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Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

**MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES**

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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**AUTHOR: Major John M. Snyder**

**AY 2020-21**

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**MMS Mentor: Lieutenant Colonel Craig A. Grant, Doctor of Management (D. M.)**

**Approved: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: 23 April 2021**

**MMS Oral Defense Committee Member: Lieutenant Colonel Anthony C. Johnston**

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## Table of Contents

|                                                                       | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Disclaimer .....                                                      | i    |
| List of Tables .....                                                  | vi   |
| List of Figures .....                                                 | vii  |
| Preface.....                                                          | viii |
| Executive Summary .....                                               | ix   |
| Chapter 1: Introduction .....                                         | 1    |
| Background to the Problem .....                                       | 2    |
| Problem Statement .....                                               | 2    |
| Purpose Statement.....                                                | 3    |
| Significance of the Study .....                                       | 3    |
| Nature of the Study .....                                             | 4    |
| Appropriateness of Research Method .....                              | 4    |
| Instrumentation .....                                                 | 5    |
| Interview Questions .....                                             | 5    |
| Data Collection .....                                                 | 6    |
| Data Analysis .....                                                   | 6    |
| Research Question .....                                               | 6    |
| Central Research Question.....                                        | 7    |
| Sub-research Question .....                                           | 7    |
| Conceptual Framework.....                                             | 7    |
| Definition of Key Terms .....                                         | 8    |
| Assumptions, Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study ..... | 10   |

|                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Assumptions.....                                               | 10 |
| Scope.....                                                     | 11 |
| Limitations .....                                              | 12 |
| Delimitations.....                                             | 13 |
| Summary .....                                                  | 13 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review.....                              | 15 |
| Current Gaps .....                                             | 16 |
| Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation.....                     | 17 |
| Herzberg Two Factor Model.....                                 | 18 |
| Generational Groupings .....                                   | 22 |
| Generation.....                                                | 25 |
| Empowerment and Purpose .....                                  | 25 |
| Challenge Them.....                                            | 26 |
| Technology Impact .....                                        | 27 |
| Collaboration over Teamwork .....                              | 29 |
| Generation Z Place High Importance on Accumulating Skills..... | 29 |
| Herzberg’s Two-Factor Model and Generation Z .....             | 31 |
| Summary .....                                                  | 31 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology .....                                   | 33 |
| Research Method and Design Appropriateness .....               | 34 |
| Selection of the Qualitative Case Study Research Method .....  | 34 |
| Population .....                                               | 35 |
| Sampling .....                                                 | 35 |

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Geographic Location.....                                    | 37 |
| Ethics.....                                                 | 38 |
| Informed Consent.....                                       | 38 |
| Confidentiality .....                                       | 39 |
| Dependability and Trustworthiness .....                     | 40 |
| Data Collection and Instrumentation .....                   | 40 |
| Data Analysis .....                                         | 41 |
| Summary .....                                               | 42 |
| Chapter 4: Data Analysis .....                              | 43 |
| Central Research Question.....                              | 43 |
| Sub-research Question .....                                 | 43 |
| Data Collection .....                                       | 46 |
| Dependability and Trustworthiness .....                     | 47 |
| Interview Structure.....                                    | 48 |
| Saturation .....                                            | 48 |
| Demographic Characteristics .....                           | 48 |
| Data Analysis .....                                         | 50 |
| Major Data Points Received from Research Participants ..... | 51 |
| Theme 1: Monetary Incentives .....                          | 54 |
| Theme 2: Operational Level Decision Making / Oversight..... | 54 |
| Theme 3: Incentives as a Retention Tool.....                | 54 |
| Theme 4: Career Flexibility .....                           | 55 |
| Summary .....                                               | 55 |

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations .....             | 56 |
| Implication of the Findings .....                           | 56 |
| Theme 1: Monetary Incentives .....                          | 58 |
| Theme 2: Operational Level Decision Making / Oversight..... | 58 |
| Theme 3: Incentives as a Retention Tool.....                | 58 |
| Theme 4: Career Flexibility .....                           | 59 |
| Significance of the Findings for Marine Corps Leaders ..... | 59 |
| Interpretation of Findings .....                            | 60 |
| Recommendations .....                                       | 60 |
| Limitations .....                                           | 67 |
| Recommendations for Future Research .....                   | 68 |
| Summary and Conclusion .....                                | 68 |
| End Notes.....                                              | 70 |
| Bibliography .....                                          | 80 |
| Appendix A: Informed Consent.....                           | 87 |
| Appendix B: Interviewer Verbal Consent Record .....         | 89 |
| Appendix C: Interview Questions.....                        | 90 |

## List of Tables

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 1: Literature Review Sources.....                     | 16 |
| Table 2: Interview Participant Service Demographics .....   | 45 |
| Table 3: Interview Participant Education Demographics ..... | 46 |

## List of Figures

|                                                                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Herzberg's Theory of Motivation – Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction Scale ..... | 19 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

## Preface

*When the proper tools are provided, and the employees' motivational needs are met, there will be a positive impact on employee performance and organizational success.<sup>1</sup>*

The average age of members of the United States Marine Corps is the lowest of all the military branches. Over 50% of Marines are under the age of 25. Individuals under the age of 25 fall into the generational group known as Generation Z. The individuals in this cohort, to include those in the Marines Corps, have different needs compared to their leaders who are in the Generation Y and older generational cohorts. Given their unique generational needs, leaders in the Marine Corps must invest in initiatives Generation Z individuals identify as desirable for future employment, specifically mentorship, empathetic leadership, and competitiveness. Some of these issues are new, based on the needs of Generation Z, however, some of them, like a coordinated plan within the Marine Corps to mentor junior enlisted Marines and officers, remains an institutional challenge.

I would like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Craig A. Grant, D.M. for his guidance, help, and support in the production of this thesis. He was an incredible sounding board and mentor throughout the process and guided me onto target multiple times.

Thank you, Sir.

To my wife, Allison, and kids, Riley, and Nolan. Thank you for the time and feedback you gave me while I completed this project. I love you.

## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** Preparing the Marine Corps for Generation Z

**Author:** Major John M. Snyder, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** As outlined in the 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance, the Marine Corps is in the process of redefining its structure and to an extent, its overall mission. This thesis analyzed how the needs of the Generation Z cohort, currently entering the Marine Corps, will impact the actions and decisions of Marine Corps leadership and make recommendations for new initiatives leaders in the Marine Corps should pursue.

**Discussion:** Since the release of the 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance in July 2019, the Marine Corps took appropriate steps to incentivize the youngest generation of Marines; Generation Z. Incentives like career flexibility, through the career intermission program, reinstatement of the lateral move program, and extended maternity leave all provide options for Marines to develop their own career path, which is important to the Generation Z cohort. The incentives program is an essential tool for retention. When evaluating how the Marine Corps should proceed with planning for the future, in terms of education, manpower, and training, leaders in the Marine Corps must consider the specific needs of Generation Z. The incentives must be timely and targeted towards the needs of these Marines. If not, the Marine Corps as an organization will waste time and resources with antiquated incentives that provide no long-term benefit to the Marine Corps and only limited value to Marines. Offering Marines financial incentives near the end of their period of service tempts them to continue serving and increases the likelihood of the Marine Corps retaining the most qualified Marines who cherish and respect our core values. However, we should focus on early investment in Marines, specifically junior enlisted and company grade officers in the Generation Z cohort; who value competition, achievement, and mentorship more than previous generations. This will contribute significantly to the Marine Corps' retention goals, reduce the need for monetary incentives, and produce more proficient Marines with an imbued desire to continue serving.

**Conclusion:** Motivating Marines will always be more effective on an individual basis. Everyone has their own needs and desires. However, scientific research proved that generational characteristics do exist. Leaders at the tactical and operational level must stop relying on what they believe worked in the past and understand the needs of their subordinates and how to motivate them.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Motivation, Achievement, Incentives, Retention, Marine Corps

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

As General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote in MCTP 6-10A, *Sustaining the Transformation*, “Like all previous generations, Marines today are equally as committed to our time-honored values of honor, courage, and commitment. Marines of the 21st century are among the finest we have ever forged; it is every Marine’s duty to sustain that rich legacy.”<sup>2</sup> General Amos’ comments encapsulated the challenge and good fortune of serving in a multi-generational organization like the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps has a rich, evolving legacy, highlighted by the actions of each generation of Marines who previously served. The responsibility for the continuation of that legacy rests on the next generation of Marines and each generation after them. Individuals currently entering the Marine Corps appear to value and appreciate everything the Marine Corps stands for and seem willing to carry on that legacy and do everything in their power to support the constitution of the United States of America and the mission of the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps must accomplish its mission regardless of the needs of each individual or generation filling the ranks. New technologies, wars, the generational differences of parents, financial crises, and other world events all shape a generation’s perception of their reality. Leaders in the Marine Corps must be conscious of generational differences and reinforce the training and capabilities of all personnel to meet the needs of the junior enlisted Marines and company grade officers in the Generation Z cohort who make up a large portion of the Marine Corps.

This posits that the needs of the newest generation of Marines, usually in the cohort known as Generation Z, individuals born between 1995 and 2010, are both similar in some respect and different in others to the generations of Marines who served before them.<sup>3</sup> This thesis also reviewed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, specifically Herzberg’s Two Factor

Model of motivation as a guideline to prioritize motivational needs. Finally, this thesis explored the needs of Generation Z to assess the specific ways in which Headquarter United States Marine Corps and lower-level leaders can engage Marines to meet their motivational requirements.

### **Background to the Problem**

Generation Z, those individuals born between 1995 and 2010 currently comprise about 70 million individuals globally, and that number continues to grow every day.<sup>4</sup> Currently, and over the next decade, these young people will enter the job market and eventually replace the Baby Boomers. Approximately 80% of the workforce are already post-boomer (Generation X, Generation Y / Millennial, or Generation Z), and 20% are already Generation Z.<sup>5</sup> Each generation has unique characteristics which require new methods of motivation and incentives from employers. In the case of this thesis the employer is the United States Marine Corps and tactical level leaders are the managers.

### **Problem Statement**

In recent years the Marine Corps instituted or is in the process of instituting, multiple new incentives such as merit-based reorder, monetary incentives for pilots, and additional maternity leave, to motivate Marines.<sup>6</sup> Despite these new incentives the Marine Corps missed significant driving factors for this generation of Marines. The driving factors for Generation Z includes mentorship, achievement, and competition.<sup>7</sup> Leaders in the Marine Corps must reevaluate the broader incentive plans of the Marine Corps and determine if they meet the needs of Generation Z Marines which will soon make up more than half of its ranks.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the

Generation Z cohort.<sup>8</sup> Using the context of larger motivational theories, within the construct of the United States Marine Corps, this study reviewed the needs of Generation Z Marines to determine what initiatives the Marine Corps should pursue to ensure a highly effective and motivated force. Finally, this thesis also attempted to determine if the Marine Corps should continue to pursue current initiatives focused on motivating and retaining Marines.

### **Significance of the Study**

Marines take great pride in the honors and lineage of the Marine Corps. However, as important as traditions are, the Marine Corps always evolved to support new operating environments and threats. This study focused internally to examine the needs of the newest generation of Marines; Generation Z Marines. To develop the most lethal fighting force leaders in the Marine Corps and other military services must act to develop a greater understanding of service members in the ranks. They must understand who they have in the ranks, why they serve, what motivates them, and their needs. In the era of Force Design 2030, by changing the understanding of what motivates rank and file members of the Marine Corps, leaders can reenergize the force, transform behavior, and fully prepare them for a future fight.

This study explored the nuances of the new cohort of Marines, Generation Z. Members of the Generation Z cohort believe in supporting their leadership and desire mentorship from their seniors, but they also believe that their input should count as a valued member of the unit, and they prefer non-hierarchical structured work places.<sup>9</sup> Finding the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can overcome negative concerns over the Marine Corps' structure and ensure employment of Generation Z Marines in a manner they would like, while supporting the Marine Corps mission.<sup>10</sup>

## **Nature of the Study**

In the conduct of this qualitative case study research, the researcher conducted an analytical review of traits inherent to the Generation Z population. Using the Herzberg Two Factor model of job satisfaction, the researcher applied existing resources leaders have available to motivate Marines born between 1995 and 2010, and through interviews with Manpower Plans and Policy Division (MP), Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), HQMC personnel, explored pending initiatives the Marine Corps currently uses and plans to implement. Finally, the researcher identified initiatives for potential implementation in the United States Marine Corps to ensure a highly motivated and satisfied force, which will ensure mission accomplishment and retention of only the most qualified Marines.

**Appropriateness of Research Method.** This thesis used the qualitative research method with a case study design. The broad nature of the concept explored and the research questions necessitated the qualitative study to get an in-depth understanding of the circumstances surrounding the incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines.<sup>11</sup> The researcher used the case study research design because there was not a specific question which would support the use of historical or grounded theory case studies. Also, the purpose of the study was to explore what motivates Generation Z Marines instead of the reasons they have motivation, therefore, a phenomenological study is inappropriate.<sup>12</sup> The case study methodology was also the most appropriate because the researcher needed to extract information from multiple sources and compile it into final recommendations.<sup>13</sup>

**Instrumentation.** Instrumentation is how the researcher collects information about the research questions. Qualitative research instruments include the researcher as the main instrument.<sup>14</sup> For this case study, the researcher developed seven open-ended interview questions

to gather information from the research participants. Open-ended questions are most useful to get responses from research participants and allow them to truly express themselves.<sup>15</sup> Open ended questions also allow research participants to provide in-depth responses which may lead to follow-on questions from the researcher which may add rigor and value to the study.

