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An Organizational Climate Assessment of the Army Contracting Workforce

December 2016

MAJ Magen L. McKeithen, USA

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Rene G. Rendon, Associate Professor
Dr. Edward H. Powley, Assistant Professor

Graduate School of Business & Public Policy

Naval Postgraduate School

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this research is to assess the Army's contracting workforce on 13 dimensions within the area of organizational climate. This research analyzes the responses from active Army civilian and military workforce professionals. The survey questions were derived from a previously developed Navy survey on its contracting workforce and from established scales and measures relating to job satisfaction and climate. The results of this research identify those key organizational climate dimensions that are positively correlated to organizational climate, which may assist senior Army leaders in targeting recruiting, developing, and retention goals within the Army's contracting workforce.

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First, I would like to thank God for giving me the ability, patience and determination to begin and finish this research. I would also like to thank my husband, Curtis, for his continued love and understanding. Additionally, I would also like to thank my children, Savanna and JD, for understanding all the late nights and missed opportunities while I studied. I would be remiss if I did not thank my advisors, Dr. Rene Rendon and Dr. Edward H. Powley, for working tirelessly with me during my educational journey.

I would not be here without God's grace and mercy. I thank God every day for I am grateful to have His hand over my life.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Magen L. McKeithen, Major, is a Contracting Specialist within the Army's acquisitions workforce, pursuing her master's degree in System Acquisitions Management. She commissioned through the ROTC program at Austin Peay State University at Clarksville, TN, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. She is married to Curtis of 15 years, and they have two children. After graduation, she will be assigned to the 408th CSB located at Shaw AFB, SC. Her long-term goal is to become a program manager, within the Combat Support/Combat Service Support Program Executive Office.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Army Contracting Command
ACE	Army Contracting Enterprise
ACF	Army Career Field
AMC	Army Materiel Command
AW	Acquisition Workforce
BBP	Better Buying Power
COCOM	Combatant Command
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CS	Contracting Specialist
DACM	Director of Acquisition Career Management
DASA-P	Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Procurement
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DAW	Defense Acquisition Workforce
DAWIA	Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act
DAWDF	DOD Acquisition Workforce Development Fund
DOD	Department of Defense
DOD IG	Department of Defense Inspector General
FAC-C	Federal Acquisition in Contracting Certification
FDO	Field Duty Office
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GS	Government Service
HCSP	Human Capital Strategic Plan
IGO	Interagency Government Agency
KO	Contracting Officer
NDAA	National Defense Appropriations Act
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NMS	National Military Strategy
QDR	*Quadrennial Defense Review*
PACOM	Pacific Command
PMA	President's Management Agenda
PM	Program Manager
PMO	Program Management Office

RCO	Regional Contracting Office
USAASC	United States Army Acquisition Support Center
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   BACKGROUND

A 2015 Congressional Research Service report identified that "in FY2014, the U.S. federal government obligated $445 billion for contracts for the acquisition of goods, services, and research and development. The $445 billion obligated on contracts was equal to approximately 13% of FY2014 federal budget outlays of $3.5 trillion" (Schwartz, Ginsberg, & Sargent, 2015, p. 2). Additionally, the procurement for goods, services, and research and development has grown, where "in FY2014, 45% of total DOD contract obligations were for services, 45% for goods, and 10% for research and development" (Schwartz et al., 2015, p. 6). The challenges that the Department of Defense (DOD) and Army contracting senior leaders now face are the increasing overall federal deficit, more than 50% of the acquisition workforce eligible for full retirement by 2016, and competition in talent management with agencies outside the DOD. Additionally, senior leaders must consider the effects of potential sequestration and senior acquisition officials' expectation for higher quality products and services purchases with federal funds (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics [AT&L] Human Capital Initiatives [HCI], n.d.). Contracting within the DOD is big business. Contracting professionals are those civilians and military persons whose responsibilities reside in assisting the services in executing their mission. All of these factors affect the well-being and satisfaction of these professionals as well as the organizational climates where they work.

Contracting as a management tool is vital to procure the goods and services that warfighters need to execute their missions. Marrying the right set of skills, experience, and education is an essential element in recruiting, developing, and retaining a competent contracting workforce. In a *Defense AT&L* article, the authors express the criticality of contracting competence. These contracting competencies are both technically and professionally required for superior performance in contracting actions, surveillance and oversight, and mitigating potential threats in fraud, waste, and abuse (Manning, Thomas, & Brooks, 2008). However, education and experience alone are not the only characteristics that the contracting workforce must exemplify; the organization's climate also plays a

critical role. Organizational climate theory describes the perceptual and objective measures of an organization's climate. Hellriegel and Slocum (1974) explain that "research on climate and dependent measures of organizational effectiveness, such as performance and job satisfaction, indicate that there is some commonality upon which to build some tentative integrative conclusions" (p. 263).

