SPSS. The results of the pilot test produced a score of .819. The survey instrument proved to be reliable and was administered to the sample population for the study.

### **Data Collection**

The target audience for data collection were 173 executive probation leaders in 15 Arizona adult probation departments. Data collection was accomplished using an online survey via SurveyMonkey. An e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to all eligible participants by each county adult probation chief. A total of 80 surveys were returned; however, three were not usable. Seventy-seven respondents met the requirement of being in their leadership position for at least one year and having gained EBP governance through the Arizona Supreme Court. Two respondents did not meet the requirement of having one year of experience in their current position as an executive leader. One respondent started the survey but after completing eight questions opted to not continue completing the survey.

Participants were contacted via email by their Chief Probation Officer and were provide with a copy of the introductory letter, and a notice of informed consent, and a link to the online survey. Participants were informed in the introductory email letter that they were provided full anonymity regarding their position title (i.e., chief, deputy chief, manager, and supervisor) and IP Address. To provide full anonymity to participants' position titles, department name, and IP addresses were not collected. The survey link remained opened for three weeks (21 days). Five days prior to the closing of the survey,

a follow up email was sent out to encourage participants to complete the survey, if they had not already done so. Factoring out those participants who did not meet the criteria and the incomplete survey, the overall response rate was 44.4%. Data collection regarding probation outcomes were collected from secondary data utilizing performance measures data from the Adult Probation Services Division. Data from SurveyMonkey were first downloaded into Excel and then exported into SPSS. Data collection regarding probation outcomes were collected from the monthly performance measures and were manually entered in SPSS. Data collection regarding probation outcomes was collected from secondary data utilizing the Annual Probation and Parole Survey administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Data from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey were entered manually in SPSS.

### **Data Analysis**

Survey responses were first downloaded into Excel from SurveyMonkey, and then exported into SPSS Version 19. Downloading the data directly from SurveyMonkey eliminated data entry errors. To prevent data missing from survey responses, each statement on the survey was tagged in SurveyMonkey requiring the respondent to provide a response. Data from the performance measures and the Annual Probation and Parole Survey were manually entered into SPSS. Verification of the figures entered in SPSS from the monthly performance measures and the Annual Probation and Parole Survey were manually verified individually to avoid data entry errors.

### **Demographic Synopsis**

Demographic responses on the survey were optional. There were 24 instances of missing data in Part III, Demographics. Where data was missing, a “no answer” option

was created in SPSS and was reflected as such in the frequency tables. There were no missing data for Part II of the survey, the perceptions of evidence-based practices using a Likert-type scale. Missing data were avoided using a tag in SurveyMonkey, which required the respondent to answer each question before moving on to the next question. Descriptive statistics were generated, including frequency and percentages for nominal data, plus means and standard deviations for relevant continuous data. The descriptive statistics and frequency tables for the relevant usable portions (gender, ethnicity, age, education, years in probation/parole, and years in current position) for the survey are included in Appendix D.

**Demographic data.** Data for the demographic gender were grouped into two categories: (1) male and (2) female. Males were coded as 1, females were coded as 2, and blank responses were codes as 9. Data for the demographic ethnicity were grouped into six categories: (1) Asian, (2) African-American, (3) Caucasian, (4) Hispanic, (5) American-Indian, and (6) Other. Asian was coded as 1, African-American was coded as 2, Caucasian was coded as 3, Hispanic was coded as 4, American-Indian was coded as 5, Other was coded as 6, and blank responses were coded as 9. Data for the demographic age were grouped into 10 categories: (1) 25 years or younger, (2) 26-30 years, (3) 31-35 years, (4) 36-40 years, (5) 41-45 years, (6) 46-50 years, (7) 51-55 years, (8) 56-60 years, (9) 61-65 years, and (10) 66 years or older. The age of 25 years or younger was coded as 1, 26-30 years was coded as 2, 31-35 years was coded as 3, 36-40 years was coded as 4, 41-45 years was coded as 5, 46-50 years was coded as 6, 51-55 years was coded as 7, 56-60 years was coded as 8, 61-65 years was coded as 9, 66 years or older was coded as 10, and blank responses were coded as 99.

Data for the demographic education were grouped into eight categories: (1) GED, (2) High School Diploma, (3) Some College, (4) Associate, (5) Bachelor, (6) Master, (7) Juris Doctor (law degree), and (8) Doctorate/Ph.D. GED was coded as 1, High School Diploma was coded as 2, Some College was coded as 3, Associate was coded as 4, Bachelor was coded as 5, Master was coded as 6, Juris Doctor (law Degree) was coded as 7, Doctorate/Ph.D. was coded as 8, and blank responses were coded as 9. Data for the demographic of the number of years working in community supervision were grouped into seven categories: (1) 5 years or less, (2) 6-10 years, (3) 11-15 years, (4) 16-20 years, (5) 21-25 years, (6) 26-30 years, and (7) 31 years or more. The 5 years or less of experience was coded as 1, 6-10 years was coded as 2, 11-15 years was coded as 3, 16-20 years was coded as 4, 21-25 years was coded as 5, 26-30 years was coded as 6, 31 years or more was coded as 7, and blank responses were coded as 9. Data for the demographic of the number of years served in the current position as a formal leader were grouped into eight categories: (1) 1 year or less, (2) more than 1 year - 3 years, (3) 4-6 years, (4) 7-10 years, (5) 11-13 years, (6) 14-17 years, (7) 18-20 years, and (8) 21 years or more. The 1 year or less of experience was coded as 1, more than 1 year - 3 years was coded as 2, 4-6 years was coded as 3, 7-10 years was coded as 4, 11-13 years was coded as 5, 14-17 years was coded as 6, 18-20 years or more was coded as 7, 21 years or more was coded as 8, and blank responses were coded as 9.

Table 1 displays the characteristics of the respondents' gender, ethnicity, and age group. The overall response was 49.4% female and 42.9% male. Six respondents elected not to answer the question regarding gender. A total of 71 respondents answered the question regarding their gender (Appendix E). The majority (75.3%) of respondents were

Caucasian. Four respondents elected not to answer the question regarding ethnicity. A total of 73 respondents answered the question regarding their ethnicity (Appendix F) The most common age group of respondents were between the ages of 36-40 years. Five respondents elected to not answer the question regarding age. A total of 72 respondents answered the question regarding their age (Appendix G).

