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HEALTHY COMMAND ENVIRONMENTS: DEFINITIONS, RISK FACTORS, AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

by

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This project aims to identify protective and risk factors that contribute to a healthy command environment and the effects of those factors on Sailor behavior. To examine which factors were most impactful for building a healthy command environment, we developed and asked our participants a series of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. Using their answers, we analyzed any perceived effects upon Sailor behavior. We compared responses from sea vs. shore command experiences as well as responses from different communities within the Navy. Our research shows which command practices, policies, procedures, and processes (P4) contributed to healthier environments. Our research shows that trust, leadership, and communication significantly influence a command's environment. Our findings indicate that these themes can manifest through a variety of programs, policies, practices, and procedures. As a result, we recommend expanding the current leadership curriculum to include organizational behavior to improve implementation of the P4 throughout the military. We also recommend expanding the data collection effort throughout the Navy to gain a more complete understanding of healthy environments in the fleet and to enhance readiness, foster healthier Sailor behaviors, and encourage higher retention.

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ABSTRACT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Army Doctrine Publications
ADRP	Army Doctrine References Publications
CMEO	Command Managed Equal Opportunity
DEOCS	Defense Organizational Climate Survey
DEOMI	Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute
DOD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of Navy
EO	Equal Opportunity
NAVADMIN	Naval Administration Message
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OPNAV	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OPNAVINST	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction
P^4	Processes, Procedures, Practices, and Policies
SAPR	Sexual Assault and Prevention Response

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—Emily Cooper

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—Barret Goman

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—Spencer Morris

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to attempt to define healthy and unhealthy command environments and to identify factors that contribute to healthy command environments (protective factors) and to unhealthy command environments (risk factors) in the Navy. The Navy's leadership must understand what factors contribute to or detract from healthy working environments to cultivate the necessary conditions to create better working environments. The Navy recently developed the Culture of Excellence (COE) approach to support warfighters. It also began the Twenty First Century Sailor Initiative to "more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward, and retain the forces of tomorrow" (Gilday, 2019). These efforts indicate that to retain forces that are ready to "win wars, deter aggression, and maintain freedom of the seas," Sailors must be prepared in their personal and professional lives. This can be achieved by fostering healthy command environments through organizational inclusion, trust, and transparency. Impeding this readiness, however, are risk factors which can lead to destructive behaviors and unhealthy working environments. Those barriers affect a valuable Sailor's decision to remain in the Navy which detrimentally impacts the Navy's end strength. As the Navy is aware, our Sailors are a vital resource in supporting the goals directed in the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS) and the 21st Sailor Century Initiative, however, more importantly, they are critical to combat readiness of our fighting Naval forces.

Working environments continuously affect Sailors' careers. Factors such as leadership, mentorship, advancement opportunities, and professional development, along with the programs, policies, practices, and processes that surround them, are critical to a working environment (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Using focus groups and interviews, this study gathers and examines data assessing the various working environments experienced by the targeted audience and how those working environments affect Sailors' behavior and readiness. The data collected capture both their sea and shore duty experiences. The study's intent is to identify the factors that Sailors report to have had the greatest effects on their perceived working environments, what behaviors resulted from those factors, and then to

inform Navy leaders what protective factors and risk factors can be controlled to improve the health of working environments in the Navy.

The results aim to provide a roadmap on how to create a healthy working environment by promoting specific programs, practices, procedures and policies. The aspiration behind the questions in our focus groups and interviews is to highlight compelling trends that can improve the health of working environments through communication, leadership, and trust (U.S. Army Headquarters, 2006). Furthermore, the questions intend to capture the effect of protective and risk factors that significantly influence Navy organizations' working environments. Furthermore, our focus groups will help answer the following questions:

A. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this thesis we aimed to address the following research questions.

- What defines a healthy vs. unhealthy environment?
- What factors contribute to a healthy/unhealthy environment?
- What programs, policies, processes, and practices are common themes in healthy environments?
- What behaviors result from healthy/unhealthy environments?

B. SCOPE

This thesis provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of data collected using open-ended interview questions accounting for first-hand experiences of naval officers at the Naval Postgraduate School.

- The goal is to identify practices, policies, programs, and processes that contribute to healthy and unhealthy command environments, and to provide insights in developing cultural competencies which can be used to identify risk and protective factors.

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter II provides a background overview of the risk and protective factors within command and working environments and why a healthy environment matter. Chapter III reviews earlier research studies, which serve as the foundation for the approach used in our thesis. Chapter IV describes the research method used. Chapter V presents the results from the focus group and interviews used for the qualitative analysis. Chapter VI summarizes our findings and offers recommendations for measuring and improving command environments in the Fleet.

C. ASSUMPTIONS

The researchers assume that Sailors' personal perceptions of their working environments accurately reflect the reality of the health of their working environments. The focus of this study is not to define and analyze healthy vs. unhealthy environments based on performance metrics or quantitative data, but rather the personal thoughts and experiences of reasonable persons within the Navy. In this way, the researchers assume that the subjects studied are reasonable persons and that their assessments of their working environments would match those of the legal definition of a reasonable person. The legal definition of a reasonable person is "a fictional person with an ordinary degree of reason, prudence, care, foresight, or intelligence whose conduct, conclusion, or expectation in relation to a particular circumstance or fact is used as an objective standard by which to measure or determine something" (Webster, 2021).

D. LIMITATIONS

The researchers faced two main limitations: time and subject availability. Regarding time, this study was conducted over the space of three months. The researchers understand that the constrained timeline could lead to a lower amount of data. Furthermore, the study involved only Naval Postgraduate School students. While the involvement of only commissioned officers supplies worthwhile data, the study may miss perspectives and data from other groups such as enlisted personnel.

It is also important to note that this study was conducted during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, access to additional participants was severely limited due to different Department of Defense, State of California, and local public health

regulations. While following these restrictions, our team was able to conduct focus groups on a smaller scale, however, as will be discussed in this study, participants brought a wide variety of experiences to these discussions which gave us solid data to work with, despite the aforementioned limitations.

The researchers understand that there are quantitative metrics that could be used to define the health of a working environment such as performance metrics, production output levels, and retention levels. However, this study aims to analyze and report on the qualitative factors that affect working environments as described by Sailors based upon their own perceptions and experiences. The researchers understand that further studies may seek to identify correlations and causal relationships between the qualitative factors identified in this study and more quantitative measurements of organizational performance.

II. BACKGROUND

The Navy is amid a cultural change to adhere to DOD Directive 1350.2 as well as the National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) of 2013 and 2015 which formed the requirement for commanders to monitor and evaluate their command's environment and remediate any issues found. The 2015 NDAA stipulates that the Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (given by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute [DEOCS]) is only authorized instrument for assessing the Navy's command environment. In addition to monitoring command climate, the Navy also became interested in researching the factors that influence the environment (protective and risk) as well as the resulting behaviors. To better understand these questions, the Navy started its Twenty First Century Sailor Initiative.

A. NAVY COMMAND CLIMATE EFFORTS

In 2013, the Chief of Naval Operations regrouped existing policies into a new initiative named the Twenty First Century Sailor (21st Century Sailor) (NAVADMIN 153/ 13). The 21st Century Sailor (also known as OPNAV N17) aims to provide Sailors with the resources and support to thrive in adversity. This success will arise promote mental and physical resiliency through seventeen policies such as a Culture of Excellence, Equal Opportunity, Inclusion & Diversity, and Life-Work Balance (Chief of Naval Operations, 2013).

The Chief of Naval Operations instituted the Navy's Culture of Excellence (COE) policy in November 2019. The policy states that to remain an excellent Navy, Sailors must do what is right so that all Sailors feel empowered, respected, and included. It focuses on creating positive command climates and healthy working environments so that Sailors are ready to win wars, deter aggression, and maintain freedom of the seas (NAVADMIN 254/ 19).

To create those Sailors, the Chief of Naval Operations' Office released their COE Quick Reference Guide in December 2020. The guide formed a Cultural Champion Network (CCN) to bolster team cohesion by promoting healthy norms and "Signature

Behaviors" such as communication (DON, 2020). The CCN integrated with the Command Resiliency Team to create the Command Resilience Team Human Factors Council which monitors the overall wellbeing of personnel. If the council identifies any human risk factors or unhealthy behaviors, it will recommend a risk mitigation plan (DON, 2020). Furthermore, the CCN promulgated Prevention Scorecards which capture quarterly or semi-annual snapshots of the command's environment. The Command Resiliency Team collects this information allowing the command a layered look at a its signature (healthy) and destructive behaviors.

N17 has identified research gaps in the Culture of Excellence policy regarding how protective and risk factors affect healthy working environments. To close the behavioral norms gap, the Navy plans to add primary prevention initiatives to the current repertoire of intervention and post-intervention. As part of this plan, the Navy intends to identify promising practices throughout the Fleet to promote positive, healthy behaviors at the individual and unit level.

While healthy behaviors at the individual level may be straightforward to identify, defining healthy behaviors at the unit level becomes more complex. Defining a healthy command environment, which is influenced by numerous interactive factors, presents an even greater challenge. It is, however, critical to develop a greater understanding of healthy command environments, as well as its related protective and risk factors, to continue this movement towards a primary prevention approach. This comprehension will enhance Navy's ability to provide whole-Sailor primary prevention.

As the Navy's understanding for healthy command environments evolves, this information can be utilized in two essential areas: 1) to provide evidence-informed recommendations for integrated primary prevention efforts for total Sailor fitness as well as readiness and 2) to help determine how to best enhance existing and/or develop new evidence-informed policies, programs, practices, and processes (P^4) that support a healthy command. This study's purpose is to fill the identified research gap regarding healthy command environments as well as the protective and risk factors that impact the health of command environments.

B. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

While this chapter reviews the Navy's efforts to improve command environments, there remains work to be done to ensure that healthy environments are the norm across the Navy. Improving command environments via restructuring existing programs, procedures, policies, and practices can potentially increase retention as well as strengthen the Navy's mission readiness, leading to the achievement of the National Defense Strategy objectives.

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III. LITERATURE REVIEW

> In order to more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward and retain the forces of tomorrow, aiming to simply avoid doing the wrong thing is too low a bar; we must actively pursue that which is right. When Sailors feel included, respected and empowered, they will be more ready to win wars, deter aggression and maintain freedom of the seas.
>
> —Admiral Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations

A. INTRODUCTION

The Navy continues to explore command climate across all domains to better understand the scope of its problems and its effects on military readiness. Since its inception, the Navy has studied command climate. Numerous studies have approached the subject from different viewpoints. Their findings culminated in multiple theories and unearthed several issues existing in the Navy today.

One issue, how to foster a positive command climate, requires continuous, methodical improvement and refinement across the Navy. This thesis team's initial research shows that a positive command climate arises from a healthy environment within the command. This finding leads to another set of questions. How is that environment defined and what factors contribute to creating a healthy environment?

Answering these questions would benefit not only the Navy, but also any leader who desires to create a positive environment. Research conducted on command climate point out clear benefits of well-managed command climate such as greater innovation, increased productivity, and a lower employee turnover (Loden and Rosner, 1991). Furthermore, military studies have shown that command climate via job satisfaction significantly correlates to a service member retention (Behnke, 2010).

Conversely, Loden and Rosner's (1991) research has shown that choosing to ignore command climate may result in a higher service member turnover due to a non-supportive work environment which may in turn drive away talented recruits as they learn of the organization's practices. To ensure an adequate analysis, this literature review will include

the current research on command climate, command climate factors, and the practices, policies, and programs that the Navy currently uses.

This literature review serves two purposes. One, to recognize which methods the Navy currently employs to obtain command climate data as well as the risk factors and protective factors within the data. Second, to demonstrate how understanding those factors could improve the Navy. Combined, this chapter will set the foundation for answering the questions of how to define a positive environment, which protective factors and risk factors create a healthy environment, and what behaviors leaders could expect to see because of a healthy command environment?

B. COMMAND CLIMATE

To determine whether a command's environment is healthy or unhealthy, the term command climate must be defined. This definition ensures that leaders understand what command environment means so that they can improve it. Otherwise, leaders cannot determine if their adjustments will have an effect. Furthermore, Doty and Gelineau (2008) determined that evaluating command climates must be intentional and completed by the command's leadership. These assessments must also be continuous as how members perceive their environment determines how they perform. Their performance will determine the productivity and efficiency of the command (p.v). Rogers, Marsh, and Ethridge found that the productivity rests with employees perceiving their control environment as appreciative, that the company treats all employees equally, and that all employees serve a vital role. When this perception is present in the command environment, there is lower employee turnover, higher profits, higher rates of project completion, less fraud, and less deviant workplace behavior committed (Rogers, Marsh, & Ethridge, 2004).

Isci, Cakmak, and Karadag (2015) found that a command's environment is the compilation of its practices and conditions. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) offer another definition: in addition to practices and conditions, they add those policies, procedures, routines, and rewards all factor into how a Sailor perceives their command climate. In other words, a command's environment is the environment as it is perceived by its members.