The literature review describes the dimensions used to assess organizational climate. Responses to a web-based survey administered to the Army's contracting workforce provide insights into how contracting professionals view their jobs and organizations. Additionally, results from this research will provide senior Army leaders insight on the challenges within the organizational climate that have the potential to impact recruitment and retention. The results of this research will be made available to the Army's deputy assistant secretary of the Army Procurement (DASA-P) and other senior leaders, with recommendations on improving the recruiting and retention initiatives within the Army's contracting workforce.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to assess the Army's contracting workforce on 13 dimensions of organizational climate. This research aims to answers the following questions:

- What insight does the assessment provide in correlating the climate dimensions?
- Which organizational dimensions are causing problems with recruitment and retention within the Army's contracting workforce?

C. BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

This research analyzes participants' responses as they relate to the Army's contracting climate environment. This research highlights those dimensions within the Army's organizational climate that affect the recruiting and retention goals of the contracting workforce. Research results identify trends or patterns that can be used in providing recommendations to senior leaders to improve recruiting, developing, and retaining goals within the Army's contracting workforce.

D. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This research was limited to collecting and analyzing only the Army's contracting workforce of approximately 10,000 contracting professionals. The web-based survey consists of 136 multiple-choice survey items and four open-ended fill-in-the-box questions, and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. The web-based survey was given to contracting workforce members within the 1102, 1105, 1109, and 0800 positions and their military equivalents, which does not account for any non-acquisition professionals who assist in contracting actions. Another limitation is that although there are likely other dimensions of organizational climate, the researcher chose to use 13 dimensions previously used to assess climate in the military (Navy Contracting Workforce Environment Climate Assessment; Powley, 2016). The dimensions are described in the literature review.

E. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research involved conducting a literature review on DOD Army contracting workforce and organizational climate. The literature review consists of recent literature on organizational climate, and outlines 13 dimensions of organizational climate. The survey was previously developed by the Navy, and converted these dimensions into survey items. For this research, a web-based survey was deployed to the Army's contracting workforce. Based on the survey results, this project provides an assessment of the Army's contracting workforce organizational climate. Additionally, the project provides Army senior leaders recommendations on how to improve the Army's contracting workforce organizational climate.

F. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This chapter introduced the purpose and background of this research and discussed the big business of DOD contracting and the importance of the Army's contracting workforce. In order for the Army's contracting workforce to meet the needs of the warfighter, organizations must recruit, develop, and retain competent employees. One of the ways to foster an environment that promotes the recruiting and retention goals of the Army is to emphasize a positive organizational climate. This research provides senior Army leaders considerations for improving the contracting workforce.

The following chapter provides the foundation for the research by presenting a literature review that covers the big business of DOD contracting, the contracting workforce and its challenges, and an outline of the Army contracting structure. Chapter III describes and differentiates between organizational culture and climate, and, in turn, presents the 13 dimensions used to develop the satisfaction and climate survey. Chapter IV presents the methodology for this project, describes the data sources, and discusses the 13 organizational dimensions used within the web-based survey. Chapter V includes the data analysis, findings of the research, and recommendations, and outlines the implications of those dimensions that affect the Army's contracting workforce. Lastly, Chapter VI provides the summary, conclusion, and areas for further research.

II. ARMY CONTRACTING WORKFORCE

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the foundation for analyzing some of the most recent contracting reforms and the potential benefits and challenges they present to the Army's contracting workforce from 2008 to present. Contracting is the mechanism that the government uses to execute tasks. Contracting is more than just the purchase of goods and services, but is a value-added management tool that enables the DOD to develop capacity. The following section discusses the importance of DOD contracting.