**Interview Questions.** The interview questions used in the conduct of this qualitative case study research were:

IQ1: What initiatives has the Marine Corps offered through Manpower and Reserve Affairs, MPP Division over the last two year to appeal to junior enlisted Marines and junior officers?

IQ2: How much interest / use of the incentives has there been? e.g., how many pilots accepted the bonus for continued service in the Marine Corps.

IQ3: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers are currently available for those interested?

IQ4: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers did MPP discontinue in the last two years? Why?

IQ5: What steps does MPP take to evaluate the likely success of the initiatives offered as an incentive for junior enlisted Marines and junior officers prior to implementation?

IQ6: What role do you foresee the Interest/Capability Matching Tool having on long term career analysis of enlisted Marines serving in the Marine Corps?

IQ7: What role do you foresee the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) having on long term career analysis of officers serving in the Marine Corps?

**Data Collection.** For this qualitative case study, the researcher emailed eleven individuals from MP, M&RA, HQMC who had insight into the incentives the Marines Corps

uses to motivate new enlistees and officers. Following confirmation of agreement to participate, the researcher emailed the participants the informed consent. Once the researcher received the signed informed consent forms, he reviewed them for accuracy and completeness. Next, he emailed the seven interview questions to the research participants individually. To ensure confidentiality the researcher opened a folder with sub-folders on his password protected, personal computer where he saved the responses from the research participants. In addition to the responses to the research questions the researcher also stored notes collected from the emails and documents reviewed.<sup>16</sup>

**Data Analysis.** The researcher conducted the research through interviews of six individuals from MP, M&RA, HQMC after they voluntarily agreed to participate in the research study. After collecting the data, the researcher reviewed all the information received and looked for common themes related to incentives and motivation of new Marines who recently volunteered to serve in the Marine Corps. The information received from the research participants may be useful in the Marine Corps' efforts to incentivize and motivate Generation Z Marines. The researcher consolidated and compared the data against research data from the body of knowledge regarding Generation Z before developing recommendations.

### **Research Questions**

Members of the Generation Z population recently began entering the workforce. Limited research exists on what drives them to be more positive members of their organization. Research studies of how Generation Z individuals learned as students in high school and college, their experiences outside of educational settings, and those in the workforce helped to shape the current research study. The research questions below focused the research efforts on Generation Z motivation need, a specific aspect of this large population.

**Central Research Question.** The central research questions of this qualitative case study were:

RQ1: How can senior leaders in the Marine Corps ensure Marines at the tactical level achieve a high state of motivation towards mission accomplishment?

RQ2: How can tactical leaders in the Marine Corps contribute to ensuring Marines maintain a high level of motivation?

**Sub-research Question.** The sub-research question was:

SQ1: What actions are most effective in increasing the motivation of Marines in the Generation Z demographic?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Leaders at all level of the Marine Corps frequently state their superiors failed to provide them with regular counseling throughout their careers but all leaders acknowledge that mentorship is an important aspect of leadership. Arguably, they may explain the gap between what they know and what they do as: lack of time, nobody did it for them, Marines already know, it makes them uncomfortable, it is too touchy feely, or they incorrectly assume younger Marines no longer want or need mentorship. Generation Z Marines refuse to accept those excuses. Mentorship is extremely important to Generation Z and they want regular, meaningful, counselings.<sup>17</sup> They desire systematic feedback on their performance and while they are not in pursuit of a gold star like Millennials, they want to know that their actions made a difference.<sup>18</sup> They thrive on the knowledge and affirmation that their superiors approve of their actions, conduct, and performance. Most Marines appear to have the same consensus on this issue; however, Headquarters United States Marine Corps took no action to address this issue.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David H. Berger, laid out a plan to conduct institutional change in the Marine Corps.<sup>19</sup> His attempt to make Marine Corps wide changes captured the imagination of Generation Z Marines as it supports their need for leaders attuned to their desires for change.<sup>20</sup> Changes at Headquarters Marines Corps that fall short of supporting leaders at the lowest level will fail to address the needs of Generation Z Marines. Senior leaders in the Marine Corps must embrace initiatives that support leaders at the tactical level who generally are in direct contact with Generation Z Marines. In the researcher's experience Generation Z Marines have a lot to offer the Marine Corps but these Marines seek reciprocity from their Marine Corps leaders.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The definitions provided below serve to enable a clearer understanding of the terminology associated with this research.

*Baby Boomers:* born between 1946 and 1964, this generation has for the most part aged out of the Marine Corps, however some continue to serve.<sup>21</sup> For example, the current Commandant of the Marine Corps is a Baby Boomer.

*Boatspace requirement:* the number of first term Marines needed to meet operational requirements in a specific MOS, by fiscal year.<sup>22</sup>

*Cuspers:* individuals born on or near the transition from one generation to the next. They display characteristics of both generations to varying degrees.<sup>23</sup>

*Extrinsic Motivation:* part of Self Determination Theory (SDT), extrinsic motivation is the use of external motivation tools such as pay, awards, and status to incentivize the accomplishment of tasks.<sup>24</sup>

*Generation X*: born between 1965 and 1980.<sup>i,25</sup>

*Generation Y / Millennials*: born between 1981 and 1994.<sup>26</sup>

*Generation Z*: born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>27</sup> The oldest individuals in this cohort in the Marine Corps are about 26 years old and likely Staff Sergeants or Lieutenants while the youngest are about 18 years old and likely privates.

*Generational Archetype*: cyclical archetypes tied to generations and possessing similar traits to a previous generation.<sup>28</sup>

The Hero – characterized by community, affluence, and technology

The Artist – characterized by pluralism, expertise, and due process

The Prophet – characterized by vision, values, and religion

The Nomad – characterized by liberty, survival, and honor

*Generational Cohort*: individuals born in the same period who experienced similar significant life events in their formative years.<sup>29</sup>

*Intrinsic Motivation*: the polar to extrinsic motivation in SDT, intrinsic motivation focuses on the individual's desire to complete the task for their own personal enrichment.<sup>30</sup>

*Joint Enlisted Personnel Evaluation System (JEPES)*: the replacement for the Marine Corps' proficiency and conduct marks, JEPES will be the new process to evaluate Marines for promotion in the ranks of private through corporal.<sup>31</sup> The Marine Corps implemented this system in February 2021.

*Merit-Based Reorder*: also known as Merit-Based Promotion List Reorder (MPLR). Merit-Based Reorder "is the statutory authority granting the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the discretion to authorize officer promotion boards to place officers of particular

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<sup>i</sup> Generational cohort start and end dates will vary throughout this thesis based on the start and end dates used by referenced authors.

merit higher on a regular promotion list. The standard for MPLR is documented, sustained, superior performance, consistently superior to the performance of other officers recommended for promotion.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Assumptions, Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study**

In conducting qualitative research, researchers make many assumptions.<sup>33</sup> The researcher’s upbringing, life experiences, professional experiences, view of the world, and their personal philosophy are the basis for the assumptions they form. This study focused on Generation Z Marines in the Marine Corps and explored if incentives the Marine Corps provides them effectively serves to motivate them and enhance their level of performance.

Generalizing any topic a researcher studies is difficult and often comes with suspicion and scrutiny from peers and others in the field until fully validated and accepted through further research.<sup>34</sup> This is a limitation particularly in qualitative research; however, this type of research provides rich data for analysis and better understanding of the matter under study.<sup>35</sup> The way the researcher collects, analyze, and interpret the data may also be a limitation. It is also important for the researcher to discuss what the research will not do to manage the expectations of the reader and ensure clarity of all actions taken if another researcher attempts to replicate the study.

**Assumptions.** The most significant assumption for this study was that research participants provided accurate and truthful information. A second assumption was that research participants fully understood the incentives offered and the responses to the incentives by Generation Z Marines. It was possible that they could say that they were not aware of the impact on Generation Z Marines or that the responses to the incentives were effective. The third assumption was that the individuals interviewed had a good memory and understanding of the different incentive programs.

Generational studies inherently assume that everyone in the generation, at least to some degree, hold similar overarching characteristics. This is an accepted assumption as it is a generalization of a larger group of individuals and predominantly anticipated to hold true across the cohort. There are numerous factors that could affect the degree to which generalizations of a group hold true, not least of which is a decision to join the Marine Corps, which is only common in a small percentage of the population. Additional effects on the individual could be atypical childhood development, e.g., a grandparent from Generation Y or Baby Boomers who raised a Generation Z individual. Most parents of Generation Z individuals are from Generation X. There is an assumption that data collected from MP, M&RA, HQMC is comprehensive and accurate at the time of collection. If there are additional initiatives not shared by MP, M&RA, HQMC the researcher assumed the staff may believe they are pre-decisional and not sharable.

**Scope.** The scope of the study was a qualitative case study limited to new Generation Z Marine officers and enlisted personnel and the incentives awarded by HQMC to motivate them to want to contribute to the organization. The length of time serving in the Marine Corps as Generation Z Marines did not negatively impact the study nor did the length of time MP, M&RA, HQMC personnel served in their assigned billets. The researcher excluded incentives offered to Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, and Baby Boomers, and Cuspers from this study as well as personnel who previously served at MP, M&RA, HQMC.

The study focused primarily on members of the Generation Z population and members of the Generation Z population serving in the Marine Corps. The researcher also reviewed available research on Millennials and Generation X to identify challenges and proposed changes in workplace trends to better support and accommodate the needs of Generation Z. The scope also included current initiatives published in Marine Corps Administrative Messages

(MARADMINs), the 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance, Marine Corps Orders, and discussions with MP, M&RA, HQMC which resulted in a more focused review of potential solutions beyond initiatives implemented in the past or those ready for implementation by Headquarters United States Marine Corps.

**Limitations.** This study faced eight limitations. First, the researcher could not investigate the problem in greater detail due to the short timeline associated with the Command and Staff College Master of Military Studies combined with additional course requirements. Second, there are few studies on Generation Z in the workforce and even fewer on Generation Z Marines which would provide the most definitive understanding of the problem set and provide the best recommended way ahead. Third, given more time, the researcher would ensure a more in-depth, narrative, study of Generation Z Marines. Fourth, the willingness of research participants to provide truthful information. A fifth limitation was the impact of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to complete all interviews in person without social distancing. A sixth limitation is the limited gender and racial diversity of the research participants. The seventh limitation is the validity of the responses received from research participants depended on the method used in the conduct of the research and their reliability. The openness and honesty of research participants with their response to the interview questions also impacted the validity of the study. The researcher depended on them to be truthful. Since no one had to participate the eighth limitation was the number of individuals who agreed to participate in the interview. They may have personal reasons that discouraged them from participating such as their schedules, fear of participation, or disagreements they may have with the premise of the study or the methodology used.

**Delimitations.** This study relied on current MP, M&RA, HQMC personnel to participate. This study focused on Generation Z Marines and the impact of incentives offered by the Marine Corps to motivate them to want to contribute to the organization and continue to serve. Delimiters determine the parameters of the study. There were no Marines from the Fleet Marine Force participating in this study. This study did not include personnel above the grade of O-5 and no one below the grade of O-3. Another delimiter was the period of time to conduct the study. The researcher had a short timeline in which to conduct the study due to deadlines set by Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University to complete this thesis. This ensured the researcher remained focused and on task to effectively complete the requirements. The type of study was another delimiter. For qualitative case study research, interviews are a significant element of the data collection process and for this research interviews were the only means of exploring the research questions. The type of question the researcher asked the participants was another delimiter. The researcher's academic Mentor for this thesis and the Marine Corps University Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensured the researcher remained committed to the approved research questions. The delimitations set for this study is the focus on Generation Z Marines. Though, focusing on a more developed generation would not produce more lasting recommendations for the Marine Corps, it would inform a more developed understanding of the workforce.

### **Summary**

This study focused on qualitative feedback from professionals who develop manpower initiatives to meet the Commandant's vision and the needs of United States Marines in the Generation Z cohort. The initiatives they enact provide operational level support to the Marine Corps, however, those incentives do not replace tactical level leadership or employment of those

initiatives, in the Fleet Marine Force. This qualitative case study reviewed the needs of Generation Z Marines and assessed the actions of leaders at HQMC to meet their needs for leaders who can motivate and inspire them. Chapter 2 provides information on previous studies in the field of motivation and Generation Z. Chapter 2 also provides the baseline for understanding the actions that motivate people and what the expectations of the Generation Z cohort have for their employers. The researcher combined results from the fields of motivation and Generation Z characteristic and made an assessment of HQMC's initiatives to motivate Generation Z Marines.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the Generation Z cohort; individuals born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>36</sup> Determining the effectiveness of these techniques will inform the Marine Corps' approach to enlistment, retention, discipline, and morale in the ranks. In recent years the Marine Corps initiated several actions to meet the needs of Generation Z Marines. These actions consisted of incentives including bonuses for contract extensions and reenlistments and extended maternity leave, as examples.<sup>37</sup> Despite these new incentives the Marine Corps missed significant driving factors for this generation of Marines. The driving factors for Generation Z includes mentorship, achievement, and competition.<sup>38</sup> This literature review examined research on Generation Z in the workforce, the fundamental principles of Frederick Herzberg's landmark two-factor model of motivation developed in the 1960s, and how it relates to Generation Z individuals.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review, which is a means of informing the reader why the study was important and assist the reader in making comparisons with other research studies and their results and recommendations.<sup>39</sup> The literature review communicates essential elements of the field of study to the reader that will inform his or her understanding of available research on the topic. The literature review also examines the strengths and weaknesses of available literature, makes comparisons, and looks for trends in the existing research related to the research problem.<sup>40</sup> The focus areas for this literature review are motivation in the workplace and Generation Z motivation. This literature review accomplished two objectives: concisely summarized the findings or claims from prior research efforts on the focus areas and made an assessment on the accuracy and completeness of that knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

The researcher conducted research primarily using the Marine Corps University's Gray Research Center. The researcher accessed books, periodicals, and peer reviewed articles using the Marine Corps University's Gray Research Center online database and hard copy collection. Table 1 highlights sources used.