Specifically, Watkins and Hubbard (2003) and Inderjit (2014) note how Sailors perceive their environment directly relates to how well they can complete their job.

C. COMMAND CLIMATE FACTORS

Various factors form a command's environment. Analyzing these factors will allow commanders to determine which (if any) areas within their command need work. Protective factors are attributes of a command that supports its members by helping them handle stress events and/or mitigate risks more effectively (Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute [DEOMI], 2021). Protective factors are associated with higher likelihood of positive outcomes for organizations such as increased levels of readiness and retention (p.v). Risk factors are attributes (attitudes, behaviors, etc.) of a command associated with negative outcomes such as suicide, sexual assault, drug and alcohol abuse (DEOMI, 2021). Delaying the identification of factors reduces a command's readiness and performance (Rogers, Marsh, & Ethridge, 2004). Additionally, practicing identifying the factors will enable leaders to improve leadership skills as well as improve accountability within a command (Jones, 2003).

The Australian Defense Force PULSE model proposes five factors form command climate: motivation/morale, task cohesion, group cohesion, confidence in leadership, and job satisfaction. This model closely mirrors research conducted on the U.S. military. For example, Behnke's (2010) study through the Military Family Research Institute show that factors such as, perception when considering job characteristics, opportunities in pay and promotion, work environment, and quality of leadership and supervision, tie together to create a Sailors' sense of command environment. As of DEOCS 21 (2018), the Navy included four areas when assessing the health of a unit's environment: organizational effectiveness, equal/opportunity/fair treatment, retaliation, and sexual assault & response prevention (SAPR). Using these studies as a model, one can analyze command climate factors as well as the programs, policies, practices, and processes that influence command climate.

1. Motivation and Morale

Inderjit (2014) found that motivation and morale can be an outcome as well as a measure of command climate. Motivation can be defined as how high or low a member's

enthusiasm is for accomplishing a mission. Part of that excitement arises from being a part of a group. This group shares a common goal and together, achieving high motivation which bleeds into how they perceive their work environment (p. v).

Inderjit further found that two factors affect an employee's motivation and their perception of command climate: mobility and opportunity. Mobility and opportunity tie into the service member's perception of their ability to advance. Mobility means the ease with which a Sailor can linearly promote upwards in the chain of command, while opportunity relates to the possibilities or chances that allow one to promote. These factors relate to how much or how little a Sailor feels valued and their sense of fairness (Moon, 1997). Since the service member bases this feeling on their perception, both factors can be altered.

Both mobility and opportunity foster affect a member's morale. The U.S. *Army Manual on Leadership* (2006) states that morale is a measurement of how soldiers feel about their command, their leaders, and themselves. A service member's morale stems from their feelings about not only their team, but also themselves and their leaders. Additionally, to achieve high morale, a command must have good leadership, shared effort, and mutual respect. When service members feel that their leaders respect them, both morale and motivation will predictably increase (Inderjit, 2014).

2. Task Cohesion

Goyne (2009) concluded that the perception of social cohesion correlates directly to command climate. Social cohesion consists of task and group cohesion. Task cohesion is how well members of a group are motivated to achieve a common goal.

3. Group Cohesion

Group cohesion is defined as how much group members like each other. Powerful group and task cohesion allows teams to become highly motivated and reliably achieve mission success (Pinch, 2006).

4. Confidence in Leadership

Additionally, command climate factors in how group members perceive their leadership. Confidence in leadership is how well command members feel their leadership can achieve the mission. Miller (2006) found that this confidence arises from the leadership practices that convey aspects as trust, equality, communication, and fairness. Dr Stephen Covey in *The Speed of Trus*t (2006) expressed trust as "the hidden variable" in the formula for organizational success.

5. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, or a Sailor's assessment of how they see their job, is important in explaining one's perception of command environment. Job satisfaction ties in aspects such as job performance, underlying attitude, motivation, and morale (Cooper & Sloan, 1985). Additionally, the Steers and Mowday (1981) model states that job expectation, values, and organizational experiences all influence job satisfaction. Job satisfaction could become a risk factor if a command climate is poor due to lack of autonomy at work, low morale, and/ or lack of career opportunities. Furthermore, research by Kocher, Thomas, and Kakhani (1985), linked military member's higher reported job satisfaction to high probability of retention. If predictors of job satisfaction can be identified, the Navy may be able to take actions to improve command climate and increase retention.

Research by Lawler (1968) formulated two theories that explain possible predictors of job satisfaction: equity theory and organizational support. Equity theory focuses on workers' perception of equity or fairness in the workplace. Lawler directly links a workplace's application of equity to its employee satisfaction. Perceptions of *in*equity reduce satisfaction within an organization (Carrell and Dittrich, 1978). Furthermore, if an employee perceives an inequity in the workplace they may engage in absenteeism, low productivity, and turnover, all of which negatively affect command climate (Cosier and Dalton, 1983).

Perceived organizational support affects job satisfactions as well. Organizational support can arise in the form of supportive relationships, procedural justice, and organizational citizen behavior. One way that commands can show care is through

supportive relationships. These relationships can help mentees make valuable contributions to the organization and create an environment where members have similarities upon which to build a foundation of acceptance and foster more positive experiences within a command. The success of supportive relationships also affect retention. Kirchmeyer (1995) found that an employee's experience of mentorship supplied strong indicators toward their career advancement and retention.

The second tenet or perceived organizational support is procedural justice. Procedural justice measures a servicemember's belief of fairness of a command's procedures and opportunities. Like the perception of inequity, if a member perceives unfairness within an organization, they may engage in behaviors to balance the fairness. Conversely, Moorman, Blakely, and Nieoff (1998) found that if procedural justice is clear, it leads to higher feelings of organizational support.

The extent that a servicemember feels supported via relationships and procedural justice influences how often they engage in organizational citizen behavior (p.v). Organizational citizen behavior consists of employee initiative, interpersonal helping, personal industry, and promotion of organizational image to outsiders. Such reciprocation benefits the organization and subsequently improves the perception of organizational support. A strong sense of organizational support generally improves command climate which can potentially lead to higher retention rates. Lastly, while these factors provide a broad framework from which to start, our research may unearth other factors (quite possibly unique to the Navy) that require consideration.

D. POSITIVE COMMAND CLIMATE

Additionally, Sailors respond to their perception based upon whether they see themselves benefitting or potentially being harmed by their environment (James & James, 1989). A positive command environment is perishable and can change quickly (United States Army, 2015) therefore, a command must actively work to maintain it. Since the individuals of a command form its climate, its maintenance falls to the efforts of individual, particularly leadership (Griffin, 2010). The Greater Good Science Center at Berkeley found that this care can decrease absenteeism, malicious behaviors while increasing students'

motivation and retention (Zakrzewski, 2013). This maintenance means that as individuals' motivation improves their interactions with others improve. These interactions have a cumulative effect of improving command climate. While many publications and studies document characteristics of a positive command climate, none define it.

Goty and Gelineau (2008) found that a positive command environment is one whose members perceive it as "inclusive, fair, and ethical." The National School Climate Council (2007), ADP 6–0, ADRP-1, and ADP 6–22 refer to positive command environments as ones who foster mutual trust, team cohesion, and open communications. In 2007, The National School Climate Council published its criteria for a positive climate.

1. Norms, values, and expectations support social, emotional, and physical safety.
2. People are engaged and respected.
3. Members work together to develop and live a shared vision.
4. Leaders model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits gained.
5. Each member contributes to the operations and care of the physical environment (ships).

E. NEGATIVE/UNHEALTHY COMMAND CLIMATE

Despite the efforts of most commands, negative command climates exist. Negative command climates have led to an increase in the following: suicide, depression, sexual assault, decreased retention, lowered productivity, increased workplace deviant behaviors (Rogers, Marsh, & Ethridge, 2004).

A negative command climate is one whose members perceive it as "toxic." The term toxic can take the form of practices such as micromanaging, abuse, favoritism, etc. Signs of a toxic environment include high workplace turnover, employee deviant behaviors, little communication and/or autocratic leaders (p. v). A negative environment can have all or some of these factors: miscommunication, incompetent leadership, unhealthy work-life balance, lack of trust, lack of respect, low risk tolerance, no shared vision/purpose, as well as few opportunities for training, growth, or mentorship (p. v).

F. LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND CLIMATE

Isci, Cakmak, & Karadag (2015) found that leadership has a strong effect on command climate. To assess the relationship between leadership and command climate researchers conducted a meta-data analysis consisting of 43,698 subjects. The results indicated that leadership had a 0.54 correlation to command climate. This correlation means that the tone at the top must be monitored so that it fosters a healthy command environment.

The Army Publish Directorate (2019) denotes a leader's responsibility to create a positive command climate through mutual trust and understanding. One way to foster such trust, Edson (2011) and Inderjit (2014) propose, is through establishing a disciplined and consistent communication method that is effective throughout the chain of command.

Organizational leaders establish policies and practices that create meaning for individuals. These perceptions aggregate and form a command's climate (Schneider, Barbera, 2014). Thus, leaders play a large role in setting up a positive organizational climate. Organizational leaders shape this perception in 5 ways:

- What they pay attention to
- How they react to situations
- How they allocate opportunities and rewards
- How and whom they teach
- How they handle themselves

G. PRACTICES AND COMMAND CLIMATE

According to the ADRP-1, observed policies and practices drive command climate. Practices within an organization directly influence a command's climate by creating the perception of what a command values. The positive reinforcement of these values by the entire chain of command ensures consistency.

For example, a case study involving the USS ARCHERFISH demonstrates how the chain of command referred every decision back to the mission (Green, 2007). This reinforcement helped create a shared vision that emerges from the personnel themselves. This "buy in" will increase the likelihood that the employees will commit to the mission and execute it, according to Peter Senge the director of the Society for Organizational Learning (Zakrzewski, 2013).

ADRP 1 3–3 references how all leaders as responsible for reinforcing the culture and command climate essential to mission command. Additionally, Edward Schein (2016), an organizational psychology expert, states that a corporation must continually assess its climate and recommends both focus groups and interviews. These methods allow for leaders to understand their subordinate's underlying assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions. According to DEOCS 21 (2018) data, the Navy measures practices such as inclusion at work, connectedness, organizational commitment, and sexual assault prevention, workplace harassment prevention to evaluate command climate.

H. POLICIES

To address and improve command climate, the Navy has established policies for the following: command climate surveys, sexual harassment, and equal opportunity. These policies help alert commanders to the development of trends relevant to the command's climate (OPNAVIST 53541.G, p. 15). Identification of these patterns will improve mission accomplishment, cohesiveness, and readiness.

The command climate survey policy identifies these patterns through its frequency. OPNAVIST 5341.1 directs commands to issue a command climate survey upon a change of command and every 9–12 months thereafter. Once the surveys are collected, a Command Resiliency Team (CRT) reviews responses and the CMEO program manager maintains the files for three years. The files contain the command climate assessment which includes significant findings, organizational strengths, areas of concern, and recommended corrective actions (OPNAVIST 5354.1G, p.40). Secretary of Defense Austin (2021) indicated that the Navy uses these surveys as a baseline not only the command's progress, but also the Navy's progress towards fleet readiness.

Additionally, commands typically employ their own policies to manage their Sailors and the environment of the command. This can include "open door," Sailor engagement, communication, and working hours policies. For example, a common leadership tactic includes an open-door policy which commands often use to keep leadership accessible to junior Sailors and Officers for question, concerns, ideas and insights. This allows Sailors to engage with their leaders, build trust and assist in the flow of communication. However, these policies are not established in Navy doctrine and are left up to the command leadership to regulate and manage.

I. PROGRAM/PROCESSES

According to the Naval War College, processes and procedures specify how work is accomplished. For most organizations, processes are a core competence and considered a vital asset. Processes have input and output, usually measured in terms of quantity, quality, time, duration, and cost. Benchmarks are a way of measuring and differentiating one organization's processes against another (Faculty, p. 5).

The Navy has established multiple methods to assess command climate. Some examples include command climate surveys, CMEO (Command Managed Equal Opportunity) program, multi-source feedback (the 360-degree reviews conducted upon leaders), and internal communications. OPNAVINST 5354.1 (Series) directs that the Navy hold command climate surveys. These surveys measure a command's climate and identify trends. The surveys are anonymous and allow Sailors to provide feedback based on their experience and perception. These surveys are only effective if a significant number of Sailors participate and are candid in their responses.

Using the 56 core survey questions, the command climate survey focuses on Equal Opportunity (EO), Organizational Effectiveness, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR). Commands can tailor the survey using the optional 10 locally developed questions (DOEMI, 2014). While the 10 questions may pertain to the command's environment, the health of a specific command's environment is not the focus of the command climate survey. 38 of 106 questions or (36% of the average survey number of questions) relate to command climate. Surveys neglect to ask service members about the

quality of training, equipping, Sailor/family support, communication, safety, or mentorship and professional development—obvious areas that also influence command climate (Kuetemeyer, 2016). This exclusion means that the effects, to include destructive and protective behaviors, of various command environment factors have not yet been rigorously studied.