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF DOD CONTRACTING

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, the DOD spent $445 billion dollars, 13% of the FY2014 federal budget, on the acquisition of goods, services, and research and development (Schwartz et al., 2015). Current trends in contracting allude to increases in service contracts, as the government has evolved from providing direct services, to now obligating and managing hundreds of billions of dollars in contracts with government, non-government, profit and nonprofit organizations (Cohen & Eimicke, 2008). The more complex contracting actions become, the greater the need for a contracting workforce with the requisite skills and experience. Equipping the right people with the right skills has always been one of the cornerstones of the contracting profession. The major significance of the contracting workforce is that contracting professionals are the only ones who can obligate government funds in support of executing government tasks. This requires a contracting workforce with a high level of business acumen, superior negotiating skills, a collaborative mindset, and knowledge of industry norms. However, today's contracting environment encompasses a workforce with limited experience in the various domains of research and development, test and evaluation, and major weapon systems, just to name few. It is essential that DOD reforms continue to improve the contracting workforce so that the services can accomplish their missions despite operating in an environment with fiscal and resource constraints.

The contracting workforce not only requires the skills and education to use prudence in obligating taxpayer funds, but also needs to stay abreast of industrial norms and technological advances, which create complex contracting actions. Today's contracting

reforms seem to target contracting professionals' inadequacies related to negotiating skills, cost and/or price analysis skills, requisite knowledge on information technology, and knowledge of major weapon systems support (GAO, 2005a). Shortfalls in these critical skill sets are only exacerbated by an aging workforce, where over 50% of the current contracting workforce was eligible for full retirement by 2012 (USD[AT&L], 2007). Loss of this knowledge base has the potential of stagnating some of the initiatives aimed at increasing the up-and-coming contracting professionals. This "brain drain" of knowledgeable contracting professionals poses a serious threat to the development of a contracting workforce that must meet the increasingly complex contracting actions to resource today's warfighter. Rendon, Apte, and Apte (2012) determine that "procurement of services in the DOD has continued to increase in scope and dollars in the past decade" (p. 5). With the increasing number of complex contracting actions, contracting professionals will need to gain the valuable lessons that only experience can teach. Contracting with DOD is big business, as described in the following section.

C.   THE BIG BUSINESS OF DOD CONTRACTING

In FY2014, the federal government obligated over $445 billion dollars for the acquisition of goods, services, and research and development—13% of the federal budget outlay of $3.5 trillion dollars (Schwartz et al., 2015; see Figure 1). This was an increase from previous years, beginning at the onset of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (2001–2014), when the federal acquisition spending reached approximately $290 billion. In light of the DOD's requirement of supporting and defending our national interests, both international and domestic contracting support has dramatically increased in service contracts. A mismatch remains between the acquisition workforce (AW) and the required skills to support the growing demands of contracting goods and services in a severely restrictive resources environment. The contracting workforce has not kept pace in supporting two continuous conflicts overseas.

Figure 1.   Contracting Obligations by Agency.
Source: Schwartz et al. (2015).

Source: Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation, January 2015. Figure created by CRS.
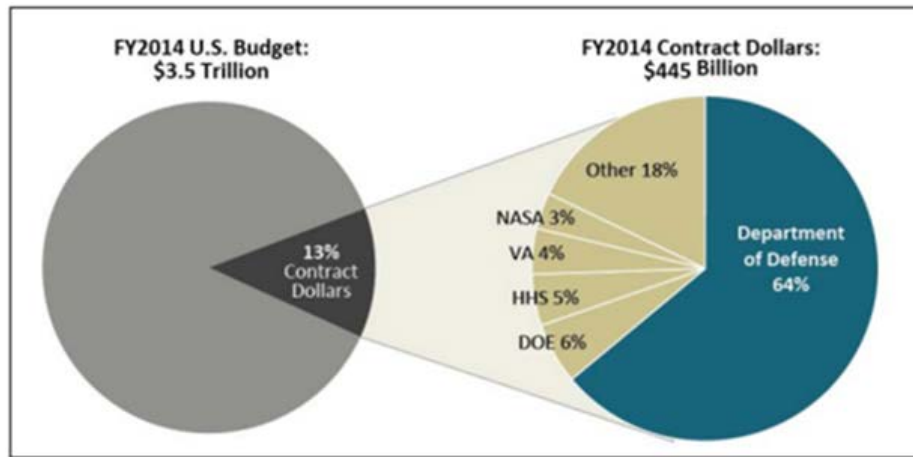
These increases in service contracts attract for-profit firms big and small to enter into contracts with DOD in various disciplines. From information technology, weapon systems, or research and development, contracting with industry will continue to rise as the government strays away from providing direct services that support the general public interests. The DOD and other Interagency Government Offices (IGOs) do not have the personnel to support the "tasks of government [which] are increasingly complex, interconnected, technological in content, and massive in scope and volume" (Cohen & Eimicke, 2008, p. 17). Industry's expertise and knowledge of advancing technologies creates a reliance that the DOD must balance on maintaining our current fighting force. This also includes a hefty price tag. The Army currently has 780 equipment programs from Acquisition Category I (ACAT I) to Acquisition Category IV (ACAT IV). Many of these programs are critical to our nation's defense and are provided by contractors. Many of the challenges of addressing the increase of service contracts involve the culture clash between the government protecting the public interest and for-profit organizations protecting commitments to their stakeholders. This requires a robust contracting workforce to effectively manage the complexities and volume of contracting actions, which are predicted to only increase. The challenges within DOD contracting are discussed in the following section.