Table 1.

| <i>Resources</i>         | <i>No.</i> |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Periodicals and Reports  | 51         |
| Dissertations and Theses | 17         |
| Books                    | 12         |

### **Current Gaps**

If leaders in organizations provide employees with the proper tools and meet their motivational needs this will positively impact the performance of employees and contribute significantly to the success of the organization.<sup>42</sup> Marines presently serving enjoy the benefits of new Marine Corps initiatives to improve work life balance in the ranks. They also enjoy other new and historic incentives which contribute to making them a more engaged and motivated force. Interestingly, although several studies examined the needs of Generation Z individuals, a review of the literature identified only one study used Herzberg's motivation theory to explore what organizations should do to meet their needs. However, there are no studies that explored the incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines to motivate them. This is a gap that is worthy of exploring. Exploring this gap and identifying potential approaches for organizations, including the Marine Corps, will inform leaders' decision making when implementing initiatives to motivate Generation Z individuals in the workforce.

The significant limiting factor for any application of Herzberg's principles to Generation Z individuals, as well as any other technique to identify their motivations, is their age and length of time in the workforce. Generation Z individuals' age ranges from as young as eleven to mid-

twenties. Most have limited time in their current careers and may not have the breadth of experience in the job market to mentally compare what does and does not work for their motivational needs. This phase of life is known as “Emerging Adulthood,” characterized by identity exploration, instability, and self-focus.<sup>43</sup> Generation Zers are still in the “exploration” phase of their careers which involves learning about the structure and opportunities of the world of work, initially implementing a vocational self-concept, and exploring occupations broadly through a capacity to look around.<sup>44</sup>

### **Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation theory also known as, self-determination theory (SDT), focuses on the different types of incentives people draw on to complete a task. Intrinsic motivation focuses on the individual’s desire to complete the task for their own personal enrichment. Extrinsic motivation is the use of external motivation tools such as pay, awards, and status to incentivize the accomplishment of tasks.<sup>45</sup> This theory became popular following Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan’s work with college students in which college students were either paid or not paid to complete a complex puzzle. The researchers offered subjects time to complete the puzzle and then during a later “free time” offered time to work on the puzzle or not. The individuals not paid, more frequently returned to the puzzle, and enjoyed the time spent trying to decipher the puzzle.<sup>46</sup>

The follow on to the initial intrinsic and extrinsic motivation study, part of self-determination theory, is crowding theory which explores the effects that leadership action has on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In crowding theory intrinsic motivation is either crowded-in by supporting actions from leadership or crowded-out by controlling actions.<sup>47</sup> For example, if an employee takes pride in completing a task (intrinsic motivation) and receives a reward for

completing the task, they are less likely to achieve the same level, or possibly any level, of intrinsic motivation if leaders assign them the same task and their leadership notifies them that this time they will not receive a monetary reward for accomplishment. External reward “crowds out” the intrinsic motivation.<sup>48</sup> Self Determination Theory suggests that individuals require three basic needs:<sup>49</sup>

Autonomy – the need to feel they have control of their lives,

Competence – the need to feel achievement on a task or subject that is important to them,

Connectedness – the need to feel connected to other people or a community.

Employees want autonomy and need to develop competence to achieve it however that is increasingly difficult in a work environment that is extremely controlled, and individual preferences and capabilities are secondary to task accomplishment. Frederick Herzberg developed a similar theory to Ryan and Deci’s based on the personal and interpersonal needs of individuals in the workforce before their 1970s model.

### **Herzberg Two Factor Model**

In the late 1950s Frederick Herzberg and his team conducted a job satisfaction survey of 200 applicants encompassing engineers and accountants from the Pittsburgh area.<sup>50</sup> Each applicant provided as many examples of positive events in their job that they could recall. Then they provided as many examples of negative events in their job that they could recall.<sup>51</sup> From there, Herzberg identified trends in the positive stories which he referred to as motivators and trends in the negative stories that he called hygiene factors. The study had two major outcomes. First, Herzberg concluded that humans have two sets of needs:

(1) lower-level needs as an animal to avoid pain and deprivation

(2) higher-level needs as a human being to grow psychologically.<sup>52</sup>

The second outcome was the factors involved in producing job satisfaction were separate and distinct from the factors that led to job dissatisfaction. Depending on whether job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction was involved, it followed that these two feelings were not the obverse of each other. The opposite of job satisfaction would not be job dissatisfaction but rather no job satisfaction.<sup>53</sup>

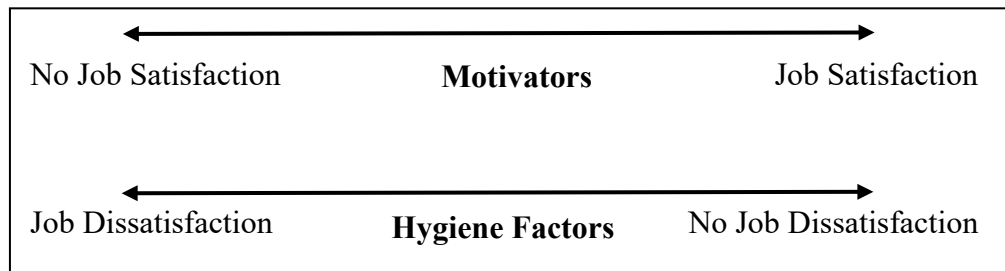


Figure 1<sup>54</sup>

From the applicants' feedback Herzberg created a hierarchy for employee motivation using 16 factors that were either commonly found in the negative stories or commonly found in the positive stories. **Motivators**: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, possibility of growth, and advancement and **hygiene factors**: company policy, supervision-technical, salary, interpersonal relations-supervisor, working conditions, status, job security, and effect on personal life. Status and job security did not have a strong variance in either direction therefore the original study did not significantly review them.<sup>55</sup>

Researchers tested Herzberg's theory in multiple demographics throughout the sixty years since the first publication of this landmark study.<sup>56</sup> Repeatedly, studies proved it still applies to the workforce, albeit with some variances based on the individual study's sample. Schwab's 1970 analysis consisted of 99 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources male supervisors. Schwab's study, not surprisingly due to the relatively short time from Herzberg's study to the Schwab study, presented similar results.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, it established a trend that

continued to present itself regardless of variances in the testing methodology or population demographic; company policy and administration were both strongly in the hygiene factors column. Their study also provided one cautionary note that proved accurate. Their study, like Herzberg's used the story telling methodology to collect data from participants. In other methodologies and population sample there is inconsistency with obtaining the same results as Herzberg.<sup>58</sup> Some studies explain that other researchers testing this theory did not find data and conclusions that support Herzberg's theory when tested using different data collection methods. Researchers had to conduct the study under specific conditions, e.g., middle- and upper-class Americans with similar testing methodologies, such as the narrative method, which is suboptimal when trying to validate a theory of motivation.<sup>59</sup>

A 2007 study compared Baby Boomers, which they identified as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, and Generation X, identified as individuals born between 1961 and 1981 for their study, using a Likert method to test Herzberg's motivating / hygiene factors theory.<sup>60</sup> The study validated Herzberg's study across both generations to varying degrees. As in Herzberg's study, work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and possibility of growth were all identified as requirements for motivation in both generations.<sup>61</sup> However, responsibility and work itself were significantly higher in the Generation X cohort.<sup>62</sup> This affirms the unique characteristics of Generation X and foreshadows the differences with future generations. This may be a reflection of Generation X and their need for more responsibility, or it may be a distinction between the age of the Generation X individuals in comparison to the higher age and time in the workforce of Baby Boomers. Additionally, the study identified compensation, which was a hygiene factor in Herzberg's study, as a motivator.<sup>63</sup> This is likely a reflection of the testing methodology used in the study. The researchers asked

subjects whether or not pay was an important part of job satisfaction. The narrative method of Herzberg's study requested people to provide instances that motivated them, and arguably, it is more difficult to identify a specific point in someone's career where pay drove them to work harder, whereas it is very easy to say pay is important to job selection.

In a 2017 analysis of public managers, using National Administrative Studies Projects data surveyed from 790 public managers in Georgia and Illinois, Hur identified that most of the motivators from Two Factor study continued to support Herzberg's model.<sup>64</sup> In her research she found that advancement, training and career development, and increased responsibility did not motivate leaders. As Hur noted, the population was already in a managerial role, in the public sector where there is a significantly regimented hierarchy therefore it would be unlikely that advancement and increased responsibility would be motivators.<sup>65</sup> This factor reflects advancement standards in the Marine Corps. Additionally, Generation Z individuals consistently include advancement as a motivator.

In addition to testing methodology, the other identified issue in Herzberg's study is the sample population. Herzberg identified the motivators as basic psychological needs, internal factors, and hygiene factors as requirements to avoid pain. The population in Herzberg's study consisted of mostly middle class, white collar workers. In impoverished areas pay is a significant motivator because there is no sense of security associated with life outside of individuals' professions and the baseline of security is a human need which aligns more closely with motivators than the pain avoidance characterized in hygiene factors.<sup>66</sup>

### **Generational Groupings**

Sociologists, who focus on generational studies, group generations based on their birth years, cultural experiences, common lived phenomenology experiences from their formative

years, and the new norms they create that identifies them uniquely.<sup>67</sup> Mannheim first formulated the Generational Cohort Theory in 1952, which defined generational cohorts as individuals born in the same period who experienced similar significant life events in their formative years. The theory then posits that these experiences influence generational groups to similar values, attitudes, and beliefs.<sup>68</sup> Identifying someone from a specific generation and predicting their characteristics should be easy. One simply needs to know their birth year. However, there are multiple challenges that go along with identifying someone based on their generational cohort or characteristics tied to that identity.

The first challenge is to define the generational boundaries. There is no agreed-on year for the beginning or end of generations. For example, depending on the source, Generation X might be individuals born in 1960 or 1965.<sup>69</sup> The concept of “cuspers” partially addressed the blurriness caused by the diverging start (and end) dates for each generation. Cuspers are individuals born on or near the transition from one generation to the next. They display characteristics of both generations to varying degrees.<sup>70</sup> As the generation becomes more developed and influenced by the current environment, the characteristics of the generation become more pronounced.<sup>71</sup>

Second, shared culture is difficult to measure due to its qualitative nature. Typically, sociologists measure culture at the country level or on a specific demographic across multiple countries. Most generational cohort researchers conduct their generational studies in the United States and apply their findings only to American citizens because it is risky to generalize beyond our borders.<sup>72</sup> This is understandable, as there may be subdivisions within each cohort that may not apply in other countries. Critics of generational studies contend that generations consist of unique individuals and that it is impossible to attribute traits and characteristics to an entire

group.<sup>73</sup> Groups are normally not monolithic; they exhibit unique and uncommon variations. Stereotyping and failing to account for the individual characteristics that each person possesses is a byproduct of any broad psychological or sociological study.<sup>74</sup> Generational studies are no different.

Recent studies showed that although stereotyping occurs across the generations, generational studies are an essential part of studying the human condition as they show that values and motivational characteristics do change from one cohort to the next. In a 2010 time-lag study, a researcher evaluated high school seniors' leisure, extrinsic values, intrinsic values, altruistic value, and social reward values in 1976, 1991, and 2006. In the study, the three generations reflected were Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X, born between 1965 and 1981, and Generation Y / Millennials, born between 1982 and 1999.<sup>75</sup> Based on the results of the study, there were clear, identifiable differences in the altruistic, leisure, and extrinsic desires of each cohort.<sup>76</sup> This study validated the theory that generations, in the broad sense, share similar characteristics at least as it related to the values studied in the research.

When evaluating generations and their needs and wants in the work environment the importance the study participants place on those values is not the only consideration. The age of the generation member and their time in the workforce will play a significant factor. For example, two cross-sectional studies found that Millennials (also known as Generation Y) place more importance on gaining status and striving for achievement, but both the researchers acknowledged that this was probably due to career stage rather than generation.<sup>77</sup> Generation Z individuals in the workforce are in their teens to mid-twenties. Most have limited time in their current career field and may not have the breadth of experience in the workforce to correctly identify their motivational needs. This phase of life is known as "Emerging Adulthood"

characterized by identity exploration, instability, and self-focus.<sup>78</sup> Generation Zers in the workforce are still in the “exploration” phase of their careers which involves learning about the structure and opportunities of the world of work, initially implementing a vocational self-concept, and exploring occupations broadly through a capacity to look around.<sup>79</sup>

Although there are already studies of the motivations and values of Generation Z, based on their lack of time in the workforce, and the problems they present, an alternative approach is to study previous generations to predict the behavior of the Generation Z cohort. Strauss and Howe identified four cyclical archetypes tied to generations:<sup>80</sup>

- The Hero – characterized by community, affluence, and technology
- The Artist – characterized by pluralism, expertise, and due process
- The Prophet – characterized by vision, values, and religion
- The Nomad – characterized by liberty, survival, and honor

These archetypes reflect the generations based on the life events that shape that cohort.