Table 1

*Respondent Characteristics*

|             | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender      |           |         |
| Male        | 33        | 42.9    |
| Female      | 38        | 49.4    |
| Ethnicity   |           |         |
| Caucasian   | 58        | 75.3    |
| Age         |           |         |
| 36-40 years | 15        | 19.5    |

Table 2 displays the characteristics of the respondents' education, years of working in community supervision, and years working in current leadership position. The highest level of education attained by respondents that was the most common was a master's degree. Three respondents elected to not answer the question regarding education. A total of 74 respondents answered the question regarding their education (Appendix H). Sixteen to 20 years of experience working in the field of community supervision was the most common amongst respondents. Three respondents elected to not answer the question regarding the number of years working in community supervision. A total of 74 respondents answered the question regarding the number of years working in community supervision (Appendix I). The most common number of years respondents had in their current position as a leader was four to six years. Three

respondents elected to not answer the question regarding the number of years in their current position as a formal leader. A total of 74 respondents answered the question regarding their current position as a formal leader (Appendix J).

Table 2

*Respondent Characteristics*

|                           | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Education                 |           |         |
| Master's                  | 40        | 51.9    |
| Years Working in Field    |           |         |
| 16-20 years               | 23        | 29.9    |
| Years in Current Position |           |         |
| 4-6 years                 | 24        | 31.2    |

**Findings**

The first judicial code adopting evidence-based practices in probation supervision in Arizona occurred in December 2008. However, the first department that met the requirements for governance under the judicial code section did not occur until August 2009. By February 2011, all 15 adult probation departments had transitioned to governance under the evidence-based supervision codes. Each adult probation department had effectively completed their strategic planning, revised and implemented policies and procedures incorporating evidence-based practices. Additionally, departmental training regarding the new requirements was also completed. Redesigning departmental policies and practices is critical when transforming an agency to evidence-based practices (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011).

Data for probation exits were grouped into two categories: (1) successful probation exits, and (2) unsuccessful probation exits. Successful and unsuccessful probation exits were based on percentages. The percentage for a successful exit was

calculated based on the total amount of successful exits divided by the total amount of probation exits. The percentage for an unsuccessful probation exit was calculated based on the total amount of unsuccessful exits divided by the total amount of probation exits.

Data for probation departments were grouped into 15 categories: (1) Apache, (2) Cochise, (3) Coconino, (4) Gila, (5) Graham, (6) Greenlee, (7) La Paz, (8) Maricopa, (9) Mohave, (10) Navajo, (11) Pima, (12) Pinal, (13) Santa Cruz, (14) Yavapai, and (15) Yuma. Maricopa was coded as A. Cochise was coded as B. Pinal was coded as C. Navajo was coded as D. Yuma was coded as E. Gila was coded as F. Mohave was coded as G. Graham was coded as H. Pinal was coded as I. Yavapai was coded as J. Santa Cruz was coded as K. Coconino was coded as L. Greenlee was coded as M. Apache was coded as N. La Paz was coded as O.

Pearson  $r$  was the primary statistical test used for the analysis. A Pearson  $r$  “is a measure of the linear relationship between two variables that have both been measured on at least an interval level” (Steinberg, 2008, p. 401). There were two research questions for this construct. Research Question 1 was developed to ask, what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders’ perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits. Research Question 2 was developed to ask, what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders’ perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

### **Research Question One (RQ1)**

RQ1 was developed to ask, what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders’ perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits?

The null hypotheses stated: there is no significant correlational between executive



probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Descriptive statistics and correlations were calculated to analyze the data. Tables 3-5

display the findings in relation to questions one through thirty.

Table 3

*Correlations: Questions 1-10 and 2009-2011 Successful Exits (N=77)*

|  |             | 2009   | 2010  | 2011  |
|--|-------------|--------|-------|-------|
| Q1 - Application of EBP is necessary in the practice of probation supervision.   | Correlation | -.074  | .027  | -.024 |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q2 - Literature and research findings are useful in my day-to-day practice.  | Correlation | -.195* | .087  | .136  |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q3 - I need to increase the use of evidence in my daily practices.   | Correlation | -.013  | -.080 | -.017 |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q4 - I have received formal training in search strategies for finding research relevant to my practice.                    | Correlation | .008   | .099  | .092  |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q5 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | Correlation | -.027  | -.065 | -.085 |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q6 - EBP helps probation officers make decisions about case plans.   | Correlation | -.038  | .005  | -.039 |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q7 - My agency supports the use of current research in practice.   | Correlation | .051   | .144  | .078  |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q8 - I received formal training in critical appraisal of research literature as part of my EBP preparation.                | Correlation | .018   | .127  | .064  |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q9 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | Correlation | -.046  | -.174 | -.149 |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |
| Q10 - I encourage probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning. | Correlation | .184   | .184  | .083  |
|  | N           | 77     | 77    | 77    |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of item 2 in 2009. Based on the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception of item 2 in 2009, there is no correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Table 4

*Correlations: Questions 11-20 and 2009-2011 Successful Exits (N=77)*

|  |             | 2009  | 2010   | 2011  |
|--|-------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Q11 - I read research/literature related to my professional practice.  | Correlation | .070  | .072   | .046  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q12 - I am confident in my ability to critically review professional literature.                                   | Correlation | .143  | .181   | .073  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q13 - My agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings.                     | Correlation | .081  | .211*  | .156  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q14 - It is not necessary to align probation practices with EBP in order to improve successful probation outcomes. | Correlation | .152  | .050   | .113  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q15 - EBP is useful to probation officers when they are developing case plans for probationers.                    | Correlation | .010  | .089   | .080  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q16 - I am confident in my ability to find relevant research to answer any probation questions.                    | Correlation | .126  | .106   | .113  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q17 - I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility.                             | Correlation | .189* | .328** | .134  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q18 - The adoption of EBP places an unreasonable demand on probation officers.                                     | Correlation | -.113 | -.186  | -.114 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q19 - Reading research articles related to my professional practice is time consuming.                             | Correlation | -.170 | -.122  | -.062 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q20 - EBP improves the quality of service to probationers.   | Correlation | .064  | .070   | .074  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of item 17 in 2009 and items 13 and 17 in 2010. Based on

the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception of item 17 in 2009 and items 13 and 17 in 2010, there is no correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Table 5

