



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE INFLUENCE OF MIDSHIPMEN LEADERSHIP ON
MORALE AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY**

by

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December 2006

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2006	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: The Influence of Leadership on Morale at the United States Naval Academy			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Christopher A. Miller				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) The purpose of this thesis is to quantitatively analyze the relationship between midshipmen leadership and morale at the United States Naval Academy. The goal is to determine if there is a specific set of leadership characteristics that directly contribute to positive company morale within the Brigade of Midshipmen. The study is quantitative and uses the Naval Academy Brigade Climate survey as its primary instrument. The results of this effort indicate that leadership characteristics that are centered on equality and fairness have a statistically significant influence on a unit's morale. Additionally, the thesis provides recommendations for clarifying the definition of morale in a military context along with recommendations for shaping survey questions when attempting to measure morale.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Morale, Leadership, USNA, United States Naval Academy, Midshipmen			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 65	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON MORALE AT THE UNITED STATES
NAVAL ACADEMY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to quantitatively analyze the relationship between midshipmen leadership and morale at the United States Naval Academy. The goal is to determine if there is a specific set of leadership characteristics that directly contribute to positive company morale within the Brigade of Midshipmen. The study is quantitative and uses the Naval Academy Brigade Climate survey as its primary instrument. The results of this effort indicate that leadership characteristics that are centered on equality and fairness have a statistically significant influence on a unit's morale. Additionally, the thesis provides recommendations for clarifying the definition of morale in a military context along with recommendations for shaping survey questions when attempting to measure morale.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Foremost I would like to thank Dr. Janice Laurence and Dr. Linda Mallory for their patience, perspective, and time. In particular, Dr. Laurence for her quick feedback, supportive attitude, and availability and Dr. Mallory for her tutelage on all matters related to data. I could not have asked for two better advisors. Additionally, I would like to thank the Lead Program Faculty from the Naval Post Graduate School along with the Naval Academy Faculty and adjunct professors that contributed to the program and ultimately to this effort. Finally, my classmates from Cohort IX and in particular my "Hole Mates" that ensured the classroom discussions were stimulating and informative, their perspectives positively challenged the way I approached this research and my perspective on leadership in general.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The importance of leadership is an accepted tenant or ubiquitous theme throughout teams, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies. In particular, its value to the military is undeniable. The Naval Academy is commonly called a leadership laboratory, but what exactly is the tangible influence of good leadership and why is it important?

It seems that high morale at the company level at the Naval Academy is a consistent predictor of quality of life, sense of safety, and overall satisfaction with the USNA experience. Companies with high morale seemingly enjoy a better quality of life and have a more favorable opinion about their company and the naval service. This study hopes to uncover what leadership characteristics contribute to company morale in order to provide leaders with proven actions that serve to increase unit morale.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to quantitatively analyze the relationship between midshipmen leadership characteristics and company morale at the United States Naval Academy. More specifically, the analyses seek to illustrate how positive or negative leadership characteristics influence morale. The ultimate goal is to provide leaders with a statistically proven set of leadership characteristics that can be of value to midshipmen in their attempts to improve company morale. In short, the results are expected to provide a list of

leadership behaviors that are statistically reliable actions that may serve to promote positive company morale.

Additionally, this thesis attempts to flesh out the meaning of morale in the military context. The initial assumption is that morale is much more than how a midshipman or service member is feeling; clarification of this nebulous construct is provided.

C. RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

The primary research question is: How do midshipmen leadership traits influence company morale as measured by the Naval Academy Climate Survey?

The study is quantitative. The first step consisted of a thorough literature review on morale and in particular its relationship to leadership in military units. The next step involved a quantitative evaluation of the Naval Academy Climate Survey. Using logical selection and Chronbach's Alpha reliability analysis, a list of leadership questions was distributed into composite groupings and shaped into new independent variables. These variables were then placed into a linear regression to determine their influence over the dependent variable morale.

D. BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

There are many possible implications to this study that extend far beyond the walls of Bancroft Hall but the ultimate goal is to provide leaders with tangible tools that can be used to positively influence the morale of the units in which they serve. Additionally, this research attempts to provide a better understanding of what morale really means in a military context.

E. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

The study is organized in five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction and explanation of the study. Chapter II provides a literature review of the relevant works in the fields of morale and military leadership. Chapter III outlines and provides a description of the research methodology used. Chapter IV is dedicated to data analysis and provides an opportunity to look at the actual data used. Finally, Chapter V provides the results of the study along with a discussion of the limitations and further recommendations for research.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

It seems that morale is recognized universally as an important element to the success of any team, organization, group, or individual. It is one of those ambiguous characteristics that is easy to identify but difficult to articulate. Morale is described as an intangible feeling that leaves the observer realizing they have just witnessed something special, but unable to explain exactly what it was. Examples of this are seen in sports teams that just have an edge over another team that extends beyond skill and athletic ability; or in a military unit that displays that indescribable panache that gives them the air of being invincible. It is this latent characteristic as applies to the military arena that is the subject of this literature review. Additionally, a review of the relationship between leadership and morale is necessary because of their entwined relationship. Finally, each of these topics will be considered in the context of the Naval Academy experience hoping to enlighten the discussion of the relationship between leadership and morale in Bancroft Hall.