According to this theory, Generation Z will follow in line with the “Silent Generation” preceding the Baby Boomers and take up the mantle of the artist archetype who grow up as overprotected children and become sensitive young adults.<sup>81</sup> By this theory, nonconformity, loyalty, and acting as sensitive helpers to the older Hero Generation’s (Millennials’) grand constructs will define Generation Z. Most importantly this archetype illustrates a need for intrinsic work focused on betterment of themselves.<sup>82</sup>

## **Generation Z**

Contemporary rules on career progression and service limitations prevent lifelong service in the military. Presently, three generations predominantly make up the Marine Corps: Generation X, born between 1965 and 1981 Generation Y / Millennials, born between 1982 and

1994; and Generation Z born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>83</sup> New recruits and officer candidates will primarily be members of the Generation Z cohort. They were young, and in some cases, not born during the 2008 financial crisis which, as a corollary, their parents were young and potentially more negatively affected by the downturn. They grew up with smart device readily available at their fingertips. They have easy access to electronics and mostly know of America at war.<sup>84</sup> Unlike their Generation X and Millennial counterparts, who predominantly valued work life balance and extrinsic gratification, Generation Z have different characteristic that make them valued members of the Marine Corps but also require different interactions and leadership methods from previous Generations.<sup>85</sup>

**Empowerment and Purpose.** Generation Z individuals view the most valued and respected leadership qualities as empowerment and courage.<sup>86</sup> Generation Z members are loyal to the leadership of their company or unit however, they are not blindly loyal and they have a strong desire to know that their leaders care about them, their peers, and their organization.<sup>87</sup> Owing to YouTube and the speed of the Internet, this generation believes there is nothing they cannot do. The answers to every question are only a click away in their eyes. Additionally, their Generation X parents instilled in them the idea to disregard traditional paths and try new ideas and answers to problems. Over 70% of Generation Z believe if you want something done right you have to do it yourself.<sup>88</sup> The members of Generation Z cohort want to know their leaders trust them and will give them the power to make decisions and to fail.

Generation Z, does not value monetary gain above everything else; rather, individuals in this generation want work that provides them a purpose.<sup>89</sup> Only 28% of Generation Z stated “money would motivate them to work harder and stay with their employer,” compared to 42% of Millennials.<sup>90</sup> In another study, three quarters of the Generation Z cohort compared to less than

half of other generational cohorts believe that the purpose of work should not be to make money.<sup>91</sup> Having a fulfilling role in a company or unit even from a junior age and rank is the number one priority for individuals in this cohort.<sup>92</sup> Generation Z grew up in a technologically advanced world where they are more technologically savvy than senior members of society. This instilled in them a need and desire to seek more control over their environment and the belief that they can find a solution to all of the issues they will encounter.<sup>93</sup>

**Challenge Them.** Members of Generation Z are the most achievement oriented of all previous generations.<sup>94</sup> Members of this generation want challenges in life and they have a strong desire to succeed. The members of Generation Z want to see specific requirements before they start their training. They want to see an example of a completed, perfect product that is similar to what they are going to have to do. They will improve on it from there. This is not hand holding, they are perfectionists who want to know they are doing it right and do not want to have to come back and ask for additional input or guidance from their leader or manager.<sup>95</sup>

Generation Z grew up in an era where college degrees hold diminishing value. This created a fairly competitive crop of individuals. Nearly 80% of Generation Z individuals believe they will have to work harder than previous generations to succeed and over half plan to work to age 70.<sup>96</sup> Generation Z is not just one of the most hard-working generations, they are one of the most competitive. They believe there are winners and losers in the world and participation trophies are less expected than in the previous generation. Over 70% “of Generation Z individuals stated they are competitive with people doing the same job.”<sup>97</sup>

In a 2018 study comparing Generation Z to Generation X and Y (Millennials), Generation Z, more than the other groups by ten percent stated they would seek out leadership roles for the increased responsibility associated with those roles and the freedom associated with

those roles. In the same study they had the lowest percentage in the mentoring that goes along with leadership roles, confronting strategic challenges, and opportunities to influence the company / organization.<sup>98</sup> This further reinforces their need for a challenge. Their disinterest in mentorship may be a reflection of their confidence in leadership due to their age or may be another representation of their autonomy tied to their use of technology to communicate.

**Technology Impact.** Generation Z is the most technologically savvy generation, frequently described as the first digital native generation.<sup>99</sup> During a 2020 study 48% percent of Generation Z professionals stated they used their personal phones for work matters.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, 90% of the same population reflected they still use email for communications with coworkers.<sup>101</sup> This is significant because 0% of them identified email as the preferred method to communicate with friends.<sup>102</sup> While it is not surprising that Generation Z does not frequently use email to communicate with friends, as it is a less expedient method of communication, the vast preponderance of email use at work even when text messaging is an option for work place communications proves Generation Zers' willingness to conform to business norms. Additionally, 17% of respondents identified inappropriate usage as the most frustrating thing about technology use in the work place, second only to system outages.<sup>103</sup> While Generation Z individuals are technologically savvy, it is not a requirement for them. Only 2% list voice calls as their primary means to communicate with friends – 42% list calls from desk as a way [not primary way] to communicate at work.<sup>104</sup>

Generation Z grew up in a world where everything is customizable because so much of it is electronic, customer-based hardware / software. Generation Z wants to tailor the real world, to include their profession, to their needs, the same way they tailor their apps and smart technology for their needs. Close to 60% of Generation Zers would rather write their own job description,

but this is not a symbol of their entitlement. This speaks to their desire to shape the aspects of the world around them.<sup>105</sup>

Generation Z lives in an echo chamber. Their newsfeeds and their podcasts do not shape their views. Generation Z chooses their feeds and podcasts to conform to what they already believe.<sup>106</sup> It is unlikely that they will easily take on competing views. This further reinforces their competitiveness. It is important to rotate them and give them exposure to multiple leaders, peers, and job responsibilities to expose them to multiple aspects of the unit.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, challenging aspects of new units, military occupational specialty (MOS), and the Marine Corps writ large this will encourage their need for stimulation and challenges.<sup>108</sup>

Advertisements targeted at Generation Z should offer interactivity. Members of Generation Z prefer advertisements that allow them to interact with media or to change the conclusion of the media based on their input.<sup>109</sup> Generation Z respondents, when compared to Millennials and Generation Xers, claimed to be more open to advertisements when they could “vote for something to happen” and “take decisions (about the ending, the story, the characters).”<sup>110</sup>

**Collaboration Over Teamwork.** In a team, a leader focuses the group towards a single common objective. Individual members of the team have their own interests, however each person, ultimately values the end result of achieving the objective over their own individual needs. Collaboration is a considerably more complicated and drawn-out process. In collaboration, each individual values their requirements over the end goal. Most importantly for Generation Z and why they value collaboration over teamwork is that collaboration does not have a leader. It promotes horizontal communication, and the individuals handle every conflict exclusively between the two or three members who have the disagreement.<sup>111</sup> This is not to say

that Generation Z does not like to work together, 80% of Generation Zers would prefer to work with other people on projects vice conducting individual effort assignments.<sup>112</sup>

Generation Z's version of collaboration is unlike Generation X and Generation Y (Millennials). Due to the plethora of "apps" and social media capabilities, instantaneous contact and feedback are not only a capability but an expectation to most of the individuals in this group.<sup>113</sup> In a Nielsen study 83% of Generation Z stated they trust the opinions of their peers the most, not subject matter experts.<sup>114</sup> Generation Z will not gain motivation from leadership standing in front of them and preaching during formations. In team settings, Generation Z would prefer to learn by themselves vice through classroom exercises. Only after they have done their own research and developed a knowledge base of the subject would they want to conduct classroom style discussions on the material.<sup>115</sup>

**Generation Z Places High Importance on Accumulating Skills.** On average Generation Z expects to work for four companies to gain a breadth of experiences throughout their careers.<sup>116</sup> To retain this young population, companies must show that they can provide the necessary broad experiences to individuals in this cohort and give them opportunities to find happiness in a job.<sup>117</sup> This fact does not automatically discount junior Marines departing the Marine Corps after their first tour, which is very common. The economic issues this group witnessed in their lifetime made them less risky in, at least initial, job selections. They desire the stability and opportunities that large companies provide. The overwhelming majority of Generation Z stated they want to work at a large international corporation or midsize company after graduating from college. However, they may quickly leave if they do not feel comfortable with the organization.<sup>118</sup>

Generation Z does not place a lot of value on college. Generation Z individuals know college is expensive and that one in eight college graduates is unemployed and of those employed about half are in jobs that do not require a degree.<sup>119</sup> Additionally, most Generation Zers (nearly 80 percent) have concerns with getting a job at graduation which decreases their desire to go to college if they view follow on employment as unlikely.<sup>120</sup> Generation Z wants to develop their own identity in the work place. Over 60% attend with the purpose of earning a specific degree and in a lot of cases choose colleges that will allow them to pursue their degree at an expedited pace.<sup>121</sup> Applied learning makes learning more enjoyable for Generation Z.<sup>122</sup> During their post high school years they want to pick up as many skills as possible that they can carry into the job market later on.<sup>123</sup> Generation Z prefers institutions that use phrases like “hands-on learning” and “real-world experience” over “premier institution.”<sup>124</sup>

The organizations that will retain Generation Z members will allow them to develop themselves in educational settings. They will stay with organization where they can achieve self-reliance and self-educate in fields that stimulate their interests.<sup>125</sup> Predisposed to learning, they are active researchers and are quick to provide their decision or input based on that research and expect their input to be a valued contribution to planning.<sup>126</sup> Over 70% “of Generation Zers find motivation through achievement, especially in terms of knowing they could gain credit towards the next milestone or an opportunity for advancement.”<sup>127</sup> They do not need participation trophies but gold stars for accomplishments is something they value.<sup>128</sup>

### **Herzberg’s Two-Factor Model and Generation Z**

The researcher found only one study which involved the usage of Herzberg’s theory on Generation Z and it reflected similar results to Herzberg’s original study. In Baldonado’s 2018 study, Generation Z participants identified responsibility, achievement, work itself, growth, and

advancement, five of Herzberg's original six motivators as their highest priority in future professions.<sup>129</sup> The study did not identify recognition as a motivator for Generation Z. This is likely due to their need for achievement and advancement.<sup>130</sup> They likely view the advancement associated with achievement as meeting their need for recognition. Conversely, if it lacks the opportunity for tangible changes to their career as a result of their achievements that could have significantly negative consequences for their motivation.

### **Summary**

This chapter identified the framework for how people get motivated to perform at a high level in the workforce. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation provide the foundation for the two methods to motivate individuals and the benefits and negatives of each. The Herzberg Two Factor Model received specific consideration as a means to achieve both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation through Herzberg's concept of motivation and hygiene factors. This chapter analyzed generational cohort theory and identified a relevant need to evaluate Generation Z as a separate group of individuals with different requirements disparate from members of previous generations serving in the Marine Corps. The chapter also discussed the characteristics and motivational needs of Generation Z framed with the understanding that they are young and immature in the workforce. Chapter 3 outlines the research method for the study. In Chapter 3 the researcher also discusses the design appropriateness with attention given to studying the problem using the research questions. Finally, Chapter 3 provides details on the population, sampling, geographic location, ethics, informed consent, confidentiality, dependability and trustworthiness, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the Generation Z cohort; individuals born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>131</sup> Determining the effectiveness of these techniques will inform the Marine Corps' approach to enlistment, retention, discipline, and morale in the ranks. In recent years the Marine Corps initiated several actions to meet the needs of Generation Z Marines. These actions consisted of incentives including bonuses for contract extensions and reenlistments and extended maternity leave, as examples.<sup>132</sup> Despite these new incentives the Marine Corps missed significant driving factors for this generation of Marines. The driving factors for Generation Z includes mentorship, achievement, and competition.<sup>133</sup> Chapter 3 outlines the research method for the study. In Chapter 3 the researcher also discusses the design appropriateness with attention given to studying the problem using the research questions. Additionally, Chapter 3 provides details on the population, sampling, geographic location, ethics, informed consent, confidentiality, dependability and trustworthiness, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis.

The researcher conducted the research through interviews of six individuals from MP, M&RA, HQMC after they voluntarily agreed to participate in the research study. After collecting the data, the researcher reviewed the responses received and looked for common themes related to incentives and motivation of Marines who recently joined the Marine Corps. The researcher consolidated and compared the data against research on Generation Z workplace needs as well as against the 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance before developing recommendations.