*Correlations: Questions 21-30 and 2009-2011 Successful Exits (N=77)*

|  |             | 2009  | 2010   | 2011  |
|--|-------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Q21 - EBP does not take into account the limitations of my professional setting.   | Correlation | .012  | -.097  | -.064 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q22 - I am interested in improving the skills necessary to continue to practice EBP.                                     | Correlation | .068  | -.001  | -.020 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q23 - EBP does not take into account the preferences of probationers.  | Correlation | .070  | .042   | .058  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q24 - I am familiar with academic search engines.  | Correlation | .019  | -.106  | -.002 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q25 - Poor ability to critically appraise literature is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.              | Correlation | .069  | -.036  | .085  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q26 - Lack of collective support among my colleagues in my agency is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice. | Correlation | -.137 | -.097  | -.112 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q27 - Lack of interest is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.  | Correlation | .016  | -.062  | .059  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q28 - Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                                     | Correlation | -.180 | -.203* | -.141 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q29 - Insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.   | Correlation | -.080 | -.191* | -.012 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |
| Q30 - Lack of information resources is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                               | Correlation | -.085 | -.212* | -.068 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77     | 77    |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of items 28, 29, and 30 in 2010. Based on the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception of items 28, 29, and 30 in 2010, there is no correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

### **Research Question Two (RQ2)**

RQ2 asked what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits? The null hypothesis stated: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits. Tables 6-8 shows the frequency data for the correlations of EBP perceptions and unsuccessful probation exit data for three years for question one through thirty.

Table 6

*Correlations: Questions 1-10 and 2009-2011 Unsuccessful Exits (N=77)*

|  |             | 2009  | 2010  | 2011   |
|--|-------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Q1 - Application of EBP is necessary in the practice of probation supervision.   | Correlation | .075  | .015  | .010   |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q2 - Literature and research findings are useful in my day-to-day practice.  | Correlation | -.188 | -.083 | -.114  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q3 - I need to increase the use of evidence in my daily practices.   | Correlation | .040  | .112  | .017   |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q4 - I have received formal training in search strategies for finding research relevant to my practice.                    | Correlation | .057  | -.013 | -.067  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q5 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | Correlation | -.001 | .027  | .064   |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q6 - EBP helps probation officers make decisions about case plans.   | Correlation | .066  | .044  | .015   |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q7 - My agency supports the use of current research in practice.   | Correlation | -.033 | -.124 | -.101  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q8 - I received formal training in critical appraisal of research literature as part of my EBP preparation.                | Correlation | .057  | -.050 | -.138  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q9 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | Correlation | .019  | .105  | .122   |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |
| Q10 - I encourage probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning. | Correlation | -.113 | -.143 | -.234* |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77     |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of item 10 in 2011. Based on the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception

of item 10 in 2011, there is no correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Table 7

*Pearson r Correlations: Questions 11-20 and 2009-2011 Unsuccessful Exits (N=77)*

|  |                  | 2009        | 2010          | 2011          |
|--|------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Q11 - I read research/literature related to my professional practice.  | Correlation<br>N | -.015<br>77 | -.044<br>77   | -.119<br>77   |
| Q12 - I am confident in my ability to critically review professional literature.                                   | Correlation<br>N | -.085<br>77 | -.156<br>77   | -.213*<br>77  |
| Q13 - My agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings.                     | Correlation<br>N | -.056<br>77 | -.158<br>77   | -.160<br>77   |
| Q14 - It is not necessary to align probation practices with EBP in order to improve successful probation outcomes. | Correlation<br>N | -.110<br>77 | -.056<br>77   | -.140<br>77   |
| Q15 - EBP is useful to probation officers when they are developing case plans for probationers.                    | Correlation<br>N | .031<br>77  | -.021<br>77   | -.091<br>77   |
| Q16 - I am confident in my ability to find relevant research to answer any probation questions.                    | Correlation<br>N | -.067<br>77 | -.057<br>77   | -.131<br>77   |
| Q17 - I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility.                             | Correlation<br>N | -.144<br>77 | -.289**<br>77 | -.302**<br>77 |
| Q18 - The adoption of EBP places an unreasonable demand on probation officers.                                     | Correlation<br>N | .099<br>77  | .145<br>77    | .116<br>77    |
| Q19 - Reading research articles related to my professional practice is time consuming.                             | Correlation<br>N | .125<br>77  | .124<br>77    | .169<br>77    |
| Q20 - EBP improves the quality of service to probationers.   | Correlation<br>N | -.044<br>77 | -.020<br>77   | -.036<br>77   |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of items 12 in 2011 and 17 in 2010 and 2011. Based on the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception of items 12 in 2011 and 17 in 2010 and 2011, there is no correlation between executive probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.