OPNAVIST 5354.1(Series) mandated the creation of the CMEO program. CMEOs coordinate command climate assessments. Additionally, CMEO program managers receive all complaints and file reports on their command's climate. This program is only effective if reports are brought to the CMEO.

Multi-source feedback is conducted at several points in naval officers' careers such as in-between their division officer tours and department head tours. This feedback, while helpful, requires some self-appraisal which could lead to rater-bias (Goyne, 2010). Furthermore, the officer chooses who gives feedback which can lead to a confirmation bias. The same biases apply to internal feedback conduct through informal meetings within a command.

In short, our research indicates that trust, communication, and transparency foster a healthy command climate. As of February 2021, the U.S. Navy has implemented the CMEO program and command climate surveys which have increased awareness. While these references delineate a strong correlation between leadership and command climate, several research gaps exist.

J. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In sum, this background and literature review provide context to the evolving realm of command climate. A command environment is the combined perception of its Sailors. Command climate surveys allow the Navy to measure the morale of a command quantitatively and qualitatively. However, the measures currently in place do not define what constitutes a healthy versus an unhealthy command environment, nor does it provide a clear strategic guideline to establish a healthy command environment. For example, the Navy's command climate program considers factors such as diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity. While these factors do influence a command's environment, other factors,

such as the Navy's existing programs, policies, processes, and procedures, should be considered as well. Examining these factors will provide the Navy a more in-depth view of healthy command environment. Additionally, this data will allow leaders to focus their efforts to improve their command's climate.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION/ DEVELOPMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

This study attempts to answer the research questions using qualitative data obtained by conducting focus groups and interviews with active-duty Sailors and recording their responses to questions regarding healthy working environments in the Navy. The research uses a combination of inductive and deductive research techniques. The deductive research techniques test existing theories (factors) regarding healthy working environments. Meanwhile, the inductive techniques that use the open format questions to collect and analyze data help the researchers identify and develop new relevant theories (factors). The purpose of this study is to define and analyze working environments and the factors that support or detract from them based on the perceptions and experiences of Sailors who are serving in the Navy. This study intends to use this research as a means of improving the understanding of protective and risk factors for healthy working environments. Using this understanding, the Navy can improve working environments for Sailors throughout the Fleet.

In this chapter, the researchers describe the focus group questions utilized to provide qualitative analysis of healthy and unhealthy environments in the Fleet. The researchers used the knowledge built from the review of prior studies and their combined 18 years of experience in the Department of the Navy and the decades of research experience from NPS Staff (See Appendix A for the focus group questions) to create the focus group questions. Based upon the literature review findings, the researchers decided upon eight factors to assess as potential protective or risk factors. These factors are leadership, communication, trust, diversity/inclusion, learning/growth opportunities, recognition/appreciation, work-life balance, and peer relationships.

Focus group questions regarding the impact of these factors on healthy and unhealthy working environments constituted a deductive research method designed to test the findings found within the literature review. Additionally, the open-ended questions in the focus groups constituted an inductive research method designed to allow subjects to

discuss and describe their own opinions, ideas, and experiences, which were then analyzed in order create new inferences regarding the themes and factors effecting the health of working environments.

B. CHOOSING THE SAMPLE

The population at the focus of this study are Department of Navy personnel. However, due to time constraints and restrictions due to Covid-19, this study's sample consisted entirely of Naval Postgraduate School students. Subjects were recruited via email sent to individuals and distribution lists. Recruitment emails included a summary of the research being conducted, criteria to be eligible to participate, and solicited a response to the researchers to schedule a focus group meeting, either in person or online. Screening was conducted during the scheduling process for focus groups and interviews as researchers confirmed that potential subjects met the criteria to be interviewed. Consent forms were distributed and signed digitally via email or in person prior to the start of focus groups and interviews. Data was collected from 30 Navy personnel who are students at the Naval Postgraduate School. Criteria for selection was as follows:

1. Must be active duty (enlisted or officer) with sea or shore duty experience of any rank.
2. Must be willing to participate on his/her own free will.

C. DEVELOPING THE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

The focus group questions were created to be deductive and inductive in nature. The deductive portion of the questions were developed to test the findings from the literature review which suggested that the following themes are important in establishing a healthy working environment: leadership, communication, trust, diversity/inclusion, learning/growth opportunities, recognition/appreciation, work-life balance, and peer relationships. The inductive section aimed to solicit responses that would provide insight into defining a healthy versus unhealthy working environment, the protective and risk factors for a healthy environment, the programs, policies, practices, and programs that are protective or risk factors for a healthy environment, how the factors regarding a healthy

work environment change depending on the size and type of command, and how healthy versus unhealthy work environments affect the behavior of Sailors and individual and fleet readiness.

D. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS BREAKDOWN

The focus group/interview questions consisted of five sections. Sections one through four consisted of a written background questionnaire and the fifth section consisted of verbal questions asked to the groups and individuals. The first section of the background questionnaire surveyed the subjects' demographics:

- Rank
- Time in Service
- Community (Officer or Enlisted)
- Background (Prior Enlisted or not)
- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Commissioning Source
- Rate/Designator

Table 1 details the responses of the subjects to the demographic questions. Our sample include 30 officers, mostly with five to ten years of service, two thirds of them males, with the surface warfare being the most represented community.

Table 1. Sample Demographic Data

Category	Demographic	Sample Size
Rank	O3	19
	O4	11
Time in Service	0 - 5 Years	2
	5 - 10 Years	17
	10 - 15 Years	9
	15 - 20 years	2
Type	Officer	30
	Enlisted	0
Background	Prior Enlisted	4
	Not Prior Enlisted	26
Age	25-29	15
	30-34	10
	35-39	3
	40+	2
Gender	Male	22
	Female	8
Race	Asain	8
	White	14
	Hispanic	5
	Black	1
	Non-disclosed	2
Comissioning Source	Service Academy	7
	Officer Candidate School	13
	NROTC	10
Rate / Designator	SWO-1110	8
	NFO - 1320	1
	Engineering Duty Officer - 1460	1
	Human Resources Officer - 1200	3
	Diving Officer - 7202	1
	Supply Corps Officer - 3100	4
	SWO - 1160	1
	Submarine Warfare Officer - 1120	1
	Meteorology / Oceanography Officer - 1800	1
	Medical Services Corps - 2300	1
	Other:	8

The second section consisted of four open ended questions in which respondents could write in their own answers. The questions were:

1. What defines a healthy command environment?
2. What defines an unhealthy or toxic command environment?
3. What factors and leadership practices contribute to a healthy work environment?
4. What factors and leadership practices contribute to an unhealthy work environment?

The third section asked subjects to consider their previous working environment experiences. Subjects were asked if their previous command was a sea or shore command and if their overall perception of the environment was positive, negative, or "other." If the subjects chose "other," they could also write a custom response describing their perception of the working environment. Additionally, the third section included a 10-point Likert scale questionnaire in which they ranked the eight themes. The ranking was designed to describe the level of importance each factor had in influencing the health of the subjects' previous working environments. A one on the Likert scale meant that the theme had no importance in relation to the health of the work environment while 10 on the scale meant that the theme significantly impacted the health of the working environment. The eight themes evaluated were leadership, communication, trust, diversity/inclusion, learning/growth opportunities, recognition/appreciation, work-life balance, and peer relationships. Furthermore, subjects could add comments at the end of the Likert scale portion to elaborate on their answers.

The fourth section consisted of the same questions and Likert scale rankings as the third section, but subjects were asked to answer them in relation to their current working environment as opposed to their previous working environments.

The fifth and final section of the focus groups consisted of the researchers verbally asking eight questions followed by a discussion from the subjects. The following eight questions were asked in the focus groups and one-on-one interviews:

1. Is there anything that you would like to expand upon from the background questionnaire?
2. In your experience, what programs, policies, processes, and/or practices contribute to a healthy environment? Please provide examples/ elaborate.
3. In your experience, what programs, policies, processes, and contribute to an unhealthy environment? Please provide examples/ elaborate.
4. How does the environment affect the personal or professional behavior of personnel? If so, which behaviors?
5. In your view, how important is a healthy environment for your readiness? Fleet readiness?
6. From your experience, do the factors that contribute to a healthy environment change depending on whether you are stationed at a sea or shore command? If so, how?
7. From your experience, do the factors that contribute to a healthy environment change depending on the size of the command? If so, how?
8. From your experience, how has your commissioning source influenced your perspective on what constitutes a healthy environment? Why/ why not? Can you elaborate?

E. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from this research included quantitative outputs such as the Likert scale results as well as qualitative outputs such as each respondents' answers and discussions following the open-ended questions regarding healthy and unhealthy working environment themes and factors. The researchers used the quantitative data to test whether respondents concurred with the assumption that the identified eight specific themes significantly impacted the health of working environments. Respondents' ranking of each theme was analyzed to determine what percentage of respondents ranked each theme as important or not important to confirm or deny that the proposed themes were in fact

important in influencing the health of working environments. The responses were then statistically analyzed to compare the differences between sea and shore commands as well as how each of the eight themes compared to the others. Then, the eight themes were compared against the baseline participant rating of sea and shore commands. The researchers used the calculated overall factor average for sea and shore commands. Next the researchers compared the trait average to the standard deviation to determine if any outliers existed. This analysis determined which themes were reported to have the greatest influence on the health of working environments and how the importance of each theme changes depending on the type of command (sea or shore). The researchers then analyzed the responses to the open-ended questions and data from the group discussions analyzed to determine how many respondents mentioned each theme in relation to the health of working environments. The data analysis summarizes the open-ended answers from respondents and includes specific quotes from respondents to offer further context regarding how each theme influences the health of working environments.

Also, the data analysis evaluates themes and factors that were introduced by respondents during the open-ended questions and discussions. These themes and factors were not included in the Likert scale ranking section and therefore have no such accompanying quantitative data. However, the researchers analyzed the number of times these new themes were mentioned and analyzed specific quotes from respondents to understand the importance of each factor in influencing the health of working environments.

Lastly, the researchers examined the open-ended questions' responses focusing on what processes, programs, policies, and practices influence the health of a working environment. The researchers listed all factors that were proposed by respondents and provided context as to how each of these factors relates to the health of working environments. The researchers also compiled the responses regarding what types of behaviors are caused by or correlated with healthy versus unhealthy working environments.

F. SAMPLE SELECTION ISSUES

This section discusses sample selection issues. This study's research sample consisted of 30 Naval Postgraduate School students between the military pay grades of O-3 and O-4. The sample size is thus relatively small and concentrated amongst mid-grade Officers. This sample provides a baseline of data that future researchers can expand upon to create a larger sample size and to capture more demographics such as enlisted personnel, senior ranking officers, and non-student military personnel. Additionally, the researchers understand that there may be self-selection bias in the sample of students. The group that chose to participate may not be equivalent to the students who opted not to participate. To contribute to the study, each participant had to volunteer using their free will. This self-selection allowed the researchers to foster open and honest discussions in which participants felt comfortable discussing their ideas, opinions, and experiences. Also, the researchers noted that when discussing working environments, respondents may have originally been reluctant to discuss certain experiences out of fear of making public negative statements that could negatively impact their ongoing careers. The researchers made all responses as anonymous to mitigate this concern. The higher level of anonymity during this project protected the identities of the respondents and their comments, but also limited our data to be analyzed as we were unable to cross section certain data like race and gender to specific comments made regarding working environments. Instead, researchers used aggregate data compared to the specific comments made anonymously in the data analysis.

G. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The goal of these research methods was to collect accurate and relevant data from Sailors on their ideas, opinions, and experiences regarding the health of working environments in the Navy. The deductive method of testing themes identified through the literature review provided relevant quantitative data that could be statistically analyzed. The open-ended questions offered an inductive research method where respondents could offer their experiences to add new data to the research on healthy working environments. The results from the data collected will provide an understanding of what themes and

factors contribute to a healthy working environment in the Navy, from the perspective of the personnel who have personally experienced and assessed positive and negative working environments during their career. This data can be used by the Navy to implement specific trainings, programs, policies, practices, and procedures that foster protective themes for healthy environments while limiting or removing those factors and themes that put healthy working environments at risk.

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V. DATA ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

The responses from the background questionnaires and focus groups from Chapter IV provided data on what themes and factors create, sustain, and support a healthy working environment as well as how those themes and factors change depending on the type of command (sea vs. shore, large vs. small). Likert scale rankings provided quantitative statistical data to determine what themes are most important to the health of working environments while answers to the open-ended questions provided context regarding why each respondent selected and ranked certain themes and factors as defining characteristics of a healthy or unhealthy working environment. In this chapter, we describe our data analysis, present the main themes recognized in healthy and unhealthy environments, present protective and risk factors as they relate to those themes, and provide contextual quotes and information that embody those themes.

B. QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

As described in Chapter IV, the focus groups and interviews consisted of questions to allow the participants to use their own words to describe their experiences with healthy and unhealthy environments. Participation in the focus group and/or interview was strictly voluntary. Each participant completed a background questionnaire which included a section to rank eight separate themes based upon the level of importance each theme had in influencing the health of working environments. These eight themes were chosen by the researchers based upon findings within the literature review and contribute to a deductive research method. The background questionnaire also included open ended questions where participants could describe their own themes and factors that they believe to affect the health of working environments which contributes to an inductive research method. The focus groups and individual interviews accomplished expanding upon these findings, providing context to the themes and factors identified, and gave an opportunity to discover additional themes and factors through discussion. As designed, the focus groups and interview responses were made to protect all personal identifying information. The open-

ended questions aimed to provide further contextual information of their experience with healthy and unhealthy environments. By allowing sailors to answer anonymously, we interpret that the answers provided are truthful.

For the analysis, we obtained the following sample size (see Table 1 for a complete list of demographic data):

- Total participants: 30
- Total Males: 22
- Total Females: 8
- Rank Range: O-3 to O-4
- Time in Service Range (years): 4–25
- Communities: Surface Warfare, Naval Flight Officer, Submarine Officer, Engineering Duty Officer, Supply Corps, Oceanography, Medical Service Corps, Financial Management Officer (USMC), Special Warfare.

C. OVERARCHING THEMES

This section will display the findings from the deductive research data collected. Using the data discovered from the literature review, the researchers identified eight factors that have been shown to influence a person's perception of healthy and unhealthy working environments. Those themes were leadership, communication, trust, diversity/inclusion, learning/growth opportunities, recognition/appreciation, work-life balance, and peer relationships. As part of the deductive research, respondents were asked to rate each theme's importance using a Likert Scale (1-10). A rating of 8–10 indicated that the participants reported that the factor significantly impacted their perception of the health of a working environment. If given a rating of five to seven, the researchers determined that the factor had a somewhat significant impact on the respondent's perception of the health of a working environment. A rating of 1–4 indicated that the participants reported that the factor did not significantly impact their perception of the health of a working environment.

In the following sections the researchers report on how each theme was rated by respondents, how each theme's rating compares with those of other themes, and how each theme's rating changes depending on whether the respondents were evaluating a sea or a shore command. When ranking themes for sea commands, the average number of participants who ranked a factor as significant was 20.88, and the average factor rating was 8.42. For a shore commands, the average number of participants who ranked a factor as significant was 18, and the average factor rating was 7.92. This data shows that participants reported that the eight themes were considered more significant in influencing the health of a working environment when at a sea command versus a shore command. In the following sections, data on each theme will be analyzed individually and compared to the average ratings for sea and shore commands. The following are the results of the Likert scale rankings as well as additional data supporting those results from open ended questions, focus groups and interviews:

1. Leadership

Figure 1 illustrates that 93% (28/30) of participants indicated that leadership played a significant role in the health of a sea command's environment. The average participant ranking was 8.8 out of 10, which was above the factor rating average. This higher-than-average score suggests that leadership at sea commands has a larger impact than most of the other factors. Regarding shore commands, 53% (16/30) of respondents expressed that leadership significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (see Figure 2). The average participant rating was 7.57 placing it below the factor average, but within one standard deviation (0.91). This change indicates that leadership has less of an impact at a shore command than a sea command. During focus groups, however, participants clarified that the change did not signal leaderships unimportance, but rather participants felt their leaders' impact less, especially at larger commands.

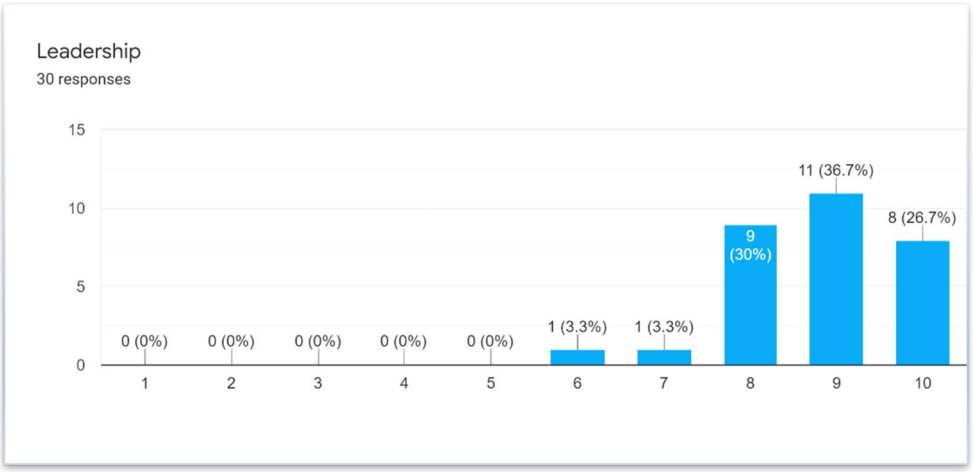

Figure 1. Significance of Leadership at Sea Commands

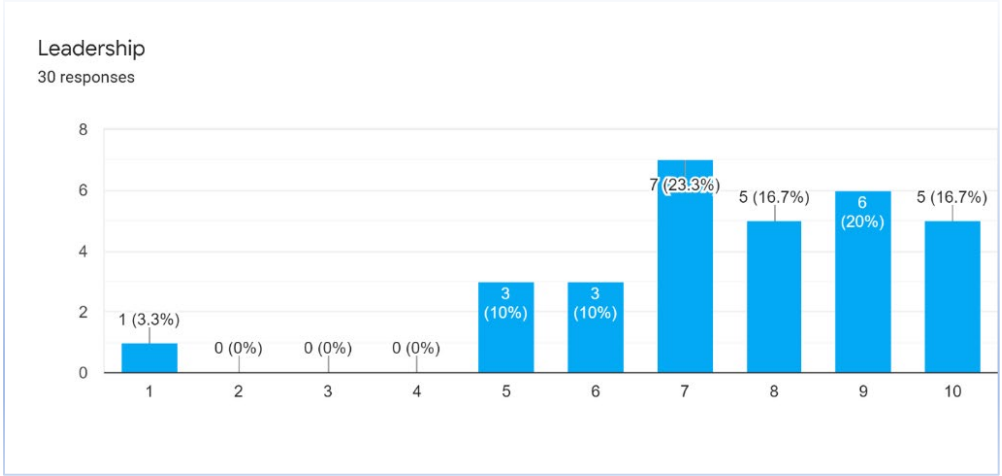

Figure 2. Significance of Leadership at Shore Commands

In the open-ended questions, 100% (30/30) of respondents specifically mentioned leadership as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of leadership arose 91 times over the nine focus groups. During these groups, respondents expressed that a command's leadership needs to be healthy for the rest of the command to be healthy (mentally, physically, emotionally). Others often said leadership was dependent on the person and this person could immediately impact their environment—leaders in healthy environments exhibited consistent behaviors/practices, maintained standardized processes and procedures, and upheld stated policies. Meanwhile,

leaders in unhealthy command environments encouraged pressurized environments which resulted in inconsistent or absent practices, policies, procedures, and processes.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- "An organization in which everyone has clearly defined roles and the commander gives clear intent, instructions, guidance, and orders to help the organization carry out its stated mission."
- "Strong and consistent leadership."
- "Humble sense of service dedicated to the fair treatment of all. The focus is on the mission, not the emotions of its service members. Steadfast, neutral, non-bipartisan application of UCMJ as well as leadership responsibilities based on performance, not personal favoritism."
- "Leadership's willingness to experiment and implement new ideas, especially if those ideas originate at the lower levels of a unit. The best functioning commands are those that truly delegate the structuring of processes down to the lowest levels. This is only possible if there is a fundamental culture of trust in a command, both up and down. Many commanders preach this sentiment, but few (practically none) are actually able and willing to make it work."
- "Levelheaded leadership"

As a result, our research confirms Miller's (2006) as well as Cosier and Dalton's (1983) findings higher levels of perceived healthy leadership at a command leads to healthier behaviors such as increased trust, communication, and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and alcohol abuse.

2. Trust

Figure 3 delineates that 93% (28/30) of participants indicated that trust played a significant role in the health of a sea command's environment. The average participant ranking was 9.13 which was above the factor rating average. In fact, trust received the highest factor average rating for sea commands. Regarding shore commands, 63% (19/30) of respondents expressed that trust significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (refer to Figure 4). Participants gave trust an average rating of 7.97, a ranking that place it above the average rating for shore commands. While the number of participants who ranked trust as significant decreased for shore commands, researchers concluded that trust impacts the health of a command's environment regardless of its sea or shore designation due to its continued above average ratings. The researchers also found that trust results from the healthy implementation of other factors such as communication and leadership. As a result, our research confirms Miller's (2006) research and Covey's (2006) higher levels of perceived trust at a command leads to healthier behaviors such as increased transparency, communication, and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and alcohol abuse.

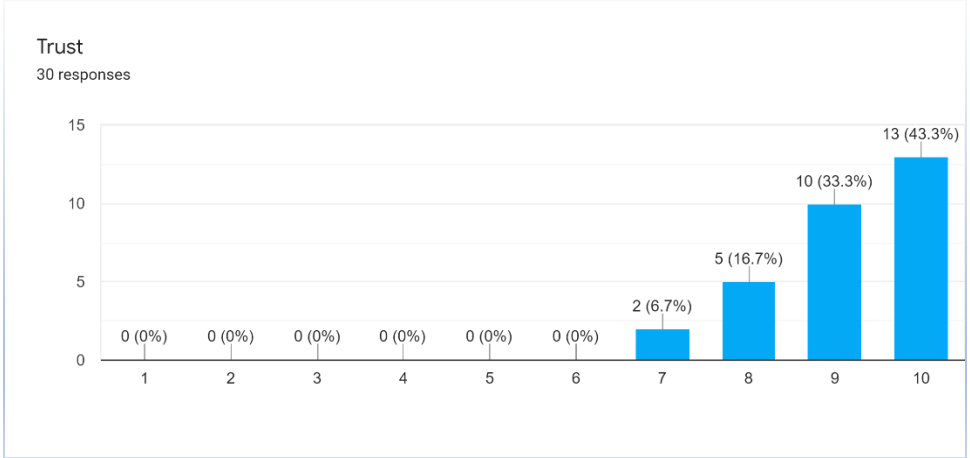

Figure 3. Significance of Trust at Sea Commands

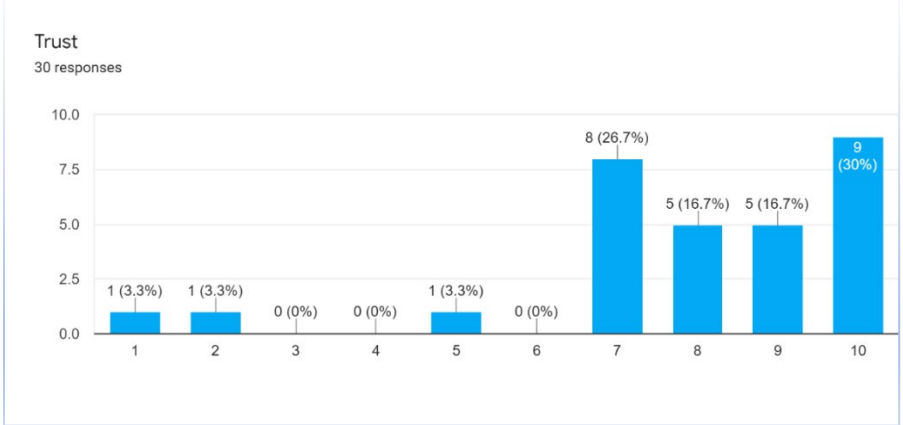

Figure 4. Significance of Trust at Shore Commands

In the open-ended questions, 53% (16/30) of respondents specifically mentioned trust as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of leadership arose 14 times over the nine focus groups. Respondents frequently stated that trust was an integral ingredient for healthy environments. Commands can foster trust by empowering sailors and allowing them autonomy to exercise creative thinking. Participants also signaled that respect and the perception that Sailors were heard factored into trust as well. Respondents expressed those poor practices can jeopardize trust.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses regarding the effect of trust on their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- "It always comes down to Trust. The leaders are empowered with authorities and powers, as they should be, but part of that is that they are entrusted that those leaders will then use that position, power, and authority to further the mission of the command and to ensure the command is treating everyone fairly with consistent application of UCMJ and career advancement opportunities."

- "Trust between leaders and subordinates; Decentralized command; Empowering subordinates to be creative and make decisions."

- "The best functioning commands are those that truly delegate the structuring of processes down to the lowest levels. This is only possible if there is a fundamental culture of trust in a command, both up and down."

Our research confirms Miller's (2006) research and Covey's (2006) higher levels of perceived trust at a command leads to healthier behaviors such as increased transparency, communication, and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and alcohol abuse.