## **Research Method and Design Appropriateness**

This thesis used the qualitative research method with a case study design. The broad nature of the concept explored, and the research questions necessitated the qualitative study to get an in-depth understanding of the circumstances surrounding the incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines.<sup>134</sup> For qualitative research, the researcher forms a research question which he or she uses to guide the research rather than develop a hypothesis used in quantitative research.<sup>135</sup> A hypothesis makes a prediction or assumption about why things happen. Researchers use quantitative research to test a hypothesis while qualitative research helps the researcher to develop a theory.<sup>136</sup> For this qualitative research the researcher's focus was on the specific actions leaders in the Marine Corps can take to motivate Marines. A hypothesis would not answer the research question, it would predict the reason and conduct research which would prove or disprove it.

The researcher used the case study research design because at the beginning of the research there was not a specific question which would support the use of historical or grounded theory case studies. Also, the purpose of the study was to explore what motivates Generation Z Marines instead of the reasons they have motivation which would make a phenomenological study appropriate.<sup>137</sup> The case study methodology was also the most appropriate because the researcher needed to extract information from multiple sources and compile it into final recommendations.<sup>138</sup>

## **Selection of the Qualitative Case Study Research Method**

There are many ways to conduct qualitative case study research. Researchers study individuals, programs, or events in-depth to learn about them and make recommendations for improvement, change, or even discontinuation of certain procedures or processes.<sup>139</sup>

In case study research the researcher visits the location where the individual, program, event, process, or group of people are and inserts himself or herself in the midst of them to learn more about the things they do and why they do it as a means of gaining a full understanding of the case.<sup>140</sup> The researcher serves as the conduit for transferring and receiving information to and from participants being careful to remain unbiased during the process to include data collection, analysis, and recommendation.<sup>141</sup> The researcher selected the case study research method to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of Marine Corps incentives and their alignment with the motivation needs of Generation Z Marines.

## **Population**

Motivating Generation Z Marines to succeed in the Marine Corps is an important undertaking to ensure the continued success of the Marine Corps in executing its mission. To better understanding this challenge the researcher conducted a detailed study to gain knowledge of current initiatives, proposed actions, and the outcome of past policies used to incentivize Marines. A qualitative research method provided a more detailed understanding of the challenges than a quantitative analysis would provide. A quantitative research method would not be sufficient since that type of study generalizes about certain populations.

The current study queried members of Manpower Plans, Programs, and Budget (MPP), within Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), because of their role in instituting long-term programs to better utilize, and respond to, the needs of Marines, their families, and the civilians employed by the Marine Corps. The study also queried members of Manpower Analysis Branch (MPA), also within M&RA, due to their role in developing long term studies on the effectiveness of MPP developed initiatives. M&RA represent one of seven, deputy commandant level, staffs within Headquarters United States Marine Corps. Their mission is to attract, develop, retain, and

support the Marines, families, and civilian workforce supporting the Marine Corps mission.<sup>142</sup>

Leaders within M&RA implement the policies and decisions, directed by the Commandant, related to force development and implementation of Human Resources Development Process (HRDP) initiatives.<sup>143</sup>

## **Sampling**

In sampling, the researcher selects research participants. For the current study the researcher used the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling can be useful in research that is exploratory in nature like the current research study.<sup>144</sup>

When the purpose of the qualitative research is to learn more about a phenomenon the researcher purposefully selects participants with detailed information and strong communication skills to discuss the matter with the researcher in an interview.<sup>145</sup>

The researcher initially emailed the MP leadership requesting the names of individuals who could best answer the interview questions. MP leadership provided the names of eleven individuals who would be the most appropriate individuals to answer the questions. Of the eleven individuals the researcher emailed, six agreed to participate. All individuals participating in the study had at least nine years in the Marine Corps and at least two years in their respective section of MP. The participants' military ranks ranged from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel. Following confirmation of agreement to participate, the researcher emailed the informed consent form to the six individuals to complete. Once the researcher received the completed informed consent and reviewed them for completeness and accuracy, he was ready to proceed with data collection. The researcher then emailed the following interview questions to the participants:

IQ1: What initiatives has the Marine Corps offered through Manpower and Reserve Affairs, MPP Division over the last two year to appeal to junior enlisted Marines and junior officers?

IQ2: How much interest / use of the incentives has there been? e.g., how many pilots have taken the bonus to stay in the Marine Corps.

IQ3: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers are currently available for those interested?

IQ4: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers did MPP discontinue in the last two years? Why?

IQ5: What steps does MPP take to evaluate the likely success of the initiatives offered as an incentive for junior enlisted Marines and junior officers prior to implementation?

IQ6: What role do you foresee the interest/capability matching tool playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?

IQ7: What role do you foresee the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?

### **Geographic Location**

Although it is not always possible the best method to conduct qualitative research interview is in person but virtual interviews more flexibility especially in times of pandemics and other logistical challenges.<sup>146</sup> The researcher, and all participants in the study, served aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico. All participants are part of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), Headquarters United States Marine Corps (HQMC), located in the James Wesley Marsh Center, Building 3280. Despite the geographic proximity of the researcher and research participants, email was the preferred method for conduct of the interviews due to the

occupational requirements of the participants and ability to accurately collect information from those involved. Email, as the primary correspondence, also allowed the researcher to better assess the answers provided in the study and send follow up emails, if there were any follow up questions, to the answers provided. The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) which caused the worldwide pandemic starting in February 2020 was also a challenge to the conduct of face-to-face interviews. The researcher and research participants had to maintain strict social distancing protocol implemented all across the United States, State of Virginia, Marine Corps Base Quantico, and Marine Corps University.

### **Ethics**

Researchers have a professional responsibility to ensure any research they do is ethical.<sup>147</sup>

In the conduct of the current research study the researcher ensured to provide research participants detailed information about the research. The researcher ensured research participants understood that any data they provided would be confidential. He specifically informed them that nobody within Marine Corps University, the Marine Corps, or any other entity would receive any of the data they provided for this research. The researcher instructed the research participants to not discuss the interview questions or the responses they provided with anyone. Only the researcher knows the name of the six individuals who agreed to participate in the research study. The researcher ensured the safeguarding of all data and the names of research participants by storing all information on a personal computer accessible only to him. The researcher did not share the data or the names of the research participants with his Mentor. The researcher did not have assistance from a research assistant or anyone.

## **Informed Consent**

The informed consent communicates to the reader that the researcher fully informed the research participants of their rights with respect to the study and that they can choose to discontinue participating at any time they choose for any reason.<sup>148</sup> In essence they can withdraw their consent at any time. The researcher provided each participant an informed consent form, for them to complete, prior to the start of their interviews. The informed consent form detailed the nature and scope of the study, as well as the researcher's safeguarding procedures. Also, the researcher informed them that there would be no direct quotes from participants without prior consent.

Appendix A is the informed consent form provided to research participants. The Informed Consent form provided guidance on confidentiality, the rights of the participant, as well as a pathway, through the USMC Human Research Protection Program, to address any concerns to research participants' rights. The researcher maintained electronic consent records for each participant. One key element of the informed consent was it made research participants aware that they could decline to continue participation in the research at any time if they felt uncomfortable or were unwilling to proceed.

The researcher ensured research participants had the contact information for Miss Kathleen Kuehn ([kathleen.kuehn@usmcu.edu](mailto:kathleen.kuehn@usmcu.edu)) Director of Institutional Research, Assessments, and Planning, from the Marine Corps University Institutional Review Board and his Mentor Lieutenant Colonel Craig Grant ([craig.grant@usmcu.edu](mailto:craig.grant@usmcu.edu)) Military Faculty, Command and Staff College if they had any concerns about the nature, scope and conduct of this research study. The

researcher also made it clear to research participants that they would receive no compensation for participating in the research study.

### **Confidentiality**

In social science research, researchers have many ideas about research they wish to conduct but the research is not always possible due to concerns of confidentiality which may restrict or prohibit the research. Researchers have a professional and ethical responsibility to ensure the protection of research participants to ensure protection of their privacy.<sup>149</sup> Due to the low number of Marines within the MPP and MPA branches, the researcher maximized all efforts to ensure confidentiality among research participants. To increase confidentiality, there was no divulgence of billets, ranks of participants, or answers to questions, which would identify their specific focus in MP Division. Prior to the study, the Director of MPP provided the list of the available population via email. Following that initial email, the researcher conducted all coordination singularly between individual participants and the researcher. The researcher did not share responses with other participants. Following the study, the researcher saved the emails to his personal computer, accessible only to him using his personal password.

### **Dependability and Trustworthiness**

The researcher fully committed to personally ensuring there were no personal biases, impropriety, or false information in the conduct of the interviews involved in this research study. The researcher developed a plan to conduct the interviews and to ensure integrity and proper record keeping. Dependability and trustworthiness also involved open-ended interview questions that were clear and contributed directly to the research study without any form of ambiguity or misinterpretation. Dependability and trustworthiness ensured research participants were comfortable in their roles and not feel threatened or coerced. The participants were in no way

intimidated or threatened in the interview. Conducting the interviews using email also allowed research participants to freely express themselves and provide answers to the research questions without fear, or any form of pressure to respond.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Researchers have professional responsibility to respect and honor the personal time of research participants if he or she wants to ensure he or she collects valid data and may even receive useless data from research participants if he or she is not prepared.<sup>150</sup> Case study research itself requires the researcher to completely insert himself or herself in the data collection process to guard against mistakes or errors.<sup>151</sup> For this qualitative case study research study, the eligible population consisted of 11 individuals assigned to Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA). The researcher collected data from a purposeful sample of six participants who volunteered to participate in this research study.

Research participants received the highest possible degree of confidentiality during the interview process. All email correspondence transmitted directly between the researcher and individual participants. The researcher maintained the integrity of the responses received and ensured no sharing of responses received from each research participants. The researcher ensured no violations of participant rights, detailed in the informed consent form, and there were no changes to the scope or purpose of the study after they agreed to participate. The researcher developed the interview questions for the study based on over ten years of experience as a Marine Officer and three years in the manpower field. At the conclusion of the study, the researchers saved the participants' emails on the researcher's personal, password protected computer. Once the researcher collected the data, he transcribed the information to Microsoft

Word and saved it on his personal computer where he organized it and queried it for common themes.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative research instruments include the researcher as the main instrument.<sup>152</sup> For this case study, the researcher developed seven open-ended interview questions to gather information from research participants. Open-ended questions are most useful to get responses from research participants and allow them to truly express themselves.<sup>153</sup> The researcher reviewed participant responses for consistency and common themes. The researcher then reviewed the information and made broader inferences about MP's initiatives and knowledge about Generation Z to evaluate the likely effectiveness of manpower plans.

### **Summary**

The qualitative nature of this study provided an in depth understanding of the problem at hand, motivating Generation Z. Coordination with MP was essential to accurately identify the initiatives and underlying objectives of Headquarters United States Marine Corps, and by extension the Commandant as it relates to Marine Corps manpower. For this case study, the researcher developed seven open-ended interview questions to gather information from research participants. Open-ended questions are most useful to get responses from research participants and allow them to truly express themselves.<sup>154</sup> Research participants' responses, specifically through narrative, open-ended questions, provided the most informed responses to Marine Corps manpower plans for junior enlisted Marines and officers based on their extensive knowledge of the mission set. Chapter 4 provides the analysis of the data received from research participants and their feedback and will identify common themes identified throughout the research which provide the foundation for future recommendations.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data Analysis**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the Generation Z cohort; individuals born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>155</sup> Determining the effectiveness of these techniques will inform the Marine Corps' approach to enlistment, retention, discipline, and morale in the ranks. In recent years the Marine Corps initiated several actions to meet the needs of Generation Z Marines. These actions consisted of incentives including bonuses for contract extensions, reenlistments, and extended maternity leave, as examples.<sup>156</sup> Despite these new incentives the Marine Corps missed significant driving factors for this generation of Marines. The driving factors for Generation Z includes mentorship, achievement, and competition.<sup>157</sup> Chapter 4 addresses feedback from professionals who developed manpower initiatives to meet the Commandant's vision and needs of Marines. This thesis used the qualitative case study research method to explore and answer the following research questions:

**Central Research Question. The central research questions of this qualitative case study were:**

RQ1: How can senior leaders in the Marine Corps ensure Marines at the tactical level achieve a high state of motivation towards mission accomplishment?

RQ2: How can tactical leaders in the Marine Corps contribute to ensuring Marines maintain a high level of motivation?

**Sub-research Question. The sub-research question was:**

SQ1: What actions are most effective in increasing the motivation of Marines in the Generation Z demographic?

The broad nature of the concepts explored, and the research questions, necessitated the qualitative method.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, there was no direct causal chain worthy of exploration to achieve the desired end state of this research study.<sup>159</sup>

Chapter 1 offered an introduction to the challenges facing Generation Z Marines in general, their needs, and what they expect from their leaders in the Marine Corps. Chapter 1 specifically informed us that the incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines are incongruent with their needs for mentorship, achievement, and competition. Chapter 1 also provided the background to the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, significance of the study, nature of the study, appropriateness of the research method, instrumentation, interview questions, data analysis, research questions, conceptual framework, definition of key terms, assumptions, scope, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 identified the framework for how leaders in organizations motivate their personnel. The chapter specifically focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as the foundation to motivate individuals. Chapter 2 also analyzed Generational Cohort Theory and identified a relevant need to evaluate Generation Z as a separate group of individuals with different requirements disparate from members of previous generations serving in the Marine Corps. Most importantly Chapter 2 identified that no previous studies explored the incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines to motivate them and this is a gap in the body of knowledge.