D. THE CHALLENGES OF DOD CONTRACTING

Sometimes it is in the best interest of the county's national defense posture to rely on the expertise and technology provided by industry. Cohen and Eimicke (2008) agree that "there are some situations that make contracting so difficult it should not be undertaken" (p. 17), but they continue, "there are also some situations that make contracting so easy and effective that performing the work in-house would be bad management" (p. 17). Some of the major issues within DOD contracting include the country's reliance on contractors due to the outsourcing of public interest services and the DOD's inability to effectively implement an accountability measure for mitigating fraud, waste, and abuse. Additionally, the culture of government public servants compared to the culture of industry could not be more different. While the motivations of private firms are to increase market shares, increase profit margins, and emphasize the bottom line, government public servants are entrusted with protecting the public interests. When these two different cultures interact, they often create dichotomous business practices that sometimes conflict with government regulations. A recent report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) gives insight on the shortcomings of the DOD contracting profession, and offers reasons that the high-risk areas will be a challenge to tackle in the near future GAO, 2015-a).

1. Deficiencies within DOD Contracting

An updated GAO (2015a) report identifies the challenges the DOD continues to face within the acquisition workforce, including "(1) the acquisition workforce, (2) contracting techniques and approaches, (3) service acquisition, and (4) operational contract support" (p. 14). Although the DOD has made significant strides in addressing these issues, reports continue to highlight the knowledge and experience gap between contracting professional age groups, and inconsistent or inadequate contracting oversight and surveillance mechanisms (GAO, 2005b). One of the challenges within the acquisition profession is the retirement-eligible workforce. Contracting, in particular, is expected to see increases in knowledge and experience gaps between the retirement group and that of the early entry and mid-career contracting professionals (GAO, 2012c).

(1)   Challenges in Addressing the Retirement Eligible Acquisition Workforce

The DOD predicts that 20% of the retirement-eligible group will retire when they become retirement eligible; the Army is making every effort count by increasing mentorship programs and aligning senior contracting professionals with early entry contracting professionals. In order to mitigate the effects of a declining workforce pool and an aging acquisition workforce, the DOD has incentivized the services through their directors of Acquisition Career Management (DACMs) to establish and maintain talent management mechanisms that encourage early entry working professionals to seek employment within the contracting workforce. The DOD addresses the challenge of an aging contracting workforce by targeting generations X, Y, and prospective millennials with opportunities for higher learning, internships, student-loan-repayment plans, and even cash bonuses (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2009). Getting a younger workforce will not mitigate the knowledge gap of the senior acquisition workforce alone, but it opens the door for early entry professionals desiring a higher pedigree profession. Optimizing the time that the retirement-eligible group has with the new contracting professionals will be instrumental in maintaining the current contracting support the Army requires.

(2)   The Impacts of Force Restructuring Compared to Experience

The impacts of re-coding non-acquisition fields, in-sourcing, and the increasingly young workforce will see spikes of improvement but with continual contracting action discrepancies. Although the contracting workforce tries to mitigate the negative effects of insufficient contract administration, like for most organizations, this is a challenge. Re-coding positions causes position shortfalls in other Army career fields that are just as critical. In-sourcing positions from other career fields creates knowledge and experience disparities within the contracting workforce. It is up to the leadership to ensure that the acquisition workforce, especially the contracting workforce, has a holistic contracting perspective as it relates to supporting the warfighter. One of the reasons that contract management remains on the GAO's list of high-risk areas is due to "the lack of an adequate number of trained acquisition and contract oversight personnel" (GAO, 2012b, p. 1). Both GAO and DOD Inspector General (IG) reports emphasize the importance of the contracting workforce and provide recommendations to address some of the workforce's fundamental

weaknesses; however, contracting inefficiencies remain an emphasis within the GAO's high-risk areas. The next section includes a discussion of other discrepancies within contract management and impacts on the contracting workforce.