B. WHAT IS MORALE?

Morale is the greatest single factor in successful wars.

President Eisenhower

What exactly is morale? Manning (1991), argued that morale has sharply different meanings depending on the context. With this consideration in mind this review of morale is focused on the military context. An appropriate

starting point for this context is the United States Army's Field Manual on Leadership, where morale is defined as "The mental, emotional, and spiritual state of the individual. It is how he feels-happy, hopeful, confident, appreciated, worthless, sad, unrecognized, or depressed" (p. 228). Manning (1991) and Bartone (1988) both argued and agreed that if as implied in the field manual that morale is merely a synonym for mood or happiness, then the word has no real value. Manning (1991) therefore makes the distinction that morale must be considered in a group context and for the purpose of his research used the military as his group. Manning's (1991) definition of morale is: "Morale is the enthusiasm and persistence with which a member of a group engages in the prescribed activities of that group" (p. 455).

Britt and Dickinson (2005) further defined morale in the military context as "a service member's level of motivation and enthusiasm for accomplishing mission objectives" (p. 162). Manning, and Brit and Dickinson each highlighted Baynes' (1967) definition of morale, which is "the possession of a confident, self sacrificing, and courageous attitude toward group tasks" (as cited in Brit and Dickinson, 2005, p.161) Further definitions and interpretations of morale also place it in the group context. Brigadier General James A. Ulio, a combat veteran and military psychologist, described military morale as "that conditioned quality, in the individual soldier and in the unit of command, which holds the soldier, holds the unit, to the performance of duty despite every opposing force or influence" (as cited in Hightower, 1944, p. 412). Although the Ulio definition may seem a bit dated, Britt

and Dickinson (2005) note that relatively little research has been done in the field of military morale with the exception being the years circa World War I and World War II.

Britt and Dickinson, and Manning arrive at their definitions of morale after a comprehensive review of morale theory. Their works serve to consolidate a broad body of literature into two modern working definitions of morale in the military context with each definition closely resembling the other. Using the literature as a foundation, a theoretical definition of morale at the Naval Academy can be derived: Morale at the United States Naval Academy is the motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence, with which midshipmen engage in the prescribed activities of the Naval Academy.

This theoretical definition of morale has three elements: motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence. A brief look at each element is necessary to afford a better understanding of morale. Daft (2005) defines motivation as "the forces either internal or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action" (p. 294). It is interesting to note that the other two elements of morale are found in his definition of motivation.

Daft's (2005) study of motivation theory focuses on the relationship between leadership and motivation, which makes his definition particularly relevant in the military context. Daft's (2005) assertion is that the study of motivation serves to inform leaders as to "what prompts people to initiate action, what influences their choice of action and why they persist in that action over time" (p.

294). Individuals engage in behavior to satisfy needs through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (McShane and Von Glinow, 2005). It is critical for a leader to understand motivation theory in order to ultimately influence morale.

Enthusiasm is another element of morale. Enthusiasm reflects excitement or emotions channeled toward a particular goal (Glassman and McAfee, 1990). Enthusiasm involves risk; in particular one of three types of risk is associated with being enthusiastic. The first is performance risk, which is the risk that a project might fail because others don't believe in it. The second is personal risk, meaning the enthusiastic person runs the risk of being ostracized because of personal feelings. And finally the third risk is cultural. McAfee and Glassman (1990) claim our society places a premium on those who remain calm and collected and that true enthusiasm runs counter to that. Enthusiasm is the intangible energy whether inspired by a leader or by the group, that brings emotion and passion to an endeavor. The implication is that enthusiasm is the emotional fuel that drives morale.

The third and simplest of the three morale components is persistence. A review of these three elements of morale affords a greater understanding of what morale at the Naval Academy means. Morale at the Naval Academy is the drive to satisfy needs or to receive rewards, along with the application of emotional energy and risk, and finally these are pursued with a steadfast dedication towards a purpose. The next step in deciphering the relationship between leadership and morale at the Naval Academy is a glimpse into the importance of morale.

C. THE IMPORTANCE AND MEASURE OF MORALE

Officers don't have morale problems. Officers cure morale problems in others.