Table 8

*Correlations: Questions 21-30 and 2009-2011 Unsuccessful Exits (N=77)*

|  |             | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  |
|--|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Q21 - EBP does not take into account the limitations of my professional setting.   | Correlation | .002  | .057  | -.032 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q22 - I am interested in improving the skills necessary to continue to practice EBP.                                     | Correlation | -.026 | .047  | .017  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q23 - EBP does not take into account the preferences of probationers.  | Correlation | -.071 | -.053 | -.076 |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q24 - I am familiar with academic search engines.  | Correlation | .034  | .153  | .054  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q25 - Poor ability to critically appraise literature is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.              | Correlation | -.070 | .010  | .035  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q26 - Lack of collective support among my colleagues in my agency is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice. | Correlation | .113  | .087  | .137  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q27 - Lack of interest is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.  | Correlation | -.028 | .038  | .004  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q28 - Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                                     | Correlation | .156  | .217* | .227* |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q29 - Insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.   | Correlation | .009  | .128  | .150  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |
| Q30 - Lack of information resources is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                               | Correlation | .002  | .121  | .181  |
|  | N           | 77    | 77    | 77    |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Each of the items were correlated using Pearson  $r$ . There was not a significant correlation with the exception of item 28 in 2010 and 2011. Based on the overall results of the analysis and individual analyses the null hypothesis was not rejected. With the exception of item 28 in 2010 and 2011, there is no correlation between executive

probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

### **National Probation Data**

Probation data have been collected from the Bureau of Justice Statistics since 1977. In its inception, probation data were collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistic via the Survey of Adults on Probation, known as the SAP (BJS, 2012). Data were collected from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey for three years: 2009, 2010, and 2011. Analysis were completed using data from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey based on the categorical data of the survey to analyze outcomes for Arizona in comparison to other states who have implemented evidence-based practices, the United States, and at the federal level. Some states, which have implemented evidence-based practices include Colorado, Ohio, and Virginia. Although some other states, such as Maryland, Oklahoma, and Texas have also implemented evidence-based practices, not all probation data were reported as being known on the Annual Probation and Parole Survey.

Data from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey for Arizona were collected by the Adult Probation Services Division. The Adult Probation Services Division is the agency responsible for reporting adult probation data to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. National data for 2010 and 2011 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics was not available on a national level. Probation data could only be analyzed for 2009, as it was available on a national level. Probation exit data was not available for 2010 and 2011 by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. A three-year state comparison analysis conducting t-tests could not be completed due to lack of data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

**State comparison.** Probation data could not be analyzed beyond 2009.

Probation exit data was not available online for 2010 and 2011. Table 9 shows the percent of probation exits for Arizona in comparison to other states that have implemented evidence-based practices for 2009. Additionally, Table 9 displays a comparison of Arizona with federal probation and the state level and national level.

Table 9

*2009 Percent of APPS Probation Exits Comparison*

|               | Successful | Unsuccessful |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Arizona       | 68.06      | 23.07        |
| Colorado      | 71.79      | 3.97         |
| Ohio          | 37.30      | 5.25         |
| Virginia      | 65.44      | 11.18        |
| State         | 49.50      | 13.61        |
| Federal       | 81.31      | 11.57        |
| Unites States | 49.66      | 13.60        |

### Summary

In chapter 4, a discussion of the analysis of the data collected from 77 completed surveys was provided. Data collection and preparation were discussed, including a discussion of the inability to use data from two surveys due to participants not meeting the initial criteria of having one year of experience in their current position as an executive probation leader and one survey that was incomplete. Descriptive statistics and a *Pearson r* correlation were used to examine the data in relation to the research questions. The data analysis performed tested two null hypotheses: a relationship between perceptions of evidenced-based practices and successful probation exits, and a relationship between perceptions of evidenced-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Overall, no relationship was found to exist between probation leaders perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful and unsuccessful probation exits. A relationship exists between successful probation exits and six items of perceptions of evidence-based practices: (1) usefulness of literature and research, (2) agency promotion of evidence-based practices, (3) ability to access databases and the internet, (4) lack of research skills is a barrier, (5) insufficient time is a barrier, and (6) lack of information resources. A relationship also exists between unsuccessful probation exits and four items of perceptions of evidence-based practices: (1) encouraging probation officers, (2) confidence in ability to review literature, (3) ability to access databases and the internet, and (4) lack of information resources. T-tests could not be performed due to a lack of data available from the Bureau of Justice Statistics on the Annual Probation and Parole Survey.

In chapter 5, a discussion of the conclusions and recommendations of the results by framing them with the research questions and hypotheses is provided. Implications of the findings and contribution to leadership are also addressed in chapter 5. Recommendations for future research concludes chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Evidence-based practices are designed to incorporate supervision strategies into the daily routine of probation supervision while focusing on the delivery of interventions with probationers who need and benefit from them in such a way that can be measured (Jalbert et al., 2010). Efforts to implement evidence-based practices in probation departments are ongoing throughout the country. Probation leaders around the country have no research related to probation leaders and evidence-based practices which to build upon or use as a guide for organizational change. The majority of research related to probation supervision and evidence-based practices focuses on programs, supervision, and tool kits for best practices (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008).

The findings from chapter 4 revealed that for the overall sample, with the exceptions of items: 2 in 2009, 10 in 2011, 12, 13 in 2010, 17 in 2009, 2010 and 2011, 28 in 2009 and 2010, 29 in 2010, and 30 in 2010 that leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices were not related to probation exits. The leaders' perceptions did not demonstrate a significant relationship with successful and unsuccessful probation exits. Significant relationships were found in eight areas: (1) literature and research findings (item 2), (2) encouraging probation officers (item 10), (3) I have the confidence and ability to review literature (item 12), (4) agency promotes evidence-based practices (item 13), (5) ability to access databases and the internet (item 17), (6) lack of research skills (item 28), (7) insufficient time (item 29), and (8) lack of information resources (item 30). A discussion of the results of the data collection and analysis were presented in chapter 4. A discussion of the interpretation, implications, and recommendations are discussed in chapter 5. Suggestions for future research are also discussed in chapter 5.

## **Findings and Interpretations**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to identify how probation leaders perceive evidence-based practices and if a relationship existed with the perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes. The analysis was also used to investigate if implementation of evidence-based practices has an impact on probation outcomes when analyzed on a national level. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to examine the relationships of leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices, and probation outcomes. Survey data were exported into SPSS. Probation outcome data were manually entered into SPSS.

Data collection with numerical values was collected based on responses to a customized survey for the field of probation supervision. The survey was a revised evidence-based practices survey used in the therapeutic field, which consisted of 45 questions. The survey focused on perceptions, attitudes, perceived benefits and limitations, and availability of resources, in relation to evidence-based practices. The terminology in the survey was revised to fit the field of probation supervision. Some of the questions on the survey were not used. In lieu of questions not used, new questions were developed regarding evidence-based practices and probation supervision.