2. GAO High Risk Areas

Contract management has been listed within on the GAO's list of high-risk areas since the 1990s (GAO, 2005a). The inefficiencies within contract management included the acquisition workforce, contracting techniques and approaches, service acquisition, and operational contract support (GAO, 2015a). There are other areas that are just as much a concern within DOD, but the public is particularly sensitive given these negative reports and contracting professionals' statutory obligatory right to financially commit the government. The DOD has responded to these reports by increasing regulations to promote more contractor oversight and surveillance, better educating the contracting workforce on contracting types, and establishing reforms designed to enhance competition. The DOD remains the largest acquisition institution responsible for obligating hundreds of billions of dollars annually (GAO, 2015a). The criticality of the contracting workforce is of paramount importance, and the Army must better educate its contracting workforce to meet the "fight tonight" mission. To ensure that the DOD has a competent contracting workforce, the Army will need to increase its efforts from the top down. The Army must continue to focus on providing the contracting workforce with the appropriate resources to perform their jobs, as well as consider restructuring the contracting hierarchy from the top down to foster an organizational climate committed to addressing these contract management challenges.

As stated in a GAO report (2015b, p. 10), "DOD has spent approximately $1.8 billion from the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to recruit and hire about 10,400 new civilian employees" and has exceeded its planned acquisition workforce increase from about 126,000 in 2008 to more than 153,000 in 2015. Of these hires, the Army's acquisition workforce numbers decreased by about 3,300 from 2008 through 2015, which the Army attributes to cost-cutting efforts that negatively affected the overall Army strength (GAO, 2015b). Figures 2 and 3 depict the defense acquisition workforce size by service and the growth of the defense acquisition workforce. Critics claim that these increases within the contracting workforce resulted from a combination of hiring,

insourcing, and re-coding positions already within the Army's workforce (GAO, 2015b). The negative effect of incorporating non-acquisition professionals within the contracting workforce is that disparities are created in complying with required contracting procedures, as well as meeting required education levels within the contracting field. The challenges within contract management pointed out by the DOD IG are similar to challenges previously mentioned in the 2015 GAO *High-Risk List*. A synopsis of the challenges highlighted within DOD IG reports is provided next.

Figure 2.   DOD Acquisition Workforce Size by Component between September 2008 and March 2015. Source: GAO (2015b).
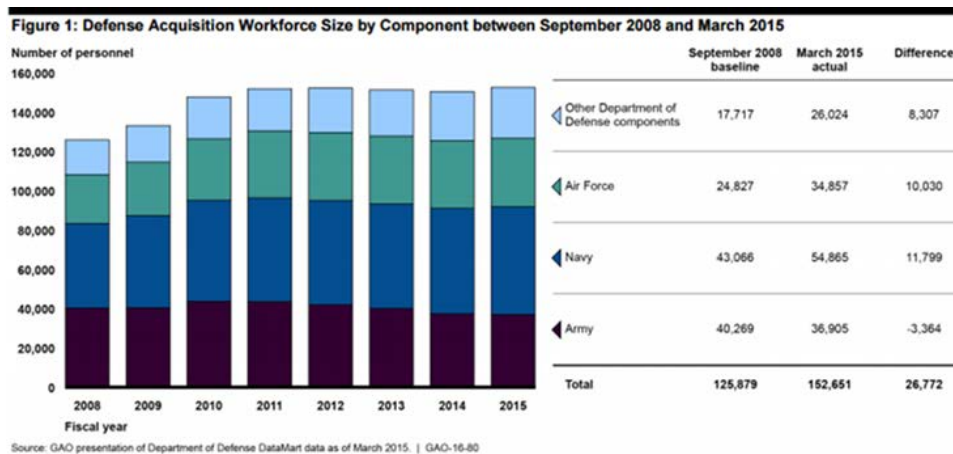
Figure 3.   DOD Acquisition Workforce Growth, September 2008 through September 2014. Source: GAO (2015b).
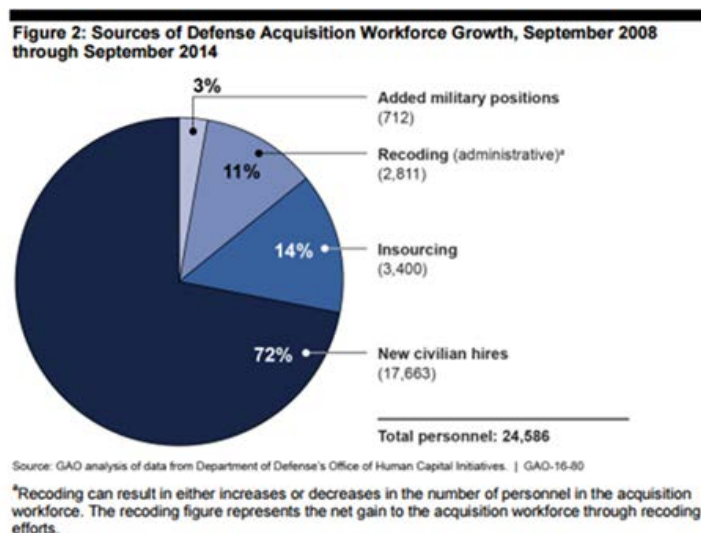
3. DOD IG Reports