General George C. Marshall

Morale is considered to be of critical importance with high morale manifested in improved performance and other tangible benefits. Sociologist Arthur Pope, chairman of the 1941 Committee for National Morale, using the war in Europe as his muse wrote "Morale wins wars, solves crises, is an indispensable condition of a vigorous national life and equally essential to the maximum achievement of the individual" (Pope, 1941, p. 195). Although most would agree with Pope's sentiment, the challenge is proving it. The focus of this study is not in proving the importance of morale, which in and of itself would be a rich topic for research, but rather in exploring the relationship between leadership and morale. However, a glimpse into the importance of morale coupled with a brief review of some other research designs for measuring morale are essential in providing a more informed understanding of the broader topic.

The observation made by Manning (1991) and articulated by Britt and Dickinson (2005) is that "One of the reasons military psychologists and leaders are interested in morale is that they assume high levels of morale will translate into superior performance during different types of military operations" (Britt and Dickinson, 2005, p. 173). They further elaborate on two additional assumptions. The first that higher levels of morale are more likely to

mitigate psychological problems resulting from participation in military operations and secondly that high morale results in increased military retention.

Britt and Dickinson (2005) used their conceptualized definition of morale to inform their theory on the benefits of morale. However, they do acknowledge the difficulty in measuring their theoretical assumptions. They further explain that one difficulty in measuring the true importance of morale is the lack of longitudinal research on the construct, especially in the military arena (Britt and Dickinson.) Whether high morale leads to improved psychological function or performance or vice versa requires longitudinal measurement (Britt and Dickinson).

Military psychology since World War II has accepted as a first principle the protective power of high morale (Manning, 1991). Although several studies offer support for the importance of morale, each requires some small leap of faith or an underlying assumption in order to directly implicate morale. Studies conducted by Steiner and Neuman in 1978 and Solomon, Mikulicner and Hobfall in 1986 determined that unit cohesion rather than combat intensity more clearly differentiated stress casualties in combat troops (as cited by Manning, 1991). However, as noted and accepted by Manning's research, a leap of faith must be made that morale and cohesion are highly correlated in order for this to be considered a valid measure of morale.

Manning also looked at Stouffer's 1949 study, which questioned men from over a 100 companies during combat training prior to D-Day. The study's questions focused on attitudes about 'willingness for combat', 'confidence in combat stamina' and 'confidence in combat skill (as cited

by Manning). If the assumption can be made that these three questions capture the sentiment of morale then Manning (1991) derived from Stouffer's research that pre-invasion morale served to predict post invasion casualties (Manning, 1991).

Manning further elaborates by highlighting some of the peacetime indicators of morale. These are particularly relevant considering midshipmen in Bancroft Hall are not engaged in combat operations. Examples cited by Manning are: rate of disciplinary actions, attempts to leave the unit (legally or illegally), general smartness of appearance, care of equipment, ability to joke about difficult conditions, sick call rates, unit performance in training and athletic competition and general bragging about the traditions and accomplishments of the unit (Manning, 1991). Additionally, Manning and Ingraham (1987) found a high correlation between cohesion and battalion rankings among 20 different battalions over nine objective measures including physical fitness tests, inspections scores, and courts martial. However, no other studies have uncovered such high correlations with Manning's belief being that outside of the military other outside influences have a greater impact on morale and cannot be accounted for (Manning and Ingraham, 1987). The most important thing to note in Manning's entire study of measuring morale is that the fundamental assumption must be made that morale and cohesion are one and the same (Manning, 1991).

It seems to be universally accepted that morale is important. However, to assess that claim assumptions must be made. Even in light of these assumptions it is not difficult to make the jump to believing that high morale

influences positive performance. The previously discussed examples serve to demonstrate this point and serve to bolster the assumptions and make this leap of faith more palatable. The real relevance of this review to this study is that whereas minor assumptions may be made the research body is robust enough so that morale can be accepted as a reliable indicator of positive performance.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MORALE

The central focus of this study is to determine if a link exists between leadership and morale at the Naval Academy. To this end the entering assumption is that leadership can positively or negatively influence morale. Up until this point, considerable time has been spent on the definition of morale, an exploration of the importance of morale, and some examples of attempts to quantify it. This has been time well spent as it better informs the discussion. The next portion of the literature review serves to bolster the central theme of this research and highlights some of the key studies exploring the relationship between leadership and morale.

The first theory that deserves attention is the Mayo Theory. Medalia and Miller (1955) provide an in-depth review of Elton Mayo's theory, which served to lift discussions on leadership and morale from the realm of social theory into the arena of scientific research (Medalia and Miller, 1955). According to Mayo: the modern work leader or administrator must concern him or herself explicitly and continuously with the maintenance of morale in the work situations for which he or she has responsibility (as cited in Medalia and Miller, 1955). The theory explicitly states "human relations leadership

increases the morale of work groups, which in turn is a factor necessary to bring about sustained increase in productivity or efficiency of those groups" (p. 348). Although not specifically stated, the implication is that positive leadership characteristics yield high morale and vice versa. The Mayo Theory is consistent with the central hypothesis of this research that midshipmen morale is influenced directly by company leadership.