Chapter 3 described the methodology the researcher used to conduct this research study. In Chapter 3 the researcher also discussed the design appropriateness with attention given to studying the problem using the research questions. Additionally, Chapter 3 provided details on the population, sampling, geographic location, ethics, informed consent, confidentiality,

dependability and trustworthiness, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis used during this study.

Chapter 4 describes the data analysis process the researcher used to conduct data analysis. The researcher interviewed six individuals from Marine Corps Manpower Plans (MP) Division, virtually, via email, requesting they answer seven questions related to current HQMC initiatives. After receiving responses from the research participants, the researcher analyzed the data and identified common themes.

Plans, Programs, and Budget (MPP) Branch, Marine Corps Manpower Plans and Policy (MP) Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters United States Marine Corps developed the manpower initiatives directed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The researcher coordinated with the leadership of MP and requested support for this thesis. Five members from MPP and one member from Manpower Analysis Branch (MPA) agreed to participate in the research study. The researcher conducted the interview of these six individuals virtually. The interview involved seven open-ended interview questions which the researcher sent individually to the six research participants via email.

Each research participant had at least nine years of service as a Marine and served at least two years in the manpower planner division of MP. The participants' ranks ranged from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel. Following confirmation of agreement to participate, the researcher emailed the informed consent to the research participants. Upon receiving the completed informed consent from the research participants, the researcher emailed the following interview questions to each of them individually:

IQ1: What initiatives has the Marine Corps offered through Manpower and Reserve Affairs, MPP Division over the last two year to appeal to junior enlisted Marines and junior officers?

IQ2: How much interest / use of the incentives has there been? e.g., how many pilots have taken the bonus to stay in the Marine Corps.

IQ3: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers are currently available for those interested?

IQ4: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers did MPP discontinue in the last two years? Why?

IQ5: What steps does MPP take to evaluate the likely success of the initiatives offered as an incentive for junior enlisted Marines and junior officers prior to implementation?

IQ6: What role do you foresee the interest/capability matching tool playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?

IQ7: What role do you foresee the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?

### **Data Collection**

Research participants received the highest possible degree of anonymity during the interview process. All email correspondence occurred directly between the researcher and individual research participants. The researcher ensured he communicated only with one research participant at time and copied no one for the sake of confidentiality. The researcher ensured research participant integrity by not informing or sharing responses to the interview questions with other research participants. The researcher ensured no violations of research participants' rights, outlined in the informed consent form, and there were no changes to the scope or purpose

of the study after they agreed to participate. The researcher developed the interview questions for the study based on over ten years of experience as a Marine Officer and three years in the manpower field. Once the researcher collected the data, he transcribed the information to Microsoft Word, saved the document on his personal computer and queried it for common themes. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher kept all data associated with this study including the informed consent, responses to interview questions, and notes on his personal, password protected computer where he will keep it for at least five years.

### **Dependability and Trustworthiness**

The researcher fully committed to personally ensuring there were no personal biases, impropriety, or false information in the conduct of the interviews involved in this research study. The researcher developed a plan to conduct the interviews and ensure integrity and proper record keeping. Dependability and trustworthiness also involved open-ended interview questions that were clear and contributed directly to the research study without any form of ambiguity or misinterpretation. Dependability and trustworthiness ensured research participants were comfortable in their roles and not feel threatened or coerced. The researcher engaged the research participants via email only, which assured no coercion from the researcher and ultimately increased their level of dependability and trustworthiness. Conducting the interviews using email and reminding research participants they could refuse to answer any question not related to the programs they were familiar with, also allowed research participants to freely express themselves and provide answers to the research questions without fear or any form of intimidation or stepping outside their lane.

## **Interview Structure**

The researcher conducted all interviews via email. Each participant received an initial email with the interview questions. Upon receipt of the responses to the interview questions, the researcher reviewed them and sent follow up questions to the research participants either asking for additional data or for clarification on certain responses. Research participants responded to the interview questions emailed to them in about one hour. Email interviews were convenient in the current worldwide Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic where social distance is the norm and there are limitations in the United States, the State of Virginia, Marine Corps Base Quantico, and Marine Corps University on face-to-face contact. This allowed research participants to relax and not worry about endangering their health.

## **Saturation**

Saturation is “the moment at which additional data collection yields little return because all additional data only confirm the understanding that arose from the previous data collection.”<sup>160</sup> The researcher reached data saturation of the data following the second response. The participants all work in the same building, in the same division within M&RA. They frequently work collaboratively on the same missions, focusing on their specific initiatives or population, whether ground officers, company grade officers, pilots, or chief warrant officers. Not all interview questions applied to each group, however when the interview question applied to multiple groups, they typically had similar responses.

## **Demographic Characteristics**

All research participants served at either MPA or MPP Section which falls under MP Division, M&RA, HQMC. The majority of MP personnel are either Marine officers or civilians. Of the eleven individuals the researcher solicited for participation in the research study one was a

civilian and the other ten were Marine officers. Six participants in total agreed to participate. All six were male, Marine officers which prevented diversity of the research participants, however, there was still a broad range of diversity due to the participants' above average time in service, military occupational specialty (MOS), and education. Table 2 provides a summary of service data, MOS, and community of the research participants.

Four of the six officers served previously as enlisted Marines. Their prior experience as enlisted members provided them with a unique perspective on enlisted Marine matters and how Marines in general interpret actions directed by HQMC. Additionally, due to the long duration of

Table 2.

| <i>Service</i>          | <i>No.</i> |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Average Time in Grade   | 3.3 yrs    |
| Average Time in Service | 17 yrs     |
| Combat Arms             | 1          |
| Combat Service Support  | 2          |
| Pilot                   | 2          |
| Aviation Ground Support | 1          |

their Marine Corps careers and varying MOS fields, they have more experience with different units and geographic locations that provided greater insight into the differing requirements of MOSs and Marine ground, air, and logistics units. They also attended a service level professional military education course. Five participants attended the Naval Post Graduate School and one participant attended the United States Air Force Command and Staff College. All six possessed a master's degree.

Table 3.

| <i>Education</i>                                                                     | <i>No.</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Master's Degree                                                                      | 6          |
| Average Time in Manpower,<br>including Naval Postgraduate<br>School (NPS) Curriculum | 4.2 yrs    |

Four of the six participants in this research study possessed a master's degree in Manpower Systems Analysis. All four received the degree through selection on the Commandant's Career Level Education Board (CCLEB) and subsequent assignment to Naval Post Graduate School in the Manpower Systems Analysis curriculum. The Manpower Systems Analysis degree is a requirement to fill the positions billeted for the 8840 – Manpower Management Officer secondary MOS. The Manpower Systems Analysis curriculum graduates officers capable of “developing and analyzing policies to ensure that the Navy and DoD are recruiting, training, utilizing and retaining personnel in the most efficient and effective ways possible.”<sup>161</sup>

The participant from Manpower Studies & Analysis Branch (MPA) is also a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School however their focus was on Operations Analysis, a requirement to fill billets coded 8850 – Operations Analyst. The focus of the operations analyst curriculum “is the development and application of mathematical models, statistical analyses, simulations, analytical reasoning, and common sense to the understanding and improvement of real-world operations.”<sup>162</sup> Marines filling the 8850 MOS code billet work closely with those who fill the 8840 MOS coded billets.

## **Data Analysis**

Three sections comprise MPP Branch: Budget (MPP-40), Officer Plans (MPP-30), and Enlisted Plans (MPP-20). The five officers from MPP were from the enlisted and officer plans sections. The data received from the participants provided nuances to specific populations they service whether it was specific to enlisted Marines or internal to the officer section whose personnel focus on restricted and unrestricted pilots or ground officers. The officer from MPA provided clarification for both the Enlisted Interest / Capability Matching Tool and the officer's Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT).

Upon receipt of the responses to the interview questions the researcher reviewed them and requested clarification to unclear, ambiguous, or open-ended statements. The researcher consolidated responses and reviewed them for applicability to the research question. Next, the researcher grouped the answers into themes with common attributes.

## **Major Data Points Received from Research Participants**

Research participants identified the following initiatives as essential components of the MP portfolio:

- Officer Aviation Bonuses: a special pay utilized to increase the inventory stability of the aviation officer population.<sup>163</sup>
- Modified Officer Career Designation: an officer retention board screens Marine officers for continued service in the Marine Corps. Prior to the officer retention board, Marines will screen on the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) Board and Commandant's Career Level Education Board (CCLEB). Marines selected on the MCRC or CCLEB boards will forego the officer retention board

and be offered the tour associated with the respective board or the option to execute their end of active service (EAS).<sup>164</sup>

- Female lateral moves into combat arms MOSs: part of the Marine Corps Force Integration Implementation Plan (MCIIP), the program established to open combat arms MOSs, previously restricted to females, to all Marines regardless of gender.<sup>165</sup>
- Career Intermission Program: the program enacted to allow active-duty Marines temporary release from active duty with a corresponding appointment or enlistment in the inactive ready reserve.<sup>166</sup>
- Field Accessions from ground MOSs to Aviation MOSs: lateral move program established to allow ground officers to screen for the student, naval aviator and unmanned aerial system operator programs.<sup>167</sup>
- Merit Reorder: “is the statutory authority granting the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the discretion to authorize officer promotion boards to place officers of particular merit higher on a regular promotion list. The standard for Merit-based Promotion List Reorder (MPLR) is documented sustained superior performance consistently superior to the performance of other officers recommended for promotion.”<sup>168</sup>
- Enlisted Interest / Capability Matching Tool: part of a longitudinal study, the Interest / Capability Matching Tool assesses a Marines’ interests and aptitude during basic training. During specific milestones in their career, MPP will use that information to evaluate how closely their MOS and test results aligned and whether or not that alignment, or lack thereof, directly, or indirectly affected their

performance while in the Marine Corps as well as their desire to make a career of the Marine Corps.<sup>169</sup>

- Officer Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT): the replacement for the General Classification Test (GCT), the CCAT is an aptitude test taken by officers during entry level training designed to provide future data on a Marine Officers' aptitude for MOS classification.<sup>170</sup>
- 12 Month Contract Extensions due to Corona Virus Disease (COVID) Impacts: 12-month cross-FY extension authorization for any Marine to allow for modified transition plans as a result of COVID-19 impacts.<sup>171</sup>
- Early Reenlistment Program: allows high quality first term Marines to reenlist up to one fiscal year early.<sup>172</sup>
- Kicker Bonuses: a collection of monetary incentives used to stimulate reenlistment in specific MOSs. The Marine Corps has six Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) kickers in FY21: The Early Reenlistment Kicker, the Aviation Maintenance Kicker, the Air Traffic Controller Kicker, the 72 Month Lateral Move (LM) Kicker, the 24-month FMF Squad Leader Kicker, and the 36-month FMF Squad Leader Kicker.<sup>173</sup>
- Delegation of Reenlistment Authority: provides the opportunity for Major Subordinate Command (MSC) commanders to reenlist Tier I and II first term enlisted Marines instead of routing their packages to HQMC.<sup>174</sup>

Across MPA and both branches of MPP, the only discontinued incentive was Merit Reorder for the Major's Selection Board, which MPP discontinued due to certain MOSs, lawyers and pilots, having extended training time which prevented them from gaining the same operational

experience as other MOSs prior to screening for major.<sup>175</sup> Based on the essential components listed above the researcher consolidated the responses of all three sections of MP (MPA, MPP-20, and MPP-30) and identified four themes: Monetary incentives, operational level decision making / oversight, incentives as a retention tool, and career flexibility.

### **Theme 1: Monetary Incentives**

MPP-20, Enlisted Plans, and MPP-30, Officer Plans, both rely on monetary incentives to entice Marines to continue serving in the Marine Corps. M&RA couples these incentives to contractual obligations to remain in the Marine Corps for a given amount of time based on the size of the bonus. Additionally, specific enlisted MOSs can receive additional bonuses or “kickers” for early reenlistment or lateral moves. The purpose of these targeted incentives is to retain Marines in specific MOSs where the service falls short of meeting annual boatspaces.<sup>176</sup>

### **Theme 2: Operational Level Decision Making / Oversight**

All MPP initiatives required higher level coordination, at least at the Major Subordinate Command (MSC) level, but most required adjudication at MPP. MPP identifies and implements policies to meet the manpower retention requirements of the Marine Corps in support of the Commandant’s operational plans.<sup>177</sup> Coordination at MPP is a requirement because MPP is the only unit in the Marine Corps specifically focused on enlisted and officer manpower end strength.

### **Theme 3: Incentives as a Retention Tool**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how to motivate Marines in the Generation Z cohort. High levels of retention and low turnover is a byproduct of creating a highly satisfied and motivated force.<sup>178</sup> If an individual has a high level of job satisfaction, they will likely remain with their employer. MP develops plans and programs for promoting and retaining members of

the active component to meet the manpower needs of the Marine Corps.<sup>179</sup> The most important measure of performance for MP is the number of Marines retained. Most programs administered by MP come with a requirement of contract extension or reenlistment, which explains why there are minimum standards tied to each incentive. This is the Marine Corps' way of controlling which Marines take advantage of the incentives. Controlling which Marines take advantage of the incentives allows the Marine Corps to prioritize and reward the "best and brightest" over less qualified Marines.