3. Communication

Figure 5 indicates that approximately 90% of respondents (27/30) indicated communication was a significant factor regarding the health of a sea command's environment. The average participant ranking was 8.9 which was above the factor rating average. This higher-than-average score suggests that communication at sea commands may affect a command's environment more so than other factors. Regarding shore commands, 73% (22/30) of respondents expressed that communication significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (see Figure 6). Participants gave communication an average rating of 8.37, which placed it above the average factor rating. While participants felt that communication impacted a sea command's command environment more, its above average factor rating indicates that communication significantly can contribute to the health of a command's environment at sea or on shore. Supporting this indication, communication received the highest factor average rating for shore commands. This decrease did not concur with our focus group findings. During our focus groups, a consistent theme emerged: a factor's importance did not change as a result of a command's sea or shore designation. One participant noted that the shift could result from the ease/lack of constraints communicating between shore commands vice sea commands.

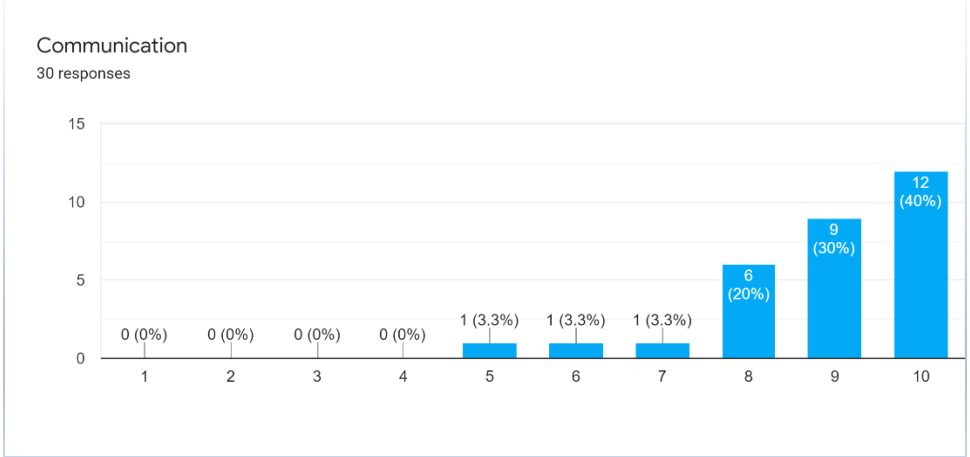

Figure 5. Significance of Communication at Sea Commands

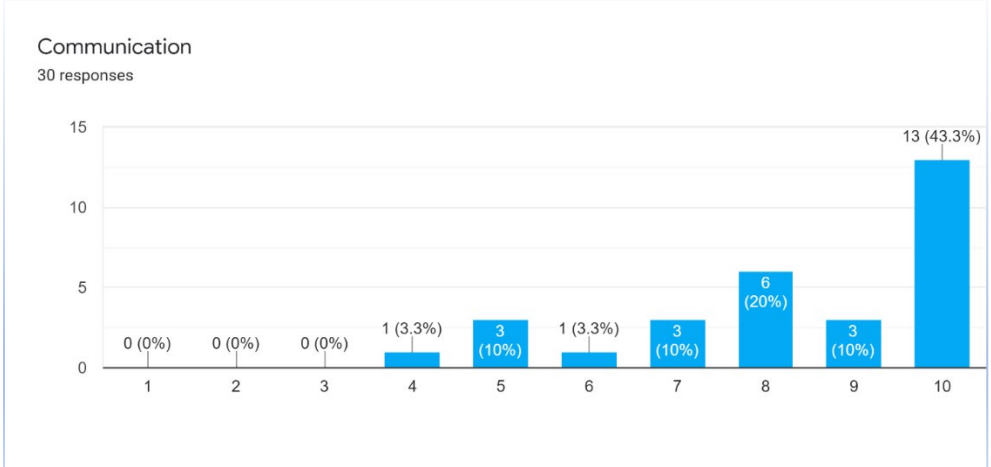

Figure 6. Significance of Communication at Shore Commands

In the open-ended questions, 50% (15/30) of respondents specifically mentioned communication as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of communication arose 24 times over the nine focus groups. Furthermore, they noted that consistent and clear communication was present in healthy command environments. They stated that communication ranges the entire chain of command as well as horizontally across each level of command. This communication demonstrates transparency which fosters trust.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- "A communicative Chain of Command defines a healthy command environment."
- "Single line of communication" and "Open communication (#1)."
- "Good communication to all hands"

Our research confirms Rogers, Marsh, and Ethridge's conclusion that healthy communication at a command leads to an increase in healthier behaviors and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and drug abuse (Rogers, Marsh, & Ethridge, 2004).

4. Work-life Balance

In our data, Figure 7 shows that 60% of respondents (18/30) indicated work-life balance was a significant factor regarding the health of a sea command's environment. The average participant ranking was 7.7 which was below the factor rating average. This lower-than-average score suggests that work-life balance at sea commands may not affect a command's environment as significantly as other factors. Regarding shore commands, 73% (22/30) of respondents expressed that work-life balance significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (refer to Figure 8). Participants attributed an average significance rating of 7 to work-life balance. The slight decrease indicates that work-life balance, while lower than the average, still significantly impacts a Sailors' perception of their command climate. The increase of respondents' number of higher ratings signifies that a Sailor's perceived work-life balance impacts a shore command's environment more than a sea command's environment. This data did not concur with our focus group findings. Our focus groups provided mixed responses alluding to the consensus that work-life balance's significance should remain the same, regardless of it a Sailor was stationed at a sea or shore command. Of note, some participants clarified that while the significance should remain steady, its impact could be felt more keenly at a shore command.

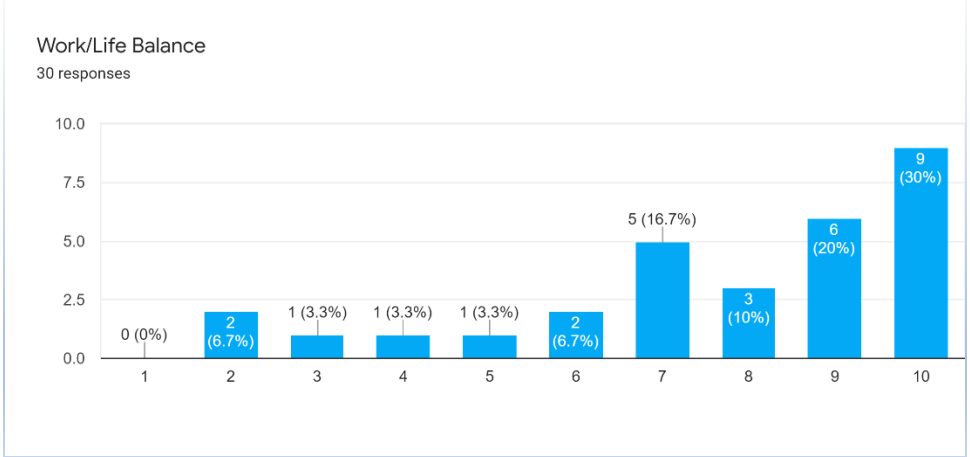

Figure 7. Significance of Work-Life Balance at Sea Commands

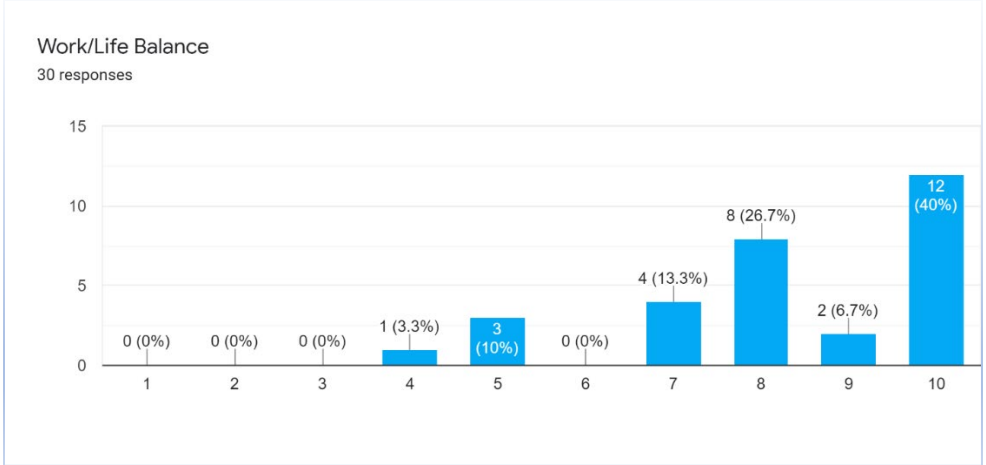

Figure 8. Significance of Work-Life Balance on Command Environments (Shore Commands)

In the open-ended questions, 13% (4/30) of respondents specifically mentioned work-life balance as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of work-life balance arose 17 times over the nine focus groups. Participants linked work-life balance to Sailor behavior. If a command did not maintain a healthy work-life balance, it had/could lead to an increase in destructive behaviors such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or domestic abuse. On the other hand, other respondents expressed that the encouragement of a healthy work-life balance fostered trust and resiliency in their Sailors.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- "Ability for a good work life balance with ship schedule."
- "Encouragement of work-life balance."
- Conversely, "poor work life balance that leads to issues outside of work (Drug and Alcohol, Domestic Abuse, SAPR issues, etc)."
- "The military is already a very hard and demanding career choice...The work place environment affects home life."

Our research confirms Rogers, Marsh, and Ethridge's conclusion that a positive work-life balance at a command leads to an increase in healthier behaviors and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and drug abuse (Rogers, Marsh, & Ethridge, 2004).

5. Learning/Growth Opportunities

We found that 60% of respondents (18/30) indicated that learning or growth opportunities was a significant factor regarding the health of a sea command's environment (see Figure 9). The average participant ranking was 7.7 which was below the factor rating average. This lower-than-average score suggests that learning and growth opportunities at sea commands may not affect a command's environment as much as other factors. Regarding shore commands, 83% (25/30) of respondents expressed those opportunities for growth significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (refer to Figure 10). Participants assigned learning and growth opportunities an average rating of 8.23, which placed it above the average factor rating. This increase in both the average and number of rankings indicates that opportunities for learning and growth impact shore commands more than sea commands, a finding not supported by our focus group responses. When interviewed, participants insisted that a factor's significance should not change between sea and shore commands. One participant remarked that this increase could result from the perception that educational opportunities generally occur during shore tours.

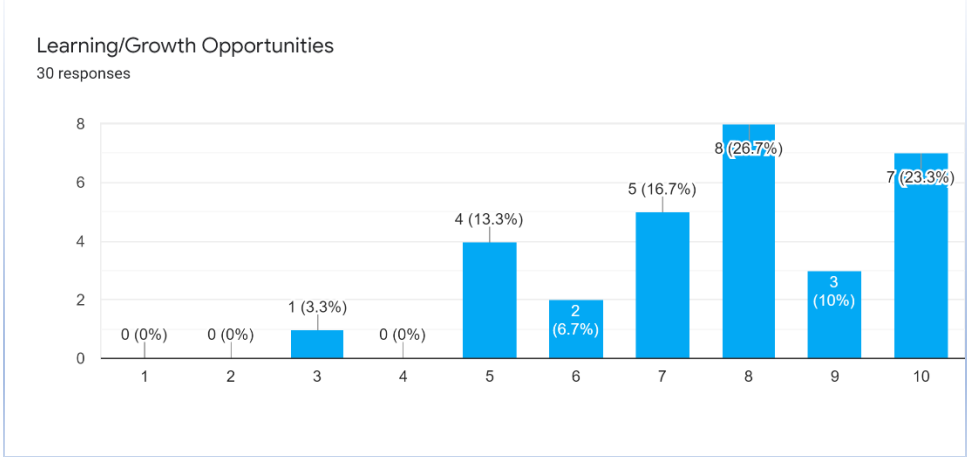

Figure 9. Significance of Learning/Growth Opportunities at Sea Commands

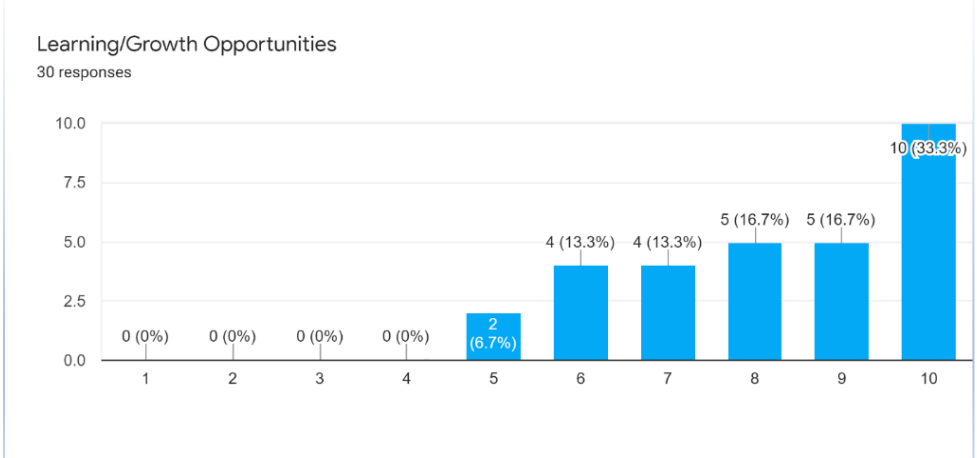

Figure 10. Significance of Learning and Growth Opportunities on Shore Command Environments

In the open-ended questions, 26% (8/30) of respondents specifically mentioned learning opportunities as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of opportunities for learning and growth arose 5 times over the nine focus groups.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- When learning and growth opportunities are done improperly such "shunning or shutting down opportunities to motivated sailors because a command is pursuing a quota for advancements, thus denying very qualified sailors the chance to advance or take on leadership opportunities is JUST as toxic as not providing leadership opportunities because of gender or race."