Medalia and Miller's introduction of the Mayo Theory in their study provides a starting point from which they soon deviate. The central hypothesis of Medalia and Miller's research is that morale is a by-product of increased efficiency and that morale is not necessarily exclusively linked to leadership (Medalia and Miller). Medalia and Millers' research measured the morale of airman stationed at numerous air sites, and they paid particular attention to the degree of satisfaction with service at the particular sites.

In part of their study they determined that the degree of satisfaction was strongly associated with the degree to which these men perceived their commanding officer as human relations minded (Medalia and Miller). However, when they controlled for leadership perception, the determination was made that operating efficiency was a factor associated with morale but independent of leadership (Medalia and Miller). So although their study certainly showed links between leadership and morale they were not quite ready to state that they were directly related. In summation, their belief is that a unit's efficiency and productivity has a direct influence on unit morale and must be evaluated apart from leadership. However, the bottom line is that an

undeniable relationship exists between leadership, morale, and efficiency and although Miller and Medalia stopped shy of making a direct connection between leadership and morale they concede that a relationship was clearly evident.

Additional studies provide further insight and a slightly different perspective on the subject. A study conducted by Harrell and Miller (1997) on the influences of women on readiness, cohesion, and morale specifically in military units provided some compelling data. They determined the single greatest influence on morale was leadership and chain of command (Harrell and Miller, 1997). Results of an open-ended questionnaire administered to 936 service members, showed that of the 936 polled, 261 specifically mentioned leadership and chain of command as having the greatest influence on morale.

Another study conducted on small unit cohesion in Norwegian Navy Officer Cadets showed the positive influence of strong small unit leadership on cohesion and that all experiences were enhanced by a positive leadership climate (Bartone, 2002). Similar to the Medalia and Miller study, Bartone noted an indirect link between leadership and unit morale through cohesion; stating that small unit leadership through its importance to unit cohesion directly influenced morale (Bartone, 2002). This reference is particularly informative and serves to strengthen Manning's position reviewed earlier on the relationship between morale and cohesion.

Blocker and Richardson (1963) looked at the question of leadership and morale but in a classroom and educational environment, which is relevant considering the duality of the Naval Academy's military and academic setting. They

wanted to measure the importance of the administrator on morale. Linder's study (as cited in Blocker and Richardson, 1963) found that one of the influences on reduced morale from a teacher's perspective was lack of leadership from the school administration. Blocker and Richardson looked at numerous other studies of a similar nature and found similar results.

The previous studies have approached the relationship between leadership and morale from the perspective of the commander's attention to the welfare of subordinates. The next study reviewed takes a different approach. Hamblin, Miller, and Wiggins (1961) researched the relationship between leadership and morale from a competence perspective. They initially highlighted the concept articulated by noted social psychologist Kurt Lewin that democratic leadership that solicits inputs from members of the organization increase morale and that conversely autocratic leadership which is exercised through centralized decision making decreases morale (as cited by Hamblin, Keith, and Miller, 1961). The implication is that opportunities for initiative and creativity are squashed by a dictatorship style of leadership.

In contrast to Lewin's hypothesis, Cooley (1956) and Simmel's (1950) morale competence hypothesis is mentioned by the authors. Their hypothesis claims that the competence of the leader in relation to other members of the organization influences morale in the sense that the leader is more competent than other members of the group than morale will be high and vice versa (as cited in Hamblin et al., 1961). The inevitable conflict between these two theories is evident. Is competent leadership

enough to overcome the morale challenges inflicted by an autocratic leadership style? The third theory introduced is a combination of Lewin and Cooley's theories that states "if morale is negatively related to the number of conflicting suggestions and if the number of conflicting suggestions is negatively related to perceived competence, then morale will be positively related to perceived competence" (Hamblin et al., 1961, p. 298).

An experiment using 42 male college students associated with Army and Air Force ROTC was conducted to test the three presented theories. The experiment consisted of artificial leadership characteristics that demonstrated competence or lack thereof from fictitious leaders. The experiment and data supported the perceived confidence theory introduced by Cooley. The following is Cooley's own description of his theory:

It is felt...that the differences among men should be functional and intrinsic, not arbitrary or accidental. The sense of justice is usually strong among the members of a...group, the basis for determining what is just being the perception of some purpose which every one is to serve, each in his own way, so that he who rightly holds a higher place is the one who can function best for the common good. It does not hurt my self-respect or me allegiance to remain a common seaman while another becomes captain of the ship, provided I recognize that he the fitter man for the place; and if the distribution of stations in society were evidently of this sort there would be no serious protest against it. (pp. 180-181)

Cooley's theory has implications for the Naval Academy and could be considered when selecting midshipmen leadership. The implication is that morale can be positively influenced merely by selecting a leader that members of an organization deem competent.

The connection between leadership and morale is clear. Whether it is the competence of the leader or their attentiveness to the needs of subordinates, leadership is a tangible factor in the morale of organizations.