After receiving approval from the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board, the revised survey instrument was pilot tested with a sample population of 20 probation experts in Arizona. Thirteen of the 20 experts selected responded to the pilot survey. Comments were encouraged regarding the difficulty of the questions, excessive amount of time needed to complete the survey, ease of reading, and challenges encountered while completing the survey. The pilot group completed the survey and

supplied written feedback on the survey instrument. There were no suggested changes from the pilot participants but an observation was made to reorder the category of demographics with regards to years in current position to capture respondents who had been in their current position for less than one year. The instrument was revised prior to finalizing and distributing it to the sample in the study.

The research questions were formulated with the goal of understanding the impact that leaderships' perception of evidence-based practices has on probation exits. Four hypotheses were generated to test two research questions. They are as follows:

Research Question One: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

Research Question Two: What relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits?

The null and alternate hypotheses for this research question were:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

The scope of the study was limited to adult probation leaders in Arizona who have implemented evidence-based practices within their organizations. The limitations of the study were a result of a minimum of one-year experience in their current leadership position. In some cases, the participants may not have provided honest, accurate responses regarding their perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation supervision within their organization due to the nature of the sensitivity of the study.

### **Demographics**

Women represented 49.4% of respondents. The majority (75.3%) of respondents were Caucasian. The most common age group of respondents were between the ages of 36-40 years. The highest level of education attained by respondents, which was the most common, was a master's degree. Sixteen to 20 years of experience working in the field of community supervision was the most common amongst respondents. The most common number of years respondents had in their current position as a leader was four to six years.

### **EBP Perceptions and Probation Exits**

In the overall sample, leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices were reported to be positive 86.67% of the time (Appendix K). There were four areas in which leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices were reported to be negative 13.33% of the time. The items which leaders negatively perceived evidence-based practices were



items 8, 19, 21, and 29. Table 10 shows the frequency of negative responses of leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices.

Table 10

*Frequency of Negative Responses*

|   | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Q8 – I received formal training in critical appraisal of research literature as part of my EBP preparation. | 43        | 55.84   |
| Q19 – Reading research articles related to my professional practice is time consuming.                      | 62        | 80.52   |
| Q21 – EBP does not take into account the limitation of my professional setting.                             | 35        | 45.45   |
| Q29 – Insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                              | 41        | 53.25   |

Since 55.84% of leaders responded negatively on having received formal training in critical appraisal of research literature as part of their EBP preparation, the conclusion may be drawn that the negative responses to reading research articles, EBP not taking into account the limitation of their professional setting, and insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in their professional practice was partially responsible for the negative perceptions of these items. Probation leaders may want to examine their evidence-based practices training curriculum in relation to research literature and time management.

Two null hypotheses were tested in the study. A correlation was evaluated to determine if there was a relationship between perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation exits. Three years of probation exit data were used in the tests: (1) in 2009 when adult probation departments were not governed by evidence-based practices; (2) in 2010 when the adult probation departments were transitioning to evidence-based

practices; and (3) in 2011 when probation departments were governed by evidence-based practices. Survey responses were broken down into three categories: (1) strongly disagree, disagree, and somewhat disagree; (2) neutral; and (3) strongly agree, agree, and somewhat agree. Category 1 was given a value of 1 and was deemed negative. Category 2 was given a value of 2 and was deemed neutral. Category 3 was given a value of 3 and was deemed positive. Probation exits were broken down into two categories: (1) successful and (2) unsuccessful. Category 1 was given a value 1 and was deemed to be positive. Category 2 was given a value of 2 and was deemed negative.

**Research question one.** Research question one was developed to ask, what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits? The null hypotheses stated: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits.

The results of the correlation between leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices and successful probation exits lack statistical significance with the exception of items 2, 13, 17, 28, 29, and 30. Overall, the null hypotheses was not rejected. The usefulness of literature and research findings in day-today-practice (item 2) had a correlation coefficient of  $-.195, p < .05$ , which indicates that as probation leaders do not use literature and research findings in their day-to-day practices that probation exits increase. My agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings (item 13) had a correlation coefficient of  $.211, p < .05$ , which indicates that as agencies promote evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings that successful probation exits increase.

I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility (item 17) had a correlation coefficient in 2010 of .189,  $p < .05$  and a correlation coefficient in 2011 of .328,  $p < .01$ , which indicate that as probation leaders have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in their facility successful probation exits increase. Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice (item 28) had a correlation coefficient of  $-.203$ ,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that as probation leaders do not have a lack of research skills as a barrier to using EBP in their profession practice that successful probation exits increase.

Insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice (item 29) had a correlation coefficient of  $-.191$ ,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that when insufficient time is not a barrier to using EBP in probation leaders professional practice that successful probation exits increase. Lack of information resources is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practices (item 30) had a correlation coefficient of  $-.212$ ,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that when a lack of information resources is not a barrier to using EBP in probation leaders professional practice that successful probation exits increase.

**Research question two.** Research question two was developed to ask, what relationship, if any, exists between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits? The null hypotheses stated: There is no significant correlational between executive probation leaders' perception of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits.

The results of the correlation between leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices and unsuccessful probation exits lack statistical significance with the exception of items 10, 12, 17, and 28. Overall, the null hypothesis was not rejected. I encourage

probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning (item 10) had a correlation coefficient of .234,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that as probation leaders encourage probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning that unsuccessful probation exits decrease. I am confident in my ability to critically review professional literature (item 12) had a correlation coefficient of -.213,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that as probation leaders lack confidence in their ability to critically review professional literature that unsuccessful probation exits decrease.

I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility (item 17) had a correlation coefficient in 2010 of -.289,  $p < .01$  and a correlation coefficient in 2011 of -.302,  $p < .01$ , which indicates that as probation leaders do not have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in their facility that unsuccessful probation exits decrease. Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice (item 28) had a correlation coefficient in 2010 of -.217,  $p < .05$  and a correlation coefficient in 2011 of -.212,  $p < .05$ , which indicates that when a lack of information resources is not a barrier to using EBP in probation leaders professional practice that unsuccessful probation exits decrease.