- "Learning/growth opportunities are better at a smaller command—more focused opportunities"

- "Have more opportunities for advancement and professional development."

Our research confirms Bowen and Ostroff's, Behnke's (2010), and Inderjit's (2004) conclusions that the higher the level of perceived learning and growth opportunities at a command leads to an increase in healthier behaviors and a reduction of destructive behaviors such as work-place deviant behaviors and drug abuse (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004).

6. Peer Relationships

As depicted in Figure 11, about 70% of respondents (21/30) indicated that their relationship with their peers was a significant factor regarding the health of a sea command's environment. The average participant ranking was 8.03, positioning it below the factor rating average. This below average score suggests that peer relationships within sea commands may not affect a command's environment more so than other factors. Regarding shore commands, Figure 12 demonstrates that 70% (21/30) of respondents also expressed that peer relationships significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment. While the number of respondents rating peer relationships as significant remained the same, they rated peer relationships' impact at shore commands as more significant than at sea commands. Participants ascribed peer relationships' an average rating of 8.27 regarding its impact on a shore command's environment. This increase suggests that peer relationship's importance rises at shore commands. Furthermore, these

rankings concur with our focus group findings. Throughout the focus groups, respondents agreed that peer relationships, mentorship, remain important when assessing the health of a command.

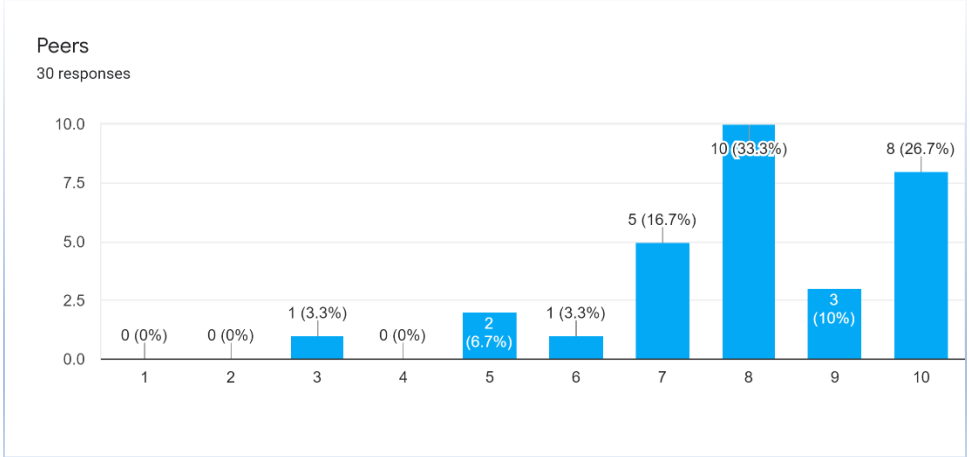

Figure 11. Significance of Peer Relationships at Sea Commands

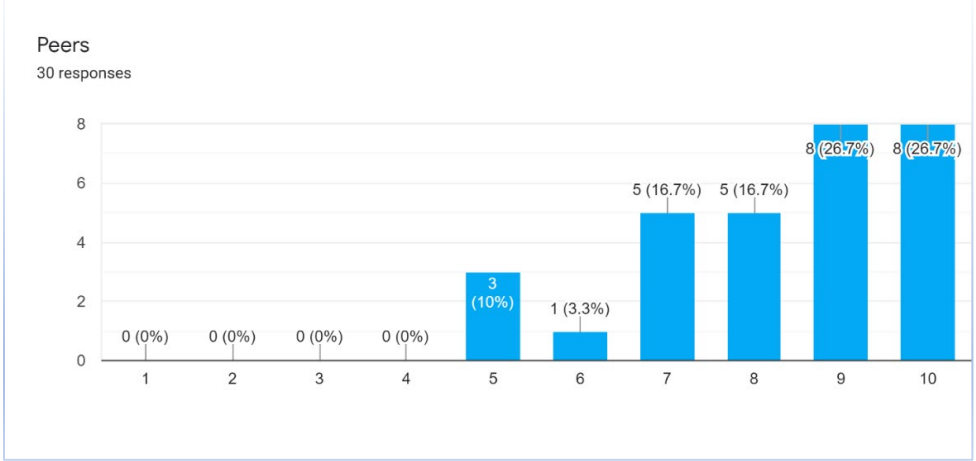

Figure 12. Significance of Peer Relationships on Command Environment (Shore Commands)

In the open-ended questions, 23% (7/30) of respondents specifically mentioned peer relationships as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of their peers arose 12 times over the nine focus groups. Two main themes emerged: peer relationships enhance camaraderie through mentorship and help to

boost resiliency. Mentorship relationships bring resiliency through giving more junior members perspective. Our research found that this camaraderie increases the social cohesion within a command which led to an increase in individual motivation.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (responses are anonymous):

- "Professional and personal relationships are essential for readiness."
- "Over 20 years, can pinpoint the mentors—one of the largest contributing factors to success."
- "Healthy system of two-way mentoring."

Our research confirms Moorman, Blakely, and Nieoff's research that positively perceived peer relationships at a command leads to an increase in healthier personal and professional behaviors such as higher levels of employee initiative, interpersonal helping, personal industry which leads to a strong sense of organizational support. This support improves the perception of a command's environment and indicates a higher likelihood of retention (Moorman, Blakely, and Nieoff, 1998).

7. Recognition/Appreciation

The data in Figure 13 shows that 47% of respondents (14/30) indicated the perception of recognition/appreciation was a significant factor regarding the health of the command's environment. The average participant ranking was 7.47 which was below the factor rating average. This below average score suggests that recognition and appreciation's impact at sea commands may less affect a command's environment than other factors. Regarding shore commands, 30% (9/30) of respondents also expressed that recognition and appreciation significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (refer to Figure 14). Participants assigned recognition and appreciation an average rating of 6.06, which placed it over two standard deviations below the mean. In addition, recognition and appreciation received the lowest average rating of all the shore command factors. This decrease did not concur with our focus group findings. The focus

group participants signaled that recognition and appreciation should continue to impact command environment regardless of whether it is a sea or shore command. Based on respondent contributions, this disparity could be due to the increased options available to Sailors when on shore duty which lessens the impact of recognition and appreciation.

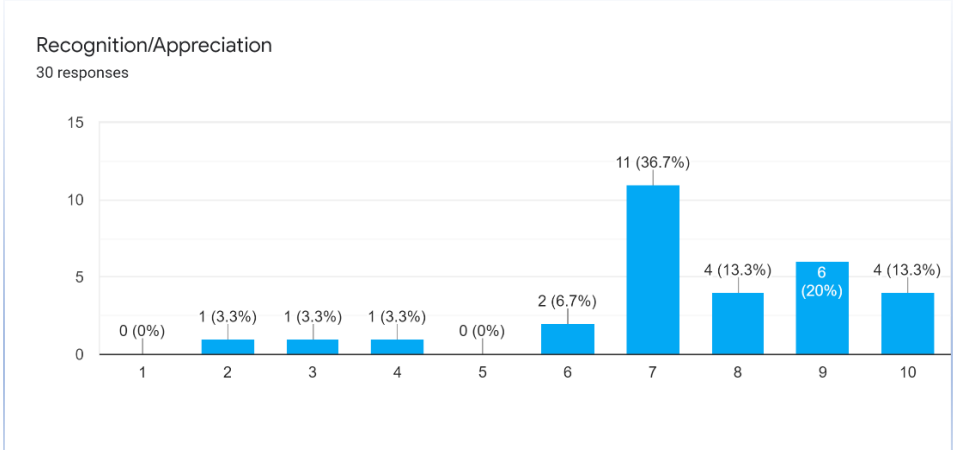

Figure 13. Significance of Recognition/Appreciation Opportunities at Sea Commands

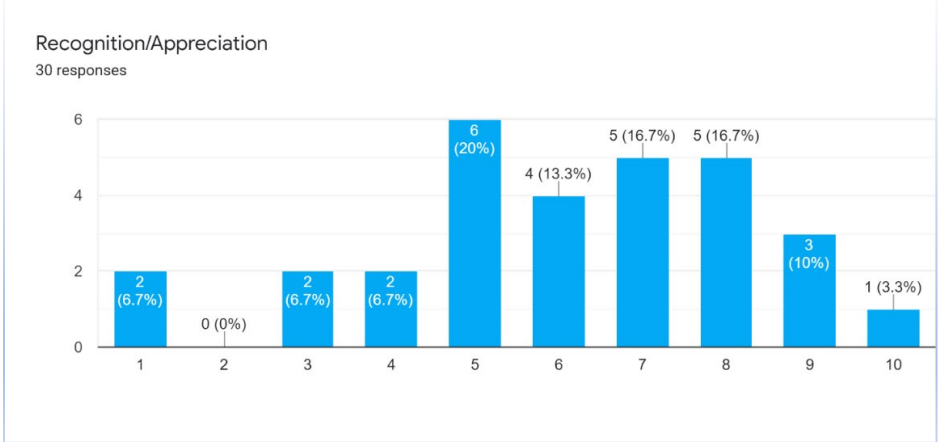

Figure 14. Significance of Recognition and Appreciation on Shore Command Environments

In the open-ended questions, 30% (9/30) of respondents specifically mentioned recognition and appreciation as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's

environment. The topic of Sailor appreciation and recognition arose 16 times over the nine focus groups. Respondents noted that when commands recognized and appreciate their Sailors, the Sailors feel valued and seen increasing trust and morale.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- A healthy command environment contains "a direct correlation between work and reward—recognize the efforts made by the members of the team (show their family and friends that they are valued)."
- A healthy environment holds the "Same performance standards expected, communicated, and rewarded and recognized for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or any other factor."
- A healthy command environment includes the "recognition of subordinates and their success/ideas."
- "Recognition is very important to increase morale of employees."

Our research confirms Moon's (1997) and Inderjit's (2014) research that recognition and appreciation at a command leads to an increase in morale and Sailor motivation. This motivation leads to a subsequent increase healthier personal and professional behaviors such as higher levels of employee initiative, interpersonal helping, personal industry which leads to a strong sense of organizational support. This support due to feeling valued improves the perception of a command's environment and indicates a higher likelihood of retention (Moorman, Blakely, and Nieoff, 1998).

8. Diversity/Inclusion

As Figure 15 illustrates, about 60% of respondents (18/30) indicated diversity and inclusion was a significant factor regarding the health of a sea command's environment. Participants attached an average ranking of 6.4, stationing it below the factor rating average. This below average score suggests that recognition and appreciation's impact at

sea commands may less affect a sea command's environment than other factors. Diversity and inclusion's position as the lowest average rating supports this conclusion. Regarding shore commands, 33% (10/30) of respondents also expressed that inclusion and diversity significantly impacted the health of a shore command's environment (refer to Figure 16). The decrease from sea to shore suggests that diversity and inclusion impact the health of a sea command more than a shore command's health. However, participants assigned diversity and inclusion an average shore command rating of 6.43. While this slight increase does not support the previous conclusion, the consistency of the average indicates that diversity and inclusion's significance towards a command's environment remains constant. Furthermore, diversity/inclusion was the only factor that participants' average rating ranked it as somewhat significant rather than significant. Of note, the researchers found that the size of the command could influence the impact of diversity and inclusion. Shore commands tend to be smaller than sea commands. This change in size means that Sailors at larger commands have a higher likelihood of experiencing diversity and inclusion due to having more command members.