E. SUMMARY

President Eisenhower said that "Morale is the greatest single factor in successful wars." If there is any truth to this quote, then the study of morale is essential to the military commander. Morale as defined for the purpose of this research is the drive for midshipmen to satisfy needs or to receive rewards, while applying emotional energy and risk, pursued with a steadfast dedication towards a purpose.

This definition has been informed and shaped by the work of social scientists highlighted above. Additionally, their work has shown that morale leads to increased effectiveness and improved performance and that these increases can be measured. Finally the link between leadership and morale is indisputable. This brief review of scientific research on morale serves to justify, empower, and excite the original theory and effort of this research, the effort to show that midshipmen leadership has an influence on morale at the Naval Academy.

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III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology and procedures used in this study. The instrument used for data collection was the 2006 Naval Academy Climate Survey. The survey was developed and administered at the request of the Commandant of Midshipmen by the Naval Academy's Office of Institutional Research (IR).

For the present study, groups of questions were logically selected from the survey that captured similar sentiments relevant to leadership and morale. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha tests were conducted to provide statistical support to question selection and grouping. Finally, a regression was run to measure the contribution each grouping of questions had in predicting morale. The analysis program SPSS 14 was used to evaluate the data for this research.

B. SURVEY

The Naval Academy Climate Survey evolved from an unofficial exploratory survey developed by Midshipmen in the Spring of 2004. Initially it was used as a tool to assess levels of equal opportunity and climate but once its value was recognized by the Naval Academy administration, it developed into a more thorough instrument for measuring overall climate with a particular emphasis on midshipmen leadership behaviors and company specific issues.

The survey consists of 65 closed questions and one open comments question. The questions are formatted on a Lickert scale. The survey is cross sectional and

administered in March of each academic year. The survey is web based and administered online. This method allows for ease of data collection and accessibility by the midshipmen.

C. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Climate Survey data from its 2006 administration were used for this study. The Climate Survey was administered to a random sample of 50% of the Brigade of Midshipmen. The resulting sample size was 2,190 (N=2,190). Of that target sample, 1,597 completed the survey and ultimately, usable data on 1,575 respondents were obtained; representing a 72% response rate. Given that the survey was a random sample, the results can be generalized to the entire Brigade of Midshipmen. The final sample was checked for representativeness.

D. VARIABLE DESCRIPTION

Not all questions in the climate survey were applicable to leadership; therefore when determining variables for inclusion in the present study it was necessary to logically select relevant questions. The dependent variable morale as operationalized by question 65: On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), rate the overall morale of your Company. The initial 15 independent variables which were listed under the leadership heading in the climate survey are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Questions from Survey on Leadership

1. The company midshipman chain of command is supportive of me when I falter.
2. My squad leader is available anytime I need him/her.
3. The midshipmen chain of command is working hard to make my company the best company in the Brigade.
4. The standards set by the First Class are clear to me.
5. The standards set by the First Class are applied consistently.
6. My midshipmen company chain of command promotes teamwork.
7. The First Class in my company upholds the standards.
8. How effective is the midshipman chain of command in leading my company?
9. A grievance or complaint would be given a fair hearing in my company.
10. The policies in this company are designed so that all members are treated equally.
11. The midshipman company leadership recognizes people who deserve it.
12. I am satisfied with the working relationships I have in this company.
13. The company is fair.
14. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate foul or offensive language within the company.
15. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate off-color, offensive or inappropriate jokes within the company.

The next step in defining the independent variables involved rational judgment to develop leadership constructs. In short, questions were grouped logically based on similar sentiments and then assessed for internal consistency using Chronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Thus, three leadership composites were constructed with three questions left to be evaluated individually as they did not fit well into any of the groupings. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the composite groupings.

Table 2. Composite Groupings of Questions on Leadership

Group 1: Questions on Standards	
4.	The standards set by the First Class are clear to me.
5.	The standards set by the First Class are applied consistently.
7.	The First Class in my company upholds the standards.
Group 2: Questions on Equal Opportunity and Civility	
9.	A grievance or complaint would be given a fair hearing in my company.
10.	The policies in this company are designed so that all members are treated equally.
13.	The company is fair.
14.	The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate foul or offensive language within the company.
15.	The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate off-color, offensive or inappropriate jokes within the company.
Group 3: Questions related to Chain of Command	
1.	The company midshipman chain of command is supportive of me when I falter.
3.	The midshipmen chain of command is working hard to make my company the best company in the Brigade.
6.	My midshipmen company chain of command promotes teamwork.
8.	How effective is the midshipman chain of command in leading my company?
Questions Evaluated Individually	
2.	My squad leader is available anytime I need him/her.
11.	The midshipman company leadership recognizes people who deserve it.
12.	I am satisfied with the working relationships I have in this company.

E. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The final step in the research methodology was regression analysis. The newly formed composite groups and the remaining individual questions were entered as predictors in a linear regression analysis in order to determine their influence over the dependent variable (morale).

F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The methodology used in this research was designed to determine the influence of leadership on morale. The primary goal was to affirm statistically what was suspected intuitively and that is the assertion that good leadership positively influences morale.

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IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

Data from the 2006 Brigade Climate survey were evaluated using the SPSS 14 statistical software program. The first step was selecting a subset of questions that seemed to focus on leadership topics. From this narrower scope the questions were organized into smaller groupings that intuitively appeared to capture similar concepts. These smaller groupings were then tested for reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha model and those that were deemed reliable were analyzed as composites. The three questions that did not easily fit into groups were evaluated independently. These variables not only failed to "load" into a composite but additionally a correlation matrix showed that they were capturing similar sentiments from the existing composites and were eliminated from further analysis. The newly formed composite groups that became the new independent variables were entered as predictors in a linear regression analysis to determine their influence over the dependent variable (morale).

B. ALPHA TESTING AND NEW VARIABLES

The 2006 Brigade Climate survey included 66 questions. From that 66, 15 questions were selected because of their apparent applicability to leadership. Those 15 questions were further organized logically into three groupings with three remaining questions that did not belong with the other groupings and were dropped from the analyses. These three new composite groupings were then analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha model. The Alpha's for each of the groupings were greater than .75 indicating a strong

reliability. From these homogenous or internally consistent groupings three new variables were developed. These variables were created by taking the means of the questions from each group. The new variables were then evaluated through linear regression to determine their influence over morale. The groupings and Cronbach's Alpha model are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Composite Groupings and Cronbach's Alpha

Composite Variable	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Group One: Standards	4. The standards set by the First Class are clear to me.	.868
	5. The standards set by the First Class are applied consistently.	
	7. The first class in my company uphold the standards.	
Group Two: Equal Opportunity	1. The company midshipmen chain of command is supportive of me when I falter.	.833
	3. The midshipmen chain of command is working hard to make my company the best in the Brigade.	
	6. My company chain of command promotes teamwork.	
	8. How effective is the midshipmen chain of command in leading my company additionally?	
Group Three: Equal Opportunity and Civility	9. A grievance or complaint would be given a fair hearing in my company.	.781
	13. This company is fair.	
	14. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate foul or offensive language within the company.	
Group Three: Equal Opportunity and Civility	10. The policies in this company are designated so that all members are treated equally.	
	15. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate off-color, offensive, or inappropriate jokes within the company.	

C. PEARSON CORRELATION

The next step in the data analysis was to produce a Pearson correlation matrix. The purpose of the Pearson correlation matrix was to further evaluate the newly

constructed independent variables against the dependent variable to ensure that each independent variable exerted an individual influence over morale and that the effect could not be attributed to another variable. This serves to help narrow the variable list and ensure the validity of the independent variables that are ultimately put into the regression. The correlation table is below in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Matrix of Variables				
	Q65 Morale	Standards	Equal Opportunity (q9,10,13,14,15)	Chain of Command (q1,3,6,8)
Morale	1			
Standards	.429(**)	1		
Equal Opportunity and Civility	.543(**)	.636(**)	1	
Chain of Command	.576(**)	.706(**)	.696(**)	1

** = $p < .01$

According to the table, the independent variable standards was correlated the least with morale indicating that the other independent variables might be capturing the same characteristics.

D. REGRESSION

The final step was to conduct a linear regression with the constructed composite variables and morale. The purpose of this regression is to measure the influence that each of the independent variables actually exerts over the dependent variable morale. Table 5 below is the summary for the regression.

Table 5. Model Summary for Regression of Composite Independent Variables against Dependent Variable Morale.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.611(a)	.373	.372	.827

Table six below show the coefficients for the Independent Variables:

Table 6. Coefficients of Independent Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.536	0.098		5.478	0.00
Standards (q4,5,7)	-0.034	0.03	-0.034	-1.15	0.251
Equal Opportunity (q9,10,13,14,15)	0.363	0.038	0.28	9.541	0.00
Chain of Command (q1,3,6,8)	0.487	0.038	0.408	12.77	0.00

a Dependent Variable: 65. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), rate the morale of your company.

The independent variable “standards” did not prove to be statistically significant thereby verifying what was suspected after running the Pearson correlation: the fact that other indicators are capturing the same sentiment attempted to be measured by “standards.”

E. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the data analysis were presented in order to provide a blueprint of the quantitative approach taken. Ultimately, it served to highlight and present the quantitative statistical results. In the final chapter conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for further research will be presented.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to determine if a link between specific leadership characteristics and unit morale could be established quantitatively. Like most research, this effort was accomplished with varying degrees of success and ultimately served to uncover more thought provoking questions than tangible answers. However, it can be said with confidence that certain leadership behaviors have a positive impact on unit morale at the United States Naval Academy. The preceding statement serves to answer the original proposed research question, which was: How do midshipmen leadership traits influence company morale as measured by the Naval Academy Climate survey?