### **National Probation Data**

Data for Arizona were collected from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey for three years: 2009, 2010, and 2011, which is submitted by the probation departments' oversight agency to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Analysis were completed using data from the Annual Probation and Parole Survey based on the categorical data of the survey to analyze outcomes for Arizona in comparison to other states Colorado, Ohio, and

Virginia) who have implemented evidence-based practices, the United States total and at the federal level. Probation data could not be analyzed beyond 2009 to conduct a state-to-state comparison because probation exit data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics was not available online for 2010 and 2011. A three-year state comparison analysis conducting t-tests could not be completed due to lack of data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In 2009, Arizona's probation success rate was 68.06%. In 2009, the national success rate was 49.50%.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The results of this study have importance to probation leaders. Evidence-based practices is new to the field of probation supervision. No research was found on probation leaders and evidence-based practices. Evidence-based practices require commitment and courage to implement and sustain. As government budgets decline probation leaders are faced with the challenge of doing more with less.

Arizona adult probation leaders have been engaged in movements towards evidence-based practices since 2005. It is likely that perceptions of evidence-based practices have been in effect prior the 2010 when probation leaders where engaged in organizational change of their probation departments with evidence-based practices. Probation leaders in Arizona are encouraged to use the finding of this study as a baseline to conduct future research on probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes.

Having the ability to access relevant databases and the internet in their facility indicate that successful probation exits increase, and not having the ability to access relevant databases and the internet in their facility indicate that unsuccessful probation

exits decrease. This inverse relationship may be an indication that while probation leaders perceive that they have the ability to access relevant databases and the internet in their facility, they may not have that ability. Further research may be conducted to analyze the ability of probation leaders to access relevant databases and the internet within their facility. Since there is a significant relationship between literature and research findings, encouraging probation officers to use literature and research findings, confidence in one's ability to review literature, agency promotion of evidence-based practices, ability to access relevant databases and the internet, lack of research skills as a barrier, insufficient time as a barrier, and lack of information resources further research is encouraged.

The results of this study may affect probation leaders in several ways. Based on the findings, leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices were not shown to have an impact on probation exits, which may be due to prior evidence-based practices efforts as far back as 2005. The findings may be generalized to other probation departments who have not yet implemented evidence-based practices. The failure rate of probation exits in Arizona has continuously decreased over the past four years (APSD, 2012). Not implementing evidence-based practices may prove to be costly in the end.

Executive leaders of adult probation departments were the focus of the study. The response to the online survey was less than the targeted rate. The low response rate may have been due to time constraints or lack of interest in completing voluntary surveys. A recommendation is made that a qualitative study be conducted with executive probation leaders from adult probation departments with the goal of building specific case studies of perceptions of evidence-based practices prior to implementation, during the

implementation phase, and after the implementation. An increased perspective of the relationship between probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation exits may develop.

The findings of the study may serve as a baseline for future research as it relates to evidence-based practices and probation leaders. Identification of additional factors such as probationer population size, department leadership size, training, or legislation pertaining to probation supervision may further aid executive probation leaders with probation exits in relation to evidence-based practices. A quantitative correlational study may effectively research additional variables related to leadership and probation exits.

### **Summary**

The minimal literature on evidence-based practices and probation supervision shows that evidence-based practices reduce recidivism. No literature was found on probation leadership and evidence-based practices. The research findings of this study show that overall there is no statistical significance between probation leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices and probation outcomes. The findings also show that there is a statistical significance, which indicates that successful exits increase when literature and research findings are not used in daily practice, when the agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing training and skill development, when probation leaders have the ability to access relevant databases and the internet, when research skills is not a barrier to their practice, when insufficient time is not a barrier to using EBP, and when there is not a lack of information resources.

There is also a statistical significant, which indicates that unsuccessful exits decrease when probation leaders encourage probation officers to use professional

literature and research findings in the process of case planning, when there is a lack of confidence in the leaders ability to critically review professional literature, when leaders do not have the ability to access relevant databases and the internet in their facility, and when there is not a lack of research skills as a barrier to using EBP in their practice.

Overall, the perceptions of evidence-based practices by probation leaders are positive.

The finding from this study can raise awareness of leaderships' perceptions of evidence-based practices within probation supervision. The findings from this study can be applied as a starting point by researchers. A replication study over time, using this study as a baseline of perceptions is one such recommendation. Using the findings from this study as the foundation for a qualitative study to explore a case study of leadership perceptions of evidence-based practices is also encouraged.



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## Appendix A: Informed Consent

### UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Maria Aguilar-Amaya and I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a Doctoral degree. I am conducting a research study entitled A Quantitative Study of Probation Outcomes and Leaders' Perceptions of Evidence-based Practices. The purpose of the research study is to identify how probation leaders perceive evidence-based practices. The intention is to examine perceptions of evidence-based practices and the degree of relationship they have with successful and unsuccessful probation outcomes.

Your participation will involve completing a survey via SurveyMonkey. Informed consent letters are mailed to me to ensure that there is no way that a participants' informed consent can be matched to the survey responses. The expected duration of your participation in the study is one point in time at your convenience during a 21-day period, which the survey will be accessible to participants. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published, but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be disclosed to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit of your participation is being involved by helping to facilitate an understanding of probation leaders' perceptions of evidence-based practices and the relationship they may have on successful and unsuccessful probation outcomes. In doing so, it may be possible to improve the success rate of probation outcomes. As a voluntary participant, the information you provide is important for leadership in probation supervision and the ongoing efforts within community supervision to increase the rate of successful probation outcomes. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at amaya2@cox.net.

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

1. You may decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without consequences.
2. Your identity as a participant will be kept confidential and your survey responses will be kept anonymous.
3. Maria Aguilar-Amaya, the researcher, has thoroughly explained the parameters of the research study and all of your questions and concerns have been addressed.

4. Data will be stored in a secure and locked area. The data will be held for a period of three years, and then destroyed.
5. The research results will be used for publication.