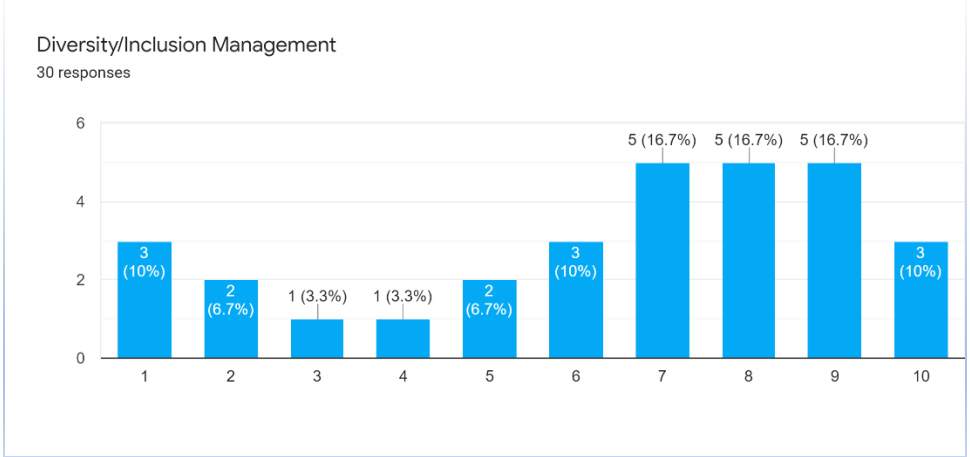

Figure 15. Significance of Diversity and Inclusion at Sea Commands

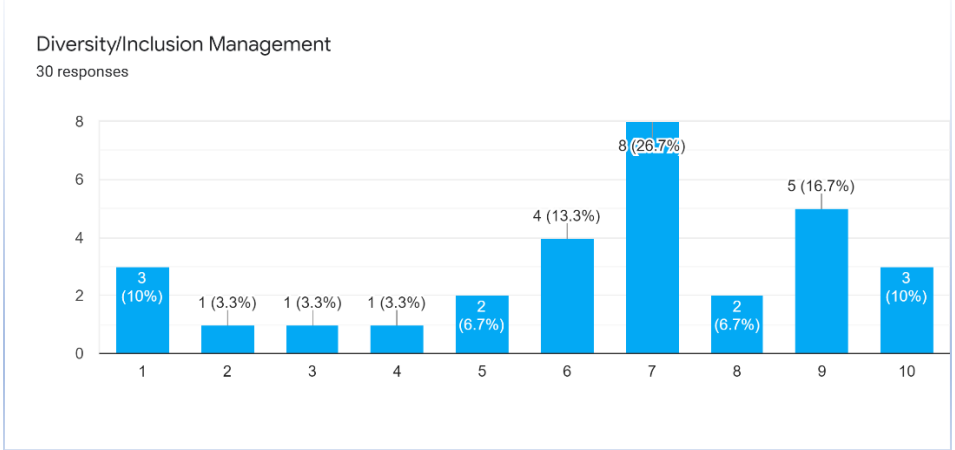

Figure 16. Significance of Diversity/Inclusion on Shore Commands

In the open-ended questions, 17% (5/30) of respondents specifically mentioned diversity and/or inclusion as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. The topic of inclusion and diversity arose 7 times over the nine focus groups. Of all the factors, participants mentioned diversity and inclusion the least. This occurrence confirms the results from the background questionnaire. When asked as to why, respondents noted that while diversity and inclusion matter, what matters more is the completion of the mission. If a person can use their skills to assist in mission accomplishment, their ethnicity or gender does not matter.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all are anonymous):

- "Command environment of inclusion which demands and values diversity of knowledge and perspectives that members of different groups bring and shapes how the mission is accomplished."

- "The answer 'inclusion' ranked at '2' is because the proper application of neutral, strong, consistent leadership through opportunities, advancements, positions, UCMJ issues, etc., takes care of 'inclusion' or 'diversity'. To make THOSE things the focus of a command is off focus! We exist as a Navy NOT as a venue or club to make everyone feel included. We are not Facebook. We are a military organization charged with ultimately

> executing violence on behalf of our nation and loved ones. We set aside our backgrounds and differences and put on a common uniform, with common grooming standards and abide by a common UCMJ, in pursuit of our mission. 'Inclusion' and 'Diversity' should not be our focus as a command or Navy. Our strategic mission should be our focus. We have ships running aground, lost skillsets, countries imploding, and we are ensuring that everyone 'feels' included. As a recent Black, Female LT stated when interviewed: 'When our ship gets attacked, we all bleed red.'"

Our research does not concur with Goty and Gelieau's (2008) findings that an inclusive environment leads to a healthy environment. Instead, we found that while Sailors agree that diversity and inclusion impact command climate, it does not dictate its health. We recommend further research to resolve this inconsistency.

D. INDUCTIVE RESEARCH

This section delineates factors from our inductive research data collected using the data discovered from the focus groups and background questionnaire, the researchers identified two factors that have been shown to influence a person's perception of healthy and unhealthy working environments. Those themes were accountability/fairness and respect. As part of the inductive research, the researchers analyzed how often members referred to a factor as having a significant impact on a command's environment. Further research is recommended to corroborate the researchers' findings. The following are the results of the inductive research as well as additional data supporting those results from open ended questions, focus groups and interviews:

1. Accountability/Fairness

When constructing the background questionnaire and focus group questions, the investigators did not include fairness or accountability as a factor contributing to the health of a command's environment. The researchers determined that fairness and accountability were attributes that fell under a command's practices, policies, programs, and processes.

Over the nine focus groups, however, the topic of accountability or fairness arose in every group. In the open-ended questions, 40% (12/30) of respondents specifically mentioned accountability/fairness as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. Participants indicated that accountability in the form of upholding standards bred healthy environments. This factor enhanced the chain of command's authenticity and fostered trust.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (all quotes are anonymous):

- "Fair, equitable, consistent, rules-based application toward ALL members in regard to opportunities, leadership positions, discipline, instruction, correction. No favoritism based upon race, relationships, or friendships. No advantages toward or biases against any one person or group of people. Same performance standards expected, communicated, and rewarded and recognized regardless of race, ethnicity, or any other factor."

- "Sailor's Creed states: "...I am committed to the excellence and fair treatment of all." Regardless of race, background, gender, etc.—but this goes ALL directions."

- "A command which holds people accountable and doesn't provide special treatment to members who exhibit bad behavior."

These findings confirm Miller's research that accountability and fairness in the sense of job equity (regarding learning and growth opportunities in particular) directly impact the perceived health of a command's environment (Miller, 2006). Also, our findings support Cosier and Dalton's findings that higher levels of accountability and fairness led to a decrease in work-place deviant behavior and increased productivity (Cosier and Dalton, 1983).

2. Respect

When constructing the background questionnaire and focus group questions, the investigators did not include respect as a factor contributing to the health of a command's

environment. The researchers determined that respect was an attribute that fell under a command's leadership practices, policies, programs, and processes.

Over the nine focus groups, however, the topic of respect arose in every group. In the open-ended questions, 60% (18/30) of respondents specifically mentioned respect as an overarching theme for the overall health of a command's environment. According to the participants, all persons (and ranks) should receive equal respect throughout the command. This application of respect led to increased trust and a sense of dignity within the command.

Reinforcing our findings, the following are some responses as to what contributed to their perception of a healthy command environment (responses are anonymous):

- "A command which demands mutual respect. (From the highest to the lowest ranks)"
- "When all ranks and rates respect each other's input. Also, when standards are clearly defined, and everyone is held to the same standard."
- A command is defined as healthy "When all ranks and rates respect each other's input."

These findings confirm Inderjit's research that respect directly impacts the perceived health of a command's environment (Inderjit, 2014). Additionally, our research supports Inderjit's findings that higher levels of respect led to increased morale and increased productivity (p. v).

E. PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY COMMAND ENVIRONMENTS: WHAT POLICIES, PROCESSES, PRACTICES, AND/ OR PROGRAMS MADE YOU PERCEIVE YOUR CLIMATE AS HEALTHY?

When asked what processes, programs, policies, and/or practices, if any, contributed to a Sailor's perception of a healthy command environment, the following themes emerged:

1. Policies

a. Open Door

- Respondents consistently mentioned “open door policies” as a successful way for leadership to engage the command.
- Overall, at commands with true open-door policies, Sailors feel like leadership is genuinely interested in Sailor’s wellbeing and willing to listen to their concerns.
- Accessibility to leadership is an essential part of creating a healthy environment.

b. Autonomy

- Commands that had clear policies towards individual, divisional, and departmental autonomy were healthier.
- The ability to exercise creativity and come up with solutions to problems, without overbearing management oversight, allows subordinates to take ownership of the mission.
- Allowing autonomy, with a clearly communicated mission and effective guidelines, helps to build trust between leadership, management, and Sailor’s.

c. Visibility/Engagement

- Commands where leadership consistently engaged with subordinates, through regular meetings or “walking spaces” daily, were shown to be healthier.
- Like Open Door policies, a policy of engagement or simply being around, demonstrated accessibility, built trust, and enhanced communication up and down the chain of command.

d. Communication

- One of the most common responses when asked about effective policies of a healthy command environment.
- Communication should flow up and down the chain of command and leaders who managed this policy effectively were very highly regarded.
- Subordinates want to feel like their voice is heard and that leadership values their input. Commands that had policies in place to accomplish this were healthier.
- Command goals and mission should be clear throughout the command.

e. Working Hours

- Commands that allowed Sailors to leave when their work or daily goals were accomplished, were indicated to be healthier.
- Enforcing appropriate work hours shows that leaders value the personal time of their Sailors.
- Expectations for working hours should be justified, clear and communicated properly.

2. Processes

a. Awards

- The criteria for awards (regular end of tour and special) varies by command.
- Participants indicated that when a command held a formal and transparent process for all award candidates, the command was generally healthy.
- The process consisted of an application followed by a board comprised of department head level and above members.

- Several respondents indicated that awards were given out too liberally, for insignificant achievements. On the other hand, a smaller number of those that mentioned awards, believed they were not given out enough.

b. Qualification

- Qualification processes in both warfare areas and watches varied across designators and commands.
- Regardless of designation, respondents expressed those healthy commands generally exhibited fair and transparent qualification processes. Transparent meaning that Sailors could review the requirements and understand the roadmap to successfully qualify in their areas of interest.
- Fairness meant that each qualification candidate had similar boards and timelines. In other words, boards did not show favoritism between Sailors.

c. Complaint Policies

- Commands that took complaints (via Inspector General, CMEO, Command Climate Surveys, or otherwise) seriously, were viewed as healthier.
- Addressing complaints quickly and working toward a solution or compromise demonstrated to Sailors that the command cared about their opinions and thoughts, thus creating a healthier work environment.

3. Programs

a. Mentorship

- Mentorship programs were mentioned in almost every focus group, as a response to our P^4 question.
- Commands that executed this program well, created healthier environments and positively impacted the personal and professional behavior of Sailors.

- Allows the command to encourage and train top performers for leadership positions, while helping others to make improvements tailored to their personal & professional goals.

b. Physical Training

- Builds camaraderie and lasting working cohesion, which is essential to creating a healthy environment, according to our respondents.
- Allotting time for people to get to know each other outside of work can build last friendships and trust in leadership.
- Demonstrates that leadership cares about physical and mental health. Sailors are busy and need time to meet the physical requirements of their jobs (PRT).

c. Diversity & Inclusion

- Effective for including Sailors from different backgrounds and making people feel "at home."
- Must be implemented practically, not everyone can or should have their own celebrations, but acknowledging the importance of different cultures at a command is key to a healthy and inclusive environment.

d. Career Development Boards

- Like Mentorship, commands that invested in a CDB program were more effective at assisting Sailors with their professional goals and helping to ensure qualification requirements were met on time.
- Shows that a command is genuinely interested in a Sailors career progression, whether they stay in the military or not.

4. Practices

a. Non-Judicial Punishment & General Accountability

- When implemented fairly and transparently, the practices of holding Sailors accountable was very effective in creating a healthy environment.
- Respondents who believed the consequences for inappropriate actions or rule-breaking were applied adequately, had greater faith in leadership.

b. Weekly Meetings

- Command and Department level leaders who implemented a practice of meeting with Sailors, as a group, weekly, often created a healthier environment.
- Sailors value face time with leaders and this practice built trust between leadership and subordinates.

c. Walking Spaces

- To enforce or support a policy of Visibility & Engagement, many healthy commands practiced "walking spaces."
- In other words, leadership was seen physically in their respective compartments, showing an interest and ownership of them, and even contributing to ship upkeep.

d. Midterm Counseling

- Respondents indicated that when commands took the counseling of its officers seriously, it demonstrated care of wellbeing and fostered trust.
- The command plays a large, active role in an Officers career progression. Those that conducted midterm counseling and valued the practice of it, were overall healthier.

- Leaders who feel like they, themselves, are valued, create a healthier environment consequently.

F. SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS OR SITUATIONS THAT ARISE FROM A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

When asked about behaviors that resulted from healthy environments, respondents indicated that they saw increases in:

- Productivity/efficiency
- Participation
- Qualifications & professional achievement
- Creativity/innovation
- Group cohesion & camaraderie
- Trust in leadership
- Personal readiness
- Command readiness
- Teamwork & inclusion
- Physical & mental health

G. UNHEALTHY COMMAND ENVIRONMENT THEMES: WHAT SPECIFIC FACTORS (POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PRACTICES, INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS), IF ANY, MADE YOU PERCEIVE YOUR CLIMATE AS UNHEALTHY?