The first step in the research process was a review of the relevant literature on morale and in particular its relationship to leadership in a military context. The central and most informative points ascertained from the literature review were focused on the definition of morale itself. Based on a consolidation of the literature, morale is described as the motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence, with which individuals engage in prescribed activities.

This point and definition proved interesting in contrast to what has seemed to be the accepted definition of morale in a military context, a definition that is more centered on how a service member feels and his or her quality of life. Additionally, another commonly shared literature sentiment is that a higher level of unit morale translates into better unit performance. And finally while

it has been difficult for researchers to make a direct connection between levels of morale and unit leadership the literature makes strong anecdotal connections that cannot be ignored.

The instrument used for the quantitative analysis was the Naval Academy Climate survey. The survey consisted of 66 questions with 15 that specifically focused on leadership related topics. The dependent variable was drawn from the survey questions and asked members to rank the overall morale in their company. From the 15 leadership questions, composite groupings were formed and used as independent variables to measure their influence on the dependent variable morale.

Ultimately the results of the analysis revealed that specific leadership traits particularly those relative to chain of command and equal opportunity exerted a positive influence over company morale.

B. CONCLUSION

The ultimate determination is that certain leadership characteristics have a positive influence on morale. The real value in this determination is leaders at the Naval Academy can be provided with statistical proof and guidance with regard to leader development based on these findings. Both composite groupings centered on chain of command and equal opportunity showed a statistically significant relationship to company morale. In short, the more these leadership traits were exercised by company leadership the better the morale was in the company.

More specifically these composite groupings consisted of individual leadership characteristics that summarized a broader leadership trait. The specific characteristics

that related to chain of command were constructed from the following individual leadership characteristics: leadership being supportive of individuals who make mistakes, a chain of command that is working towards making its company the best in the brigade: a chain of command that supports teamwork; and one that is effective at leading a company. With regard to equal opportunity, the grouping captured these characteristics: fairness in addressing grievances; equal treatment: overall fairness, and tolerance of foul language and jokes.

Surprisingly, standards set by the leadership and enforcement of standards turned out to be not statistically significant. These included: standards made clear, standards applied consistently, and standards being enforced. This flies in the face of common leadership perceptions and was one of the surprises of this research. A possible explanation for this will be highlighted in further discussion.

Another interesting conclusion from the literature was that there is a difference in the scholarly definition of morale and what appears to be the common interpretation of what unit morale means. The common definition of morale seems to be more centered on a servicemember's quality of life with a particular focus on creature comforts like food, shelter, liberty, and incentives whereas the scholarly definition is more about a member's motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence towards a prescribed activity.

The implications of this are evident when questions of morale are placed into a survey or attempts at measuring morale are made as it is critical that the individuals being assessed understand the definitions of concepts they

are being asked to evaluate. Furthermore, it is equally important that individuals who attempt to measure morale understand exactly what it is they are trying to measure. The real challenge is to determine if issues of satisfaction and quality of life are interconnected and directly related to motivation and persistence. The USNA survey's intention was to get a glimpse into the overall climate of Bancroft Hall and not specifically morale, so to better flush out the morale issue a more specific survey would be recommended.

C. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary limitation to this study centers on the definition of morale. As previously discussed, it is equally important for the individuals drafting the survey instrument and the individuals being surveyed to have a common understanding and operational definition of morale. However, it is important to highlight that the Naval Academy Climate Survey was not drafted specifically to address morale but overall climate in Bancroft Hall. This may account for the statistically non-significant relationship between leadership standards and morale, in contrast to the significance of equal opportunity and chain of command support- which have a more nurturing feel- in predicting morale.

Although this research strengthens the hypothesis that there exists a tangible link between leadership and morale, to more accurately assess specific characteristics and how they influence morale a survey more targeted to morale must be designed. A survey that assesses not only quality of life issues but issues related to an individual's motivation and persistence towards given tasks along with

opportunities and resources available to accomplish those goals is needed. The ultimate recommendation of this effort is that leaders recognize the composite groupings that did have a particular influence and try and address and incorporate those into their leadership training as well as their in to their own organizations and leadership practices.

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APPENDIX. NAVAL ACADEMY CLIMATE SURVEY 2006

Brigade Climate Survey

Page 1 of 11

From the office of
CAPT Bruce Grooms
 Commandant of
 Midshipmen

Brigade Climate Survey 2006



	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
1. The company midshipman chain of command is supportive of me when I falter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. My squad leader is available anytime I need him/her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The midshipman chain of command is working hard to make my company the best company in the Brigade.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The standards set by the First Class are clear to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The standards set by the First Class are applied consistently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. My midshipmen company chain of command promotes teamwork.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The First Class in my company upholds the standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How effective is the midshipman chain of command in leading my company?