#### **Theme 4: Career Flexibility**

Members of Generation Z, like most individuals, prefer to have the option to shape their future.<sup>180</sup> The Marine Corps Force Integration Implementation Plan (MCIIP), which allows females accession or lateral move into combat arms MOSs and MPP's initiatives including reopening Marine Corps-wide lateral moves, after an eight-year restriction, provides Marines additional options for how they want to shape their careers.<sup>181</sup> Taking actions to give Marines more options and expediting the retention processes by adjudicating reenlistments at the MSC level all give Marines more transparency and control.

#### **Summary**

Through coordination with Marine Corps Manpower Plans and Policy (MP) Division, M&RA, HQMC the researcher interviewed six research participants involved in developing Marine Corps-wide incentives to retain and motivate enlisted Marines and officers, and collected their responses for analysis. The researcher consolidated the responses from MP participants and identified four themes: Monetary incentives, operational level decision making / oversight, incentives as a retention tool, and career flexibility. Chapter 5 develops recommendations for modifications to current initiatives and makes additional recommendations on initiatives the

Marine Corps should pursue to motivate current junior enlisted Marines and officers as well as individuals who will volunteer to serve in the Marine Corps in the future.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the Generation Z cohort; individuals born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>182</sup> Determining the effectiveness of these techniques will inform the Marine Corps' approach to enlistment, retention, discipline, and morale in the ranks. In the previous two years, under the leadership of General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, HQMC reevaluated previous practices. In Chapter 4, the researcher presented four major themes from his research: (1) monetary incentives, (2) operational decision making/oversight, (3) retention tool, and (4) career flexibility. In Chapter 5 the researcher discusses in detail the implication of the findings, the four major themes uncovered from the responses from the research participants, the significance of the findings for Marine Corps' leaders, interpretation of the findings, recommendations, limitations, and provides recommendations for future research.

#### **Implication of the Findings**

This qualitative case study explored the level of Marine Corps preparedness for Generation Z Marines. The study involved a review of Marine Corps organizational approach to ensuring Generational Z Marines continue to serve and have success in the Marine Corps. The literature review informed us that members of Generation Z have unique needs and require innovative motivation techniques across all organizations and the workforce in general. Only one study used Herzberg's motivation theory to explore what organizations should do to meet their needs, but no study explored the needs and incentives the Marine Corps offers Generation Z Marines.

Members of Generation Z are the most achievement oriented of all previous generations.<sup>183</sup> “72% of Generation Z individuals stated they are competitive with people doing the same job.”<sup>184</sup> Generation Z also grew up in a world where everything is customizable because so much of it is electronic, customer-based hardware / software. Generation Z wants to tailor the real world, to include their profession, to their needs, the same way they tailor their apps and smart technology for their needs.<sup>185</sup> The organizations that will retain Generation Z members will allow them to develop themselves in educational settings. They will stay with organizations where they can achieve self-reliance and self-educate in fields that stimulate their interests.<sup>186</sup> Predisposed to learning, they are active researchers and are quick to provide their decision or input based on that research and expect their input to be a valued contribution to planning.<sup>187</sup> Over 50% of Marines are under the age of 25 and fall into the Generation Z cohort.<sup>188</sup> Marine Corps leadership must understand the traits that make this group unique and exploit those traits to fully integrate them into our mission and harness their capabilities for the betterment of the Marine Corps.

General Berger’s initiatives, undertaken by Manpower Plans and Policy Division (MP), Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) in the last two years, to a significant degree, met the identified needs of Generation Z. Manpower Analysis Branch (MPA), through the development of the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) and Interest / Capability Matching Tool, developed a longitudinal study to assess how their actions, and the actions of HQMC, as it relates to assignments, positively or negatively affects career development. The implementation of these tools is overdue but a positive trend for future studies similar to the current study. Next, the researcher outlines in detail the four themes he deduced from his research and the interviews with research participants.

### **Theme 1: Monetary Incentive**

The Marine Corps uses monetary incentives under the Selective Retention Bonus (SRB) Program as a tool to remain competitive with the civilian job market. Although there is an effort to ensure only the best and the brightest Marines (considered Tier I and Tier II) receive the bonuses and therefore guaranteed continued service in the Marine Corps, there does not appear to be much consideration to the lasting negative effects on intrinsic motivation (motivation derived from a person's desire to complete a task for their own enrichment) associated with monetary incentives.<sup>189</sup>

### **Theme 2: Operational Level Decision Making/Oversight**

Members of Generation Z expects immediate feedback in all aspects of their lives.<sup>190</sup> Taking steps to expedite the approval of reenlistments packages through delegation to lower levels represents the trend that should be encompassing more HQMC actions to meet Generation Z needs. More importantly this theme also takes advantage of the advances in technology we must use to instantaneously know how many Marines we need and have in specific MOSs at a given time. To avoid bias, there should likely be separation between the Marine considered for reenlistment, or other entitlements, and the approver, for all HQMC initiative. However, distilling that responsibility to lower-level leaders will greatly benefit the Marine Corps and the Marines, through expedited decision making.

### **Theme 3: Retention Tool**

MPP's mission drives the retention in the Marine Corps.<sup>191</sup> MPP's goal is to retain the highest quality individuals for the enduring missions of the Marine Corps. A large majority of the initiatives employed by MPP focus on a key decision point for Marines. This decision point occurs when a Marine contemplates future service and decides to reenlist or accept career

designation into the Marine Corps or makes the decision to discontinue their service on active duty. While this is a pivotal time, and arguably, these initiatives could provide that final incentive to reenlist or accept career designation in the Marine Corps instead of pursuing other options. Offering incentives earlier in a Marine's career could accomplish the same goal. Taking actions to motivate Marines throughout their initial period of service increases the likelihood of their decision to continue serving without the financial incentives offered at the end of their enlistment or commissioning contract.

#### **Theme 4: Career Flexibility**

The Marine Corps' willingness to provide options to members of the Generation Z population greatly appeals to the generation's need to control their environment or customize it like they do the technology they surround themselves with.<sup>192</sup> Lateral moves, extended reenlistment timelines during the COVID-19 pandemic, and modified officer career designation programs offers opportunities to Marines not previously available to them in their careers. More important, these options give Marines the option to decide what they would like to do long term. It provides them greater control over their future as Marines and their personal lives.

#### **Significance of the Findings for Marine Corps Leaders**

This study informed us that the initiatives under the cognizance of MP contributes directly to the Marine Corps retention of Generation Z Marines. Providing Marines with options and multiple career paths to pursue throughout their time in the Marine Corps, allows them to develop their personal brand for who they want to be as Marines. These person-specific actions along with the installment of the CCAT and Interest / Capability Matching Tool will provide additional data for the Marine Corps to use as it progresses into an artificial intelligence capable world where multiple events can determine assignments and the preferences of Marines. The

purpose of this study was to explore the needs of Generation Z Marines, however HQMC should maintain the ability to evaluate each individual Marines' needs and desires.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Based on the findings of this study, the Marine Corps, under the guidance and leadership of General Berger, took active measures to meet the needs of Generation Z Marines. The career flexibility and immediacy of these incentives provided Marines with more comprehensive feedback during pivotal points in their careers. Although HQMC, specifically MPP, used incentives predominantly during reenlistment or career designation they must take a more comprehensive approach to incentivize Marines to remain in the Marine Corps. Most Marines make their decision regarding retention long before they get to the end of their first tour which typically coincides with the decision to continue serving and make the Marine Corps their career. MP, with the help of tactical leaders, must focus on incentivizing the highest qualified Marines to remain in the Marine Corps well before they reach that crucial career decision.

### **Recommendations**

Before Generation Z enters the Marine Corps their first encounter is with a Marine Corps recruiter. There are numerous tactics recruiters use to draw each prospective recruit or candidate into the Marine Corps. Similar to discussions throughout this thesis, each individual requires a nuanced approach from the recruiter but a simple step that headquarters Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) can take is the introduction of additional benefit tags. Benefit tags are small pieces of plastic with key phrases that help the recruiter identify what each potential applicant is interested in and uses that information to provide a sales pitch.<sup>193</sup> There are currently eleven benefit tags. MCRC should add benefit tags for “mentorship” and “achievement.” There is already a benefit tag for challenge.<sup>194</sup> There is already a benefit tag for leadership so perhaps

MCRC has avoided mentorship as a benefit tag because they want to instill in Marines a leadership mentality from the beginning however if that is the case it is both a flawed concept because everyone at some point needs mentorship and it is especially faulty for Generation Z. This is a group of individuals who want to know they are doing it right and want feedback to ensure they continually meet or exceed expectations.<sup>195</sup> There is an opportunity here for Marine Corps Recruiting Command to revolutionize its recruiting process and leave behind the “manpower system” designed in the industrial era to produce mass not quality.<sup>196</sup> This will allay the concern detailed in the 38<sup>th</sup> Commandant’s Planning Guidance that “The only way to attract and retain Marines capable of winning on the new battlefield is to compete with the tools and incentives available to them in the marketplace.”<sup>197</sup> However, the Marine Corps should instead try to focus on mentorship and incentives that are not as readily apparent, or available at all in the marketplace. Additional benefit tags for motivation and achievement that speaks to the needs of Generation Z will be an incentive for them to serve their country as Marines.

Merit based reorder, although currently restricted to Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels, serves as a signal to Generation Z Marines that the Marine Corps intends to identify and promote Marines based on merit more than time in service. Generation Zers have no issue starting their careers from the bottom but want senior Marines to notice their sacrifices and contributions.<sup>198</sup> Generation Z Marines lack faith in the current system of tenure and promotion upheld by the Marine Corps. “They are not going to be the ones proud that they came in over the weekend, they will be focused on getting the job done efficiently.”<sup>199</sup> They have a different perspective on loyalty to their organization and advancement to positions of greater responsibility. It is imperative for organizational leaders to provide ongoing mentorship and skill building for retention of Generation Z employees.<sup>200</sup> They want leaders in the organization who recognize

their performance and give them feedback. They want to know the areas where they missed the mark and what they need to do to improve their performance. Unlike previous generations they will not remain silent and wonder what their bosses think of their performance. They want feedback in the form of regular counseling.

The efforts of leaders in the Marine Corps to make all combat arms MOSs gender neutral is a welcomed step forward towards meeting the needs of Generation Z Marines. The notion of equality is important to Generation Z as it is the most diverse generation to date.<sup>201</sup> More importantly, members of Generation Z want to work for a company that holds high societal ideals. One in three stated that working for a socially responsible company was extremely important, only behind “fulfilling work” as a workplace motivator.<sup>202</sup> Generational Z employees seek respect and ethical guidance through mentorship within their organizational structure.<sup>203</sup> Despite these successes there are areas where HQMC must improve on current models to meet the needs of Generation Z Marines.

The Interest / Capability Matching Tool is exclusive to enlisted Marines at this time.<sup>204</sup> This tool determines a Marine’s aptitude to perform in a certain MOS and also takes into account what he or she would like to do. The purpose of the tool is to provide longitudinal feedback on how well a Marines’ interests and aptitude in an MOS aligns with his or her future performance.<sup>205</sup> The CCAT, which is the officer equivalent of the Interest/Capability Matching Tool, does not have an “interests” section, which potentially reduces its effectiveness. MPP should add an interest section to the CCAT which will provide an additional layer of data to analyze for future officers and complement the talent management process.

The Marine Corps must tie financial incentives, including bonuses and kickers to a Marine’s average income, relative to the United States average for their age group instead of a

targeted bonus payment. As part of the Marine Corps' Selective Retention Bonus (SRB) Program, Marines in specific enlisted MOSs, receive bonuses for reenlistment or, in the case of first term Marines, as part of a lateral move.<sup>206</sup> The amount of the bonus correlates to the length of their reenlistment contract.<sup>207</sup> Tying the bonuses to reenlistment makes for an effective retention tool, however, financial incentives have the ability to create a negative effect when future reenlistment or career milestones occur and the Marine Corps does not offer a comparable financial incentive.

When individuals receive monetary incentives for a task, they lose the intrinsic motivation associated with the achievement.<sup>208</sup> Experts in the field of management call this phenomenon "crowding out."<sup>209</sup> Crowding out leads to reduced satisfaction in top performers, similar to those targeted in the bonus and kicker programs set in place by HQMC.<sup>210</sup> HQMC must however continue to provide bonuses as an incentive in some areas. The average annual income for an E-4 (Corporal) in the Marine Corps with four years of service in 2019, accounting only for base pay and basic allowance for housing (BAH), was \$45,500.<sup>211</sup> By comparison, the average annual income for a civilian of the same age was \$52,124.<sup>212</sup> Only in the highest BAH earning locations Marines earn income comparable to their civilian counterparts.<sup>213</sup> Similar to the Yusoff study discussed in Chapter 2, when pay is unequal to the individuals' surroundings and they are unable to support themselves, salary may become an intrinsic motivator. However, provided pay remains comparable to the Marines' surroundings and average income, the Marine Corps must focus on "crowding in" positive incentives, which is the reinforcement and repetition of positive motivation techniques, like allowing Marines to shape their career more and build skills.