“By signing this form you acknowledge that you understand the nature of the study, the potential risks to you as a participant, and the means by which your identity will be kept confidential. Your signature on this form also indicates that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to voluntarily serve as a participant in the study described.”

Signature of the interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Permission to Use Premises

### UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

#### PERMISSION TO USE PREMISES, NAME, AND/OR SUBJECTS (Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association)

##### Arizona Adult Probation Departments

Check any that apply:

I hereby authorize Maria Aguilar-Amaya, student of University of Phoenix, to use the premises (facility identified below) to conduct a study entitled A Quantitative Study of Probation Outcomes and Leaders' Perceptions of Evidence-based Practices.

I hereby authorize Maria Aguilar-Amaya, student of University of Phoenix, to recruit subjects for participation to conduct a study entitled A Quantitative Study of Probation Outcomes and Leaders' Perceptions of Evidence-based Practices.

I hereby authorize Maria Aguilar-Amaya, student of University of Phoenix, to use the name of the facility, organization, university, institution, or association identified above when publishing results from the study entitled A Quantitative Study of Probation Outcomes and Leaders' Perceptions of Evidence-based Practices.

Kathy Waters  
Signature

12-12-11  
Date

Kathy Waters  
Adult Probation Services Division Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
1501 W. Washington Street, Ste. 344  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3231

## Appendix C: Perceptions of Probation Leaders Survey

### Perceptions of Probation Leaders Survey (P2LS)

**Instructions:** Individual perceptions about evidence-based practices (EBP) are significant factors that could help determine your department's success or failure rate of probationers; the P2LS is designed to assess these perceptions. The 30 statements on the P2LS capture perceptions of various aspects of EBP. Please note the term "leader" refers to the following positions: supervisor, manager, director, deputy chief, and chief.

Rate the statements on the survey as honestly and accurately as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential and will not identify you as a participant in the study. There are two parts to the survey. The first part focuses on leaders' perceptions of EBP and the second part focuses on demographic information. Please rate the following statements according to your level of agreement with 1 being that you Strongly Disagree and 7 being that you Strongly Agree. Please select only one rating.

**Withdrawal Process:** If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be disclosed to any outside party. Please provide a code name which will identify you as a participant in the study, which is only known to you. The purpose of the code name is to identify the online survey, in case you request that it be removed from the study, before, during, or after data collection. Please be sure to avoid using numbers, dates, colors, or shapes, as your code name.

**Part I: Code Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Part II: Perceptions

|  | Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | No Opinion | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 Application of EBP is necessary in the practice of probation supervision.                          | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 2 Literature and research findings are useful in my day-to-day practice.                             | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 3 I need to increase the use of evidence in my daily practices.                                      | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 4 I have received formal training in search strategies for finding research relevant to my practice. | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 5 Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |

|   | Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | No Opinion | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|----------------------|----------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 6 EBP helps probation officers make decisions about case plans.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 7 My agency supports the use of current research in practice.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 8 I received formal training in critical appraisal of research literature as part of my EBP preparation.                | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 9 Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 10 I encourage probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning. | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 11 I read research/literature related to my professional practice.  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 12 I am confident in my ability to critically review professional literature.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 13 My agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings.                             | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 14 It is not necessary to align probation practices with EBP in order to improve successful probation outcomes.         | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 15 EBP is useful to probation officers when they are developing case plans for probationers.                            | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 16 I am confident in my ability to find relevant research to answer any probation questions.                            | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 17 I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility.                                     | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 18 The adoption of EBP places an unreasonable demand on probation officers.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 19 Reading research articles related to my professional practice is time consuming.                                     | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 20 EBP improves the quality of service to probationers.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 21 EBP does not take into account the limitations of my professional setting.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 22 I am interested in improving the skills necessary to continue to practice EBP.                                       | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 23 EBP does not take into account the preferences of probationers.  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |

|   | Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | No Opinion | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|----------------------|----------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 24 I am familiar with academic search engines.  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 25 Poor ability to critically appraise the literature is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.          | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 26 Lack of collective support among my colleagues in my agency is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice. | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 27 Lack of interest is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 28 Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                                     | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 29 Insufficient time is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| 30 Lack of information resources is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                               | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4          | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |

### Part III: Demographics

The following questions are optional.

Gender:  Female  Male

Ethnicity:  Asian  African-American  Caucasian  American Indian  
 Hispanic  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Age:  25 years or younger  26-30 years  31-35 years  36-40 years  
 41-45 years  46-50 years  51-55 years  56-60 years  
 61-65 years  66 years or older

Highest education level:  GED  High School Diploma  Some College  
 Associate  Bachelor  Master  
 Juris Doctor (law degree)  Doctorate/Ph.D.

Number of years working in community supervision (includes probation and parole):  
 5 years or less  6-10 years  11-15 years  16-20 years  
 21-25 years  26-30 years  31 years or more

Number of years you have served in your current position as a formal leader:  
 1 year or less  more than 1 year -3 years  4-6 years  7-10 years  
 11-13 years  14-17 years  18-20 years  21 years or more

**Thank you for your time and participation.**

### Appendix D: Demographic Frequencies

#### *Demographics*

|                           | Valid | Missing | Mean | Median | Mode | SD    |
|---------------------------|-------|---------|------|--------|------|-------|
| Gender                    | 1     | 6       | .54  | 2.00   | 2    | .502  |
| Ethnicity                 | 3     | 4       | .32  | 3.00   | 3    | .831  |
| Age                       | 2     | 5       | .08  | 6.00   | 4    | 1.837 |
| Education                 | 4     | 3       | .65  | 6.00   | 6    | .650  |
| Years in Probation/Parole | 4     | 3       | .14  | 4.00   | 4    | 1.338 |
| Years in Current Position | 4     | 3       | .78  | 3.00   | 3    | 1.501 |

### Appendix E: Ethnicity Frequencies

#### *Ethnicity*

|                  | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Asian            | 1         | 1.3     | 1.4              | 1.4                   |
| African-American | 1         | 1.3     | 1.4              | 2.7                   |
| Caucasian        | 58        | 75.3    | 79.5             | 82.2                  |
| Hispanic         | 13        | 16.9    | 17.8             | 100.0                 |
| Total            | 73        | 94.8    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing          | 4         | 5.2     |                  |                       |
| Total            | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |



### Appendix F: Gender Frequencies

*Gender*

|         | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male    | 33        | 42.9    | 46.5             | 46.5                  |
| Female  | 38        | 49.4    | 53.5             | 100.0                 |
| Total   | 71        | 92.2    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing | 6         | 7.8     |                  |                       |
| Total   | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |

### Appendix G: Age Frequencies

*Age*

|                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 31-35 years       | 3         | 3.9     | 4.2              | 4.2                   |
| 36-40 years       | 15        | 19.5    | 20.8             | 25.0                  |
| 41-45 years       | 12        | 15.6    | 16.7             | 41.7                  |
| 46-50 years       | 14        | 18.2    | 19.4             | 61.1                  |
| 51-55 years       | 10        | 13.0    | 13.9             | 75.0                  |
| 56-60 years       | 9         | 11.7    | 12.5             | 87.5                  |
| 61-65 years       | 7         | 9.1     | 9.7              | 97.2                  |
| 66 years or older | 2         | 2.6     | 2.8              | 100.0                 |
| Total             | 72        | 93.5    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing           | 5         | 6.5     |                  |                       |
| Total             | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |

### Appendix H: Education Frequencies

#### *Education*

|                    | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Bachelor           | 31        | 40.3    | 41.9             | 41.9                  |
| Master             | 40        | 51.9    | 54.1             | 95.9                  |
| Juris Doctorate    | 1         | 1.3     | 1.4              | 97.3                  |
| Doctorate or Ph.d. | 2         | 2.6     | 2.7              | 100.0                 |
| Total              | 74        | 96.1    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing            | 3         | 3.9     |                  |                       |
| Total              | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |

### Appendix I: Years Working in Community Supervision

*Years Working in Community Supervision*

|                  | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 6-10 years       | 8         | 10.4    | 10.8             | 10.8                  |
| 11-15 years      | 16        | 20.8    | 21.6             | 32.4                  |
| 16-20 years      | 23        | 29.9    | 31.1             | 63.5                  |
| 21-25 years      | 18        | 23.4    | 24.3             | 87.8                  |
| 26-30 years      | 3         | 3.9     | 4.1              | 91.9                  |
| 31 years or more | 6         | 7.8     | 8.1              | 100.0                 |
| Total            | 74        | 96.1    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing          | 3         | 3.9     |                  |                       |
| Total            | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |

### Appendix J: Years in Current Leadership Position

#### *Years in Current Leadership Position*

|                  | Frequency | Percent | Valid<br>Percent | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 2-3 years        | 14        | 18.2    | 18.9             | 18.9                  |
| 4-6 years        | 24        | 31.2    | 32.4             | 51.4                  |
| 7-10 years       | 18        | 23.4    | 24.3             | 75.7                  |
| 11-13 years      | 6         | 7.8     | 8.1              | 83.8                  |
| 14-17 years      | 8         | 10.4    | 10.8             | 94.6                  |
| 18-20 years      | 2         | 2.6     | 2.7              | 97.3                  |
| 21 years or more | 2         | 2.6     | 2.7              | 100.0                 |
| Total            | 74        | 96.1    | 100.0            |                       |
| Missing          | 3         | 3.9     |                  |                       |
| Total            | 77        | 100.0   |                  |                       |

### Appendix K: Frequency of Positive Responses

#### *Frequency of Positive Responses*

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Q1 - Application of EBP is necessary in the practice of probation supervision.   | 74        | 96.10   |
| Q2 - Literature and research findings are useful in my day-to-day practice.  | 69        | 89.62   |
| Q3 - I need to increase the use of evidence in my daily practices.   | 57        | 74.03   |
| Q4 - I have received formal training in search strategies for finding research relevant to my practice.                    | 46        | 59.74   |
| Q5 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | 52        | 67.53   |
| Q6 - EBP helps probation officers make decisions about case plans.   | 73        | 94.81   |
| Q7 - My agency supports the use of current research in practice.   | 75        | 97.40   |
| Q9 - Strong empirical evidence is lacking to support most of the interventions used with probationers.                     | 51        | 66.23   |
| Q10 - I encourage probation officers to use professional literature and research findings in the process of case planning. | 55        | 71.43   |
| Q11 - I read research/literature related to my professional practice.  | 68        | 88.31   |
| Q12 - I am confident in my ability to critically review professional literature.   | 55        | 82.09   |
| Q13 - My agency promotes evidence-based practices through ongoing skill development trainings.                             | 73        | 94.81   |
| Q14 - It is not necessary to align probation practices with EBP in order to improve successful probation outcomes.         | 64        | 83.12   |
| Q15 - EBP is useful to probation officers when they are  | 75        | 97.40   |

developing case plans for probationers.

|  |    |       |
|--|----|-------|
| Q16 - I am confident in my ability to find relevant research to answer any probation questions.                          | 66 | 85.71 |
| Q17 - I have the ability to access relevant databases and the Internet in my facility.                                   | 70 | 90.91 |
| Q18 - The adoption of EBP places an unreasonable demand on probation officers.   | 59 | 76.62 |
| Q20 - EBP improves the quality of service to probationers.   | 72 | 93.51 |
| Q22 - I am interested in improving the skills necessary to continue to practice EBP.                                     | 68 | 88.31 |
| Q23 - EBP does not take into account the preferences of probationers.  | 56 | 72.73 |
| Q24 - I am familiar with academic search engines.  | 48 | 62.34 |
| Q25 - Poor ability to critically appraise the literature is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.          | 38 | 49.35 |
| Q26 - Lack of collective support among my colleagues in my agency is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice. | 40 | 51.95 |
| Q27 - Lack of interest is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.  | 42 | 54.55 |
| Q28 - Lack of research skills is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                                     | 48 | 62.34 |
| Q30 - Lack of information resources is a barrier to using EBP in my professional practice.                               | 47 | 61.04 |

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