In general, commands that respondents said were unhealthy, exhibited the opposite processes, programs, policies, and/or practices, that were identified in Section D. As a result, the following reads very similarly, but from the opposite end of the healthy vice unhealthy spectrum.

When asked about the processes, programs, policies, and/or practices that contributed to the perception of an unhealthy command environment, the following themes emerged:

1. Policies

a. Communication

- Commands that didn't have a communication policy or even purposefully withheld relevant information from Sailors, were unhealthy.
- Sailors begin to question decisions and loose trust in those leaders.

b. Visibility & Engagement

- Sailors who do not regularly, physically, see their leaders, they will lose trust, morale and motivation, believing that the command doesn't actually care.
- Lack of visibility & engagement policy creates the perception of an unhealthy environment that people don't want to be a part of.

c. Working Hours

- Commands identified as unhealthy, often, had working hours that were not proportional to the amount of work that was required for the day. For example, Sailors were forced to stay at work, even if their tasking for the day was complete.
- Expectations for the workday were not clearly defined or delineated.

2. Processes

a. Awards

- Participants noted that when a command approved awards for everyday actions, it degraded the health of the command's environment.

- Inequality in distribution of awards created unhealthy environments by making Sailors feel like leadership was engaging in favoritism.
- Award boards were inconsistent in terms of award criteria and judgement.

b. Qualification

- Regardless of designation, respondents expressed unhealthy commands generally implemented qualification processes that involved favoritism and/or lacked transparency.
- Certain Sailors received preferential treatment when receiving qualification training, depending on their job.

c. Complaint Policy

- A command that did not have a process for handling complaints was evaluated as an unhealthy environment.
- Can create the perception that leaders don't care about or aren't listening to subordinates.

3. Programs

a. Mentorship Programs

- Respondents suggested that mentorship programs could indicate an unhealthy environment if the program was not actively managed.
- Commands that assigned mentors, rather than let Sailors chose their mentors, were not as impactful, said respondents.
- Commands who did not maintain their mentorship program were viewed by participants as inauthentic.

b. Diversity & Inclusion

- SHARP and Equal Opportunity programs that are not supported by leadership indicate that the environment is unhealthy.
- Sailors can feel excluded if the leadership does not demonstrate care for the ethnic and cultural diversity of the command.

4. Practices

a. Transparency & Fairness

- Commands that were perceived as treating people unfairly and provided little transparency on the reasons for this disparity, were consistently indicated as unhealthy.
- Unequal or inconsistent treatment/care of Sailors (favoritism).
- Double standards were a common practice mentioned in our focus groups.

b. Micromanagement

- Shut down of ideas, belittlement, abusive language used by leadership. These practices decreased trust in command and leadership, according to respondents.
- Pressurized environment/constant competition. Fostered a lack of camaraderie.

H. SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS OR SITUATIONS THAT ARISE FROM AN UNHEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

When asked about behaviors that resulted from unhealthy environments, respondents indicated that they saw increases in:

1. Workplace Deviant Behaviors.

- "Gundecking."

- Lower standards.
- Retaliation from leadership or peers.
- Risk for suicidal behavior.

2. Destructive Behaviors Outside of Work.

- Alcohol abuse.
- Domestic behavioral issues.

3. Behaviors Destructive to Fleet Readiness.

- Failures in command & leadership readiness.
- Failures in personnel readiness.
- Attrition of Sailors.

I. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented how command policies, processes, programs, and practices contribute positively or negatively to the command's environment, given the responses in our sample. Furthermore, our research indicates that the nine factors identified work in tandem and can either detract or improve the health of other factors. The symbiotic increase or decrease of these factors determine the health of a command's environment and can lead to an increase in either protective or destructive behaviors. This increase meant that the health of a command's climate is critical to the readiness of its personnel, and by extension, fleet readiness. Our findings indicated that participants felt that while priorities may differ at sea and shore commands, overall, the factors that influence their environment's healthy did not change. Additionally, our research did not suggest that the size of the command changed a work environment's protective or risk factors. Instead, it made their influence felt more acutely (especially if negative). Lastly, the research did not link commissioning source or time in service as a factor to a command environment's health.

Additionally, commonalities among the policies, processes, programs, and practices emerged when thinking in the context of healthy or unhealthy environments. Respondents gave several examples of P^4 factors that lead to health environments and positive personal and professional behavior in Sailors & Marines. Conversely, participants identified other factors that elicit negative or undesirable behaviors and can lead to an overall unhealthy command environment. This suggests, that by properly implementing and managing the policies, processes, programs, and procedures, identified above, which lead to positive behaviors, a command can cultivate a healthy environment.

VI. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

The intent of this thesis was to develop a better understanding on what constitutes a healthy or unhealthy command environment and to help assess the behavioral effects of a command's environment in the fleet. Further, the goal was to gain a better understanding on how these environments emerge by identifying protective and risk factors that influence a command environment. We used data collected from focus groups and interviews questions that were developed based on reviewing prior studies and based on our experience as sailors, to effectively capture the health of a command's environment and any resulting behaviors. Our five-part questionnaire and one section focus group allowed us to capture demographics, sea command factor impact, factors impact shore commands, and open-ended questions addressing the P4 and behaviors as a result of their implementation. Data collected through all sections supported our efforts in answering our research questions. The four main research questions addressed in this thesis are below.

- What defines a healthy vs. unhealthy environment?
- What factors contribute to a healthy/unhealthy environment?
- What programs, policies, processes, and practices are common themes in healthy environments?
- What behaviors result from healthy/unhealthy environments?

The questionnaire and focus group questions presented were designed to allow the participants to answer freely without any environmental pressures typically received when commands "strongly encourage" sailors to complete their Command Climate Surveys. One of the many complications hindering accurate assessments a command environment's health is how leadership communicates with those they are leading. The questionnaire and focus group both gave Sailors a way to voice their opinions and experiences anonymously. While focus groups can result in a reservation of speaking freely due to the private

comments being repeated later, the researchers explained how participants answers from background questionnaire removed this reservation.

B. RESULTS OF COMMAND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

Our findings indicate that while all eight factors examined remained relevant to the health of a command's environment, the significance varied. We found that military officers perceived the factors of communication, leadership, and trust as having the most significant impact upon a command's environment. The factors of peer relationships, work-life balance, and learning/growth opportunities provided mixed results. Our findings indicated that while all three contribute to the health of a command's environment, participants perceive that they could be overshadowed by the first three. Essentially, if a command's leadership was unhealthy then it would reduce the impact of a positive work-life balance factor.

The remaining two factors, recognition/appreciation and diversity/inclusion do not match our predictions. Our findings reveal that participants felt that these two factors had the least amount of impact on command environment. Participants suggested that the military culture plays a role in that all military members volunteered to serve. The gender, race, or ethnicity should not affect mission accomplishment. Similarly, participants implied that recognition/appreciation within a command matters less due to being a volunteer force as well as if he or she felt respected. While we did not initially consider respect as a factor of a command's environment, our research showed that it should be included, and we recommend that future researchers should test this hypothesis. Our research supports Inderjit's research that respect remains a factor of a healthy command environment and any subsequent organizational behaviors (Inderjit, 2014). In addition to respect, our research revealed that the perception of accountability/fairness within a command should count as a factor towards the health of its environment. We recommend that future researchers conduct a deeper analysis to confirm this finding.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expanded Educational Opportunities

Our findings suggest that military leaders could benefit from education regarding organizational behavior. We recommend expanding the existing leadership curriculum at schools built into military leaders' pipelines such as Basic Division Officer Course, The Basic School, Department Head School, Command Afloat pipeline, Senior Enlisted Academy, and Petty Officer Indoctrination. This continual inclusion would allow leaders to not only learn about the protective and risk factors affecting healthy working environments, but also assist them in translating the lessons learned into implementation of effective programs, policies, practices, and processes. Using schools that leaders already attend should help reduce any initiation costs.

2. Deeper Command Environment Analysis

Unfortunately, we were unable to conduct an analysis on perceptions of enlisted members and DON members outside of NPS due to time constraints for approvals. Interviewing both sets of personnel would allow for larger trends to develop as well as to receive more diverse perspectives. Recruiting from other naval bases would allow researcher to reach a broader audience. This method would grant more statistical power and a greater degree of confidence to any findings. Lastly, a deeper command environment analysis would enable future researchers to determine how much, how often, and what topics to include in any expanded educational opportunities from part 1.

Additionally, we recommend that future analysis includes the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) expanded command climate survey to include a section focusing on healthy environment topics such as the protective and risk factors (P4). This additional segment would allow commands to see what areas regarding organizational behavior and command climate need improving. The results from these surveys would provide researchers more data adding a greater degree of confidence to any findings.

D. THESIS CONCLUSION

The relation between the health of a command's environment and specific protective and risk factors is likely a large contributor to personal and professional behaviors exhibited by Sailors. From the qualitative analysis observed from a microcosm of Department of Navy officers to the personal testimonies from the focus groups and our personal experience, the Navy can improve the health of its environments. We found that a command can define the health of its environment using the ten factors listed above. Depending on whether the command finds the factor has a positive or negative effect, this research provides a series of practices, processes, programs, and policies (P4) that leaders can use to improve any issues found. Lastly, our findings support prior research results that the health of a command's environment affects its members behaviors. Negative usage of any of the ten factors contributed to an increase in destructive behaviors. A command's positive usage of the ten factors and P4 resulted in a rise of perceived protective behaviors such as work productivity and collaboration. These behaviors form the final link in command environment circle. Monitoring the health of commands throughout the Navy will continue to remain of the utmost importance. Healthy commands lead to mission readiness and a Navy that is ready to fight wars and deter aggression.

APPENDIX. HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Focus Group/Interview Questions

1. Is there anything that you would like to expand upon from the background questionnaire? As a reminder the background questionnaire covered the definitions of unhealthy/healthy environment, various factors: As a reminder the factors are: Trust, communication, work/life balance, leadership, recognition/appreciation, learning/growth opportunities, peers, and diversity/inclusion.

2. In your experience, what programs, policies, processes, and/or practices contribute to a healthy environment?

   Please provide examples/ elaborate.

3. In your experience, what programs, policies, processes, and contribute to an unhealthy environment?

   Please provide examples/ elaborate.

4. How does the environment affect the personal or professional behavior of personnel? If so, which behaviors? For example, in response to an (un)healthy environment, Sailors exhibit (blank) behaviors or these types of situations start occurring.

5. In your view, how important is a healthy environment for your readiness? Fleet readiness?

6. In your experience, do the factors that contribute to a healthy environment change depending on whether you are stationed at a sea or shore command? If so, how? As a reminder the factors are: Trust, communication, work/life balance, leadership, recognition/appreciation, learning/growth opportunities, peers, and diversity/inclusion or other.

7. In your experience, do the factors that contribute to a healthy environment change depending on the size of the command? If so, how?

8. In your experience, how has your commissioning source influenced your perspective on what constitutes a healthy environment? Why/ why not? Can you elaborate? How has your definition of a healthy environment changed/evolved as you have transitioned from an enlisted service member to a commissioned officer or as you have become more senior?

Focus-Group Background Questionnaire

Section 1

Chosen Alias: _____

1. Rank: _____
2. Time in Navy: _____
3. If Officer, prior-enlisted? Yes/No
4. Age: _____
5. Gender: _____
6. Race/ethnicity: _____
7. Commissioning Source: _____
8. Rate/Designator: _____

Section 2

1. What defines a healthy command environment?
2. What defines an unhealthy or "toxic" command environment?
3. What factors and leadership practices contribute to a healthy work environment?
4. What factors and leadership practices contribute to an unhealthy work environment?

Section 3: Previous Command Climate

Think of the main factors that contributed (positively or negatively) to your previous and current command climates.

1. What type of command was it? (Ship/Shore)
2. Was your overall perception of your **past** command's climate? Positive/ Negative
3. Which of the following factors contributed to your perception stated above?

Assign a ranking (from 1–10) for each factor based on its importance to your perception of command climate. 1 is the least important contributing factor, 10 being the most important.

Factor	**Level of Importance (1-10)**
Leadership	
Trust	
Communication	
Diversity/Inclusion Management	
Learning/Growth Opportunities	
Recognition	
Work/Life Balance	
Peers	
Other	

Section 4: Current Command Climate

Think of the main factors that contributed (positively or negatively) to your previous and current command climates.

1. What type of command is it? (Ship/Shore)
2. What is your overall perception of your **current** command's climate? Positive/Negative

Assign a ranking (from 1–10) for each factor based on its importance to your perception of command climate. 1 is the least important contributing factor, 10 being the most important.

Factor	Level of Importance (1-10)
Leadership	
Trust	
Communication	
Diversity/Inclusion Management	
Learning/Growth Opportunities	
Recognition	
Work/Life Balance	
Peers	
Other	

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