☐	Not effective at all
☐	A little effective
☐	Sometimes effective; sometimes not
☐	Generally effective
☐	Very effective
☐	No opinion/not applicable

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
9. A grievance or complaint would be given a fair hearing in my company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The policies in this company are designed so that all members are treated equally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The midshipman company leadership recognizes people who deserve it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I am satisfied with the working relationships I have in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. This company is fair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate foul or offensive language within the company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The midshipmen company leadership does not tolerate off-color, offensive, or inappropriate jokes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

within the company.							
---------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

16. If you had a personal issue, with whom would you feel comfortable speaking? (Please select all that apply.)

☐	Company officer
☐	SEL
☐	Company commander
☐	Platoon commander
☐	Squad leader
☐	Character Representative First sergeant
☐	ECA/athlete team members
☐	O Rep/coach
☐	Someone outside of the company, but a part of USNA
☐	Someone not associated with USNA
☐	No one



Fraternization

17. How often, if ever, have you observed in-ranks dating (fraternization) within the upper three classes in your company?

☐	Never
☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

18. How often, if ever, have you observed fraternization between the upper-class and plebes in your company (inappropriate social relationships between upper-class and plebes)?

☐	Never
-----------------------	-------

☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
19. If fraternization was taking place in my company, I feel confident my company mates would appropriately address it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. My company takes prompt action to stop fraternization when it occurs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Alcohol Use/Abuse

21. How often have you observed alcohol stowed in company spaces?

☐	Never
☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

22. How often have you observed midshipmen consuming alcohol in your company spaces?

☐	Never
-----------------------	-------

☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

23. How often have you observed underage drinking by midshipmen in your company?

☐	Never
☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

24. How often have you observed members of your company binge drinking (defined as having more than five beers, or five glasses of alcohol or wine in one sitting)?

☐	Never
☐	Rarely (once or twice since the Fall reform)
☐	Occasionally (about 3-5 times since the Fall reform)
☐	Often (about once a month since the Fall reform)
☐	All the time (regularly observed)
☐	No opinion

25. If drinking became a problem with anyone in my company, I feel confident my teammates would appropriately address it.

☐	Strongly disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Neutral
☐	Agree
☐	Strongly agree
☐	Don't know/not applicable



Religious Tolerance

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
26. I have ample opportunity to practice my faith if I choose to do so.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. I am able to observe my faith traditions without fear of reprisal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. The members of my company tolerate the customs of my faith.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. The members of my company acknowledge my faith and beliefs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Discrimination against members of minority faiths is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. Faith orientation makes no difference when punishment is given in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. Faith orientation has little influence in the selection of company perks or positions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I feel free to report unfair religious treatment in this company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

without bad things happening to me.						
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Gender Equity

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
34. The sexual harassment training provided by the company is helpful in identifying ways to prevent sexual harassment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. Discrimination against men is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. Discrimination against women is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. It is more difficult for a woman to succeed in this company than a man.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. Women have little influence or power in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. It is more difficult for a man to succeed in this company than a woman.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. While in this company, I have been the target or						

victim of sexual harassment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. I fear being the target of false accusations of sexual harassment or assault.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. I feel free to report sexual harassment without fear of bad things happening to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. Sexual harassment training is taken seriously in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. I feel comfortable in reporting incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct to the midshipmen company leadership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. Actions are being taken in this company to prevent sexual harassment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. The midshipman leadership in this company enforces the Navy's policy on sexual harassment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion/not applicable
47. The discrimination						

training provided by the company is helpful in identifying ways to prevent discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. Discrimination against Hispanics is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. Discrimination against African-Americans is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. Discrimination against other minorities (Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, etc.) is common in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. Race/ethnic group makes no difference when punishment is given in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. Minorities have little influence or power in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. I feel free to report unfair treatment in this company without bad things happening to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. I fear being the target of false accusations of racial/ethnic discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Climate

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/not applicable
55. I enjoy being a member of this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. Members of specific teams, clubs, or ECAs receive preferential treatment in my company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. I feel safe in my company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. I have to work harder to get positively recognized than other people in the company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59. The discipline system in this company is fair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
60. The midshipman chain of command in this company is an effective way to resolve equal opportunity problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
61. This company values people with different cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
62. I am satisfied with the overall quality of leadership I receive in this company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
63. My experiences in this company have encouraged me to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

stay in the Navy.						
64. I have received Equal Opportunity training in this company in the past year.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

65. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), rate the overall morale of your Company.

☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
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66. Please use this space to provide any feedback that you would like to share about your company, explain any of your responses, or to address any concerns you have previously felt reluctant to share.

Thank you for your participation.



Submit Information

--- OR ---

Reset All Answers

Return to the [USNA Home Page](#), without submitting a survey.

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