As an alternative to monetary incentives, the Marine Corps should place greater emphasis on incentives such as awarding duty station preference and training opportunities for Marines. Provide them the opportunity to shape their career path and explore training opportunities that interest them. Currently, Manpower Management Enlisted Assignments (MMEA) offers duty station preference as an incentive for completion of a special duty assignment (SDA).<sup>214</sup> This is a valuable incentive as it provides Marines the power to decide their next duty station. More importantly the intrinsic motivation they receive from having control, is something desirable to Generation Z Marines.<sup>215</sup> In addition to duty station preference, the Marine Corps must use training opportunities as an incentive during orders processing but also at the tactical leader level. Unlike financial incentives, which only HQMC can approve, commanders and Monitors have the ability to send Marines to training courses as incentives. Generation Z Marines want to develop skills that they can continue to use throughout their lives and, more importantly during their Marine Corps careers. Generation Z has a drive to achieve success in their jobs that is greater than previous generations.<sup>216</sup> Sending them to training courses, in or out of their MOS, provides them a skill they could use later in their careers and gives them confidence while allowing their commanders the opportunity to engage with them regarding their individual needs.

Members of Generation Z “want[s] to be set up for success and then given the room to succeed. They want guidance, direction, support, and coaching. They do not want to just learn from computers and communicate via handheld devices; they want the human element. In short, those leading the newest workforce need to be prepared to be hands-on, coaching style managers who customize and calibrate their direction and feedback for their Generation Z employees.”<sup>217</sup> Training Command, tasked with producing MOS, career progression, and career enhancement skills for the Marine Corps, in conjunction with the occupational field leaderships, must develop

Major Subordinate Command (MSC) level annual training for each MOS.<sup>218</sup> Generation Z has a desire to better themselves and the organization they work for.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, they desire mentorship and career development advice.<sup>220</sup> Currently, depending on a Marine's MOS, they may only receive one or two iterations of formal MOS training throughout their career, including their initial training. Unit level training encompasses the majority of follow-on MOS education. Although the hands-on leadership developed from small unit training is beneficial, centralizing the training at HQMC and distilling it down to the MSC level provides a common baseline for both the Marines and the units instituting the training.

Training and Education Command (TECOM) develops training and readiness standards for each occupational field. The training and readiness standards identify the competencies that Marines in those fields should possess to accomplish the units' mission essential tasks.<sup>221</sup> TECOM also controls the Marine Corps Training Information Management System (MCTIMS) which tracks training and readiness standards and units' mission essential tasks.<sup>222</sup> By standardizing the training, and using MCTIMS, a unit, as well as higher level units, can evaluate the capabilities of each individual Marine and subordinate unit.

Training must be collaborative and in person or virtual. For Generation Z the distinction is minimal, and conducting the training virtually provides a more flexible architecture for the training unit.<sup>223</sup> Research informed us that the attention span of each generational cohorts is unequal. Generation Z has an attention span of eight seconds.<sup>224</sup> Companies like Panera Bread instituted training methodologies to support the short attention span and capitalize on Generation Z's need for digital interoperability.<sup>225</sup> Through a study, practice, and study mentality trainees learn something, then immediately implement the training and get feedback before moving on to the next digital training session.<sup>226</sup> The developed TECOM training should have a similar

structure. Once this training is in place, the Marine Corps will have the ability to better assess the professional training of Marines. With command input, as well as additional education and training events, leaders will gain a better understanding of the Marine's capabilities. The Junior Enlisted Performance Evaluation System (JEPES) can then leverage that data to realize greater MOS capability.

In February 2021, JEPES replaced the legacy composite score system for promoting Privates through Corporals.<sup>227</sup> Junior enlisted Marines will receive a composite score which, when compared to their peers, makes them eligible for promotion to the next higher rank provided their score meets the grade requirement cutoff. In the previous system the composite score consisted of Warfighting (Rifle Score), 7.9% of total score, Mental Agility (Professional Military Education (PME) and civilian college course /degree completion), 4.8%, Physical Toughness (Physical Fitness Test / Combat Fitness Test), 15.7%, Time (Time in Service / Time in Grade), 24.3%, and Command Input (proficiency and conduct), 47.3%.<sup>228</sup> In the new system under JEPES, Warfighting, Mental Agility, Physical Toughness, and Command Input all have an equal 25% of the composite score.<sup>229</sup> Not only does this reduce the likelihood of inflated command marks, which had the ability to drastically skew the previous system based on command bias, but it also does two important things for Generation Z; (1) it puts 75% of their composite score directly in their control through completion of educational and training requirements and (2) it eliminates the time in grade and time in service points for the composite score which appeals to Generation Z's need to feel like their hard work is being taken into account.<sup>230</sup> There is still a time in service and time in grade requirement for promotion. However, Marines will not get additional points, for spending more time in grade, than their more junior, but possibly more capable, peers.

JEPES is not only a successful tool for Generation Z Marines based on its policy changes, its functionality meets the technological requirements of Generation Z. Generation Z is one of the most achievement oriented, competitive, and technologically savvy generations to date.<sup>231</sup> JEPES will be accessible from Marines' mobile devices and once a Marine logs in they immediately receive their four individual composite scores relative to their grade and relative to their MOS in grade, further exploiting their competitiveness. Overall, JEPES meets the autonomous, connectedness, and competence basic needs of intrinsic motivation possibly better than any other Marine Corps system.<sup>232</sup> As revolutionary and game changing as this tool is for junior Marines, the Marine Corps must explore the value and usefulness of using it for the entire force.

As junior Marines rise in rank, the traits of their generational cohort will remain with them. The Marine Corps does not need to modify the existing Automated Personnel Evaluation System (A-PES) used to evaluate enlisted Sergeants and above (including officers), through annual and semi-annual fitness reports. Nor should a 20-year-in-service Lieutenant Colonel have the same metrics used as the basis for command slating that a 20-year-old Lance Corporal has for promotion, however, HQMC should make the same comparative information available to the individual Marines as a readily available tool.

In coordination with JEPES and A-PES, HQMC should also institute a digital mentorship tool. Generation Z, more than other generations wants mentorship and feedback on their performance.<sup>233</sup> A mentorship tool allows mentees to better hold their mentors accountable and similar to medical readiness numbers, allows commanders to hold subordinate units accountable as well. Members of Generation Z will look for consistent feedback from their leadership. Fortunately, the feedback does not have to be quantitative and more importantly it does not all

have to be positive.<sup>234</sup> Generation Z, unlike the Millennial Generation would rather have blunt, honest feedback.<sup>235</sup> Generation Zers are accustomed to knowing where they stand and having instant feedback. Their views get immediate affirmation from social media interactions and even their school grades get expedient feedback on their digital, running report cards.<sup>236</sup> A digital mentorship tool will allow a forum for seniors to provide guidance to their subordinates and allow senior commands to track subordinate unit mentorship the same way it does proficiency and conduct marks and fitness reports.

The final recommendation for this paper is the inclusion of training on Generation Z traits at every leadership professional military education (PME) course available to the Marine Corps. Starting with The Basic School (TBS) and continuing through Cornerstone, the two-week Lieutenant Colonel and Sergeants Majors course, a portion of each course should be devoted to a discussion of who Marine Corps leaders are going to oversee.<sup>237</sup> The Marine Corps prides itself on developing our leaders and as a product of that training, the quality of the leadership our junior Marines receive. Even at Marine Corps Command and Staff College there have been courses discussing social networks and navigating those networks to message to your Marines without taking the time to evaluate if it is the best option for this new generation or even discuss alternate options. Discussing how senior Marines should lead without assessing *why* they should lead a certain way fails to provide the context that junior Marines have changed significantly since those leaders came into the Marine Corps probably two decades and two generations ago.

### **Limitations**

This study faced eight limitations. First, the researcher could not investigate the problem in greater detail due to the short timeline associated with the Command and Staff College Master of Military Studies combined with additional course requirements. Second, there are few studies

on Generation Z in the workforce and even fewer on Generation Z Marines which would provide the most definitive understanding of the problem set and provide the best recommended way ahead. Third, given more time, the researcher would ensure a more in-depth, narrative, study of Generation Z Marines. Fourth, the willingness of research participants to provide truthful information. A fifth limitation was the impact of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to complete all interviews in person without social distancing. A sixth limitation is the limited gender and racial diversity of the research participants. The seventh limitation is the validity of the responses received from research participants depended on the method used in the conduct of the research and their reliability. The openness and honesty of research participants with their response to the interview questions also impacted the validity of the study. The researcher depended on them to be truthful. Since no one had to participate the eighth limitation was the number of individuals who agreed to participate in the interview. They may have personal reasons that discouraged them from participating such as their schedules, fear of participation, or disagreements they may have with the premise of the study or the methodology used.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the effectiveness of techniques the United States Marine Corps uses to motivate enlisted Marines and junior officers in the Generation Z cohort; individuals born between 1995 and 2010.<sup>238</sup> Generational characteristics are stereotypes of a large sample size from the population.<sup>239</sup> Further research should identify what motivated Generation Z individuals to join the military. Their need for advancement and integration with technology do not represent the stereotypical view of military service, so what motivated them to join the military or what opportunity did they lacked or perceive to lack as civilians drove them to serve. The second recommendation for future research is a review of how

the Marine Corps selects its leaders. This study focused on what incentives HQMC and unit leaders should offer Generation Z Marines to make them more motivated to want to serve in the Marine Corps, however, there is no replacement for the relationship between leader and led. How leaders employ those incentives is entirely up to them, and so is their leadership style. A review of the leadership training provided to senior officers and the command selection process could provide valuable recommendations to ensure Marines have the best leadership possible.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Despite the identified similarities amongst the members of Generation Z, nothing will replace the individual relationship between the leader and the led. Every Marine is different and will vary in the degree to how much they conform with the traits of Generation Z. Members of this generation believe their unit leaders should recognize their talents and creativity, whether or not their occupation requires them, and assist in putting them to use for the betterment of the organization.<sup>240</sup> Generation Zers' most valued leadership trait is integrity followed by mentorship abilities.<sup>241</sup> Generation Z prefers a leader who (1) is a strong and effective communicator; (2) drives a positive and inclusive culture; (3) demonstrates high levels of emotional intelligence; (4) provides ongoing mentorship; (5) has an involved and engaged personality; (6) is highly competent; and (7) promotes equality.<sup>242</sup> To successfully motivate Generation Z the tactical leader must be there for their Marines and HQMC must enable that capability at every opportunity.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Dora Najjar & Pascal Fares, "Managerial Motivational Practices and Motivational Differences Between Blue- and White-Collar Employees: Application of Maslow's Theory," *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology* 8, No. 2, (April 2017), 81, <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijimt.2017.8.2.707>.
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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Informed Consent: Master's of Military Studies Thesis**

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, this notice informs you of the purpose, use, and confidentiality of this study. Authority to request this information is granted under 10 U.S.C. § 501 and 502 (1956).

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this research is to study the motivation needs of Generation Z, individuals born between 1995 and 2010, and evaluate how the Marine Corps is currently postured to meet those needs. Participation will involve an email with seven questions and possible 15-30 minute follow up interview either through phone or in person. There are no anticipated risks to participating in this research. No one will be directly quoted without their consent. You will not receive any personal benefit or compensation from participating in this project.

The research is voluntary. You have no obligation to participate in this project, and refusal to do so will result in no penalty. If you do decide to participate, you may change your mind at any point during the process and end your participation. If you would like, a copy of the thesis will be provided to you before publication for review.

#### **Additional Details**

What is involved: Participation will involve an email with possible follow up interview, if necessary and at your consent. If you choose to answer all of the questions in the email it will likely take 15-25 minutes. You do not have to answer every question in the email. If we conduct an interview it is anticipated to take 15-30 minutes. You can stop or pause the interview at any time or choose not to respond to certain questions without explaining why.

Protection of your information: If you are quoted, you will be given the option to be identified by name or treated with a pseudonym. If you desire to remain anonymous, your name will be replaced with a code on notes, transcripts, and other research materials e.g. "MPP employee #1".

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project.

Sensitive information: We cannot have discussions about Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) or classified information. If we stray into sensitive topics, I will end discussion on that topic. If any information you provided may have been CUI or FOUO, appropriate sections of notes will be erased. If the information may have been classified, notes will be handled in accordance with Marine Corps guidelines.

Questions: If you have questions regarding this research, you may ask them now, or at a later time during this process. For questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Marine Corps Human Research Protection Program.

A copy of this document is yours to retain. Do you have any questions or concerns? Are you willing to participate? Do you prefer to have your comments attributed by name or by a pseudonym

Points of contact information:

**Principal Investigator:**

**USMC Human Research Protection Program Official:**

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| NAME            | Leah Watson          |
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## **Appendix B**

### **Interviewer Verbal Consent Record**

Interview with \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to participate? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If applicable, are you willing to have this interview audio-recorded? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Do you prefer to have your comments attributed by name or a pseudonym? \_\_\_\_ By name  
attribution \_\_\_\_ Pseudonym

Notes

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions**

IQ1: What initiatives has the Marine Corps offered through Manpower and Reserve Affairs, MPP Division over the last two year to appeal to junior enlisted Marines and junior officers?

IQ2: How much interest / use of the incentives has there been? e.g., how many pilots have taken the bonus to stay in the Marine Corps.

IQ3: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers are currently available for those interested?

IQ4: What initiatives to incentivize junior enlisted Marines and junior officers did MPP discontinue in the last two years? Why?

IQ5: What steps does MPP take to evaluate the likely success of the initiatives offered as an incentive for junior enlisted Marines and junior officers prior to implementation?

IQ6: What role do you foresee the interest/capability matching tool playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?

IQ7: What role do you foresee the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) playing for the Marine Corps' long term career analysis?