In their research on past DOD IG reports, Hidaka and Owen (2015) analyzed 149 DOD IG reports between 2003 and 2010 and found that the highest deficiencies were in procurement planning, solicitation planning, solicitation, source selection, contract administration, and contract closeout. The drawdown of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan has caused an increase in contracting efforts, which critics say has led to DOD contracting commands fostering an environment that discourages internal reviews due to unrealistic solicitation and/or contract award timelines. Many of the DOD IG reports highlight the accomplishments of the contracting workforce, which is a testament of good internal reviews and oversight, and good contracting practices. However, there are numerous reports that highlight the shortcomings of the contracting workforce, processes, and contract management techniques, and DOD IG is just one of many reports that have exposed organizations and individuals that are ignoring risky shortcuts and oftentimes noncompliance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and other supporting guidelines. These reports not only highlight and suggest minor negligence, and sometimes gross negligence of individuals, but also highlight the incompetence of senior contracting officials within the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), major weapon systems officials, and all the way down to regional contracting offices (RCOs). From contingency contracting, facilities and base operations, inadequate property accountability, less than optimal contracting practices, and awarding inappropriate contract types, DOD often responds to these deficiencies with knee-jerk reactions. Some of these knee-jerk reactions trigger immediate changes in Defense Acquisition University (DAU) courses and additional contracting bureaucracy. To truly understand the complexity of the Army's contracting profession, it is essential to understand the structure and importance of the Army's contracting workforce; these are addressed in the following section.

E. ARMY CONTRACTING WORKFORCE STRUCTURE

According to the deputy assistant secretary for Army Procurement (DASA-P), the Army acquisition workforce consists of approximately 37,000 civilian and military leaders, which includes some 10,000 contracting professionals. The Army Materiel Command (AMC), which is subordinate to the Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA),

provides all acquisition support through the Army Contracting Command (ACC). The Army's contracting professionals are assigned to the ACC, which is subordinate to the AMC. The ACC is the arm of the AMC that is responsible for awarding contracts within the Army. Figure 4 provides a graphic description of the relationship between the HQDA and AMC. Figure 4 also reflects the linear relationship of the AMC with the other combatant commands (COCOMs).

The Army Contracting Command has three major subordinate organizations where a majority of the active-duty contracting workforce are assigned. Within the demographics of the Army Contracting Command, the contracting workforce is assigned to the Army's Expeditionary Contracting Command (ECC), the Military Installation Contracting Command (MICC), or the ACC Contracting Centers. Also within the demographics of the Army's contracting workforce are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Guard Bureau (NGB), and Medical Commands. Within the Army contracting workforce strength, approximately 8,000 are civilian, 1,100 are active-duty military, and the remainder belong to either the active NGB or United States Army Reserve units.

The structure of the Army's contracting workforce is both dynamic and unique. Figure 2 depicts the Army's contracting workforce—the second largest service of contracting professionals—with the Navy following with a contracting workforce of over 54,000. The Navy's numbers also include the Marine Corps contracting workforce. The structure of the Army's contracting workforce is dynamic in nature. The Army is the leading service in support of efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and provides contracting support to COCOMs in various geographic locations with different contracting needs. The AMC and ACC are unique in that while contracting professionals support COCOMs, the COCOMs do not exercise command authority over contracting organizations. The Army Contracting Enterprise (ACE) supports every aspect of the Army mission, from training to installation support, to worldwide expeditionary operations (CAPPMIS, n.d.).

Figure 4.   HQDA and AMC Command Structure Relationship.
Source: AMC (n.d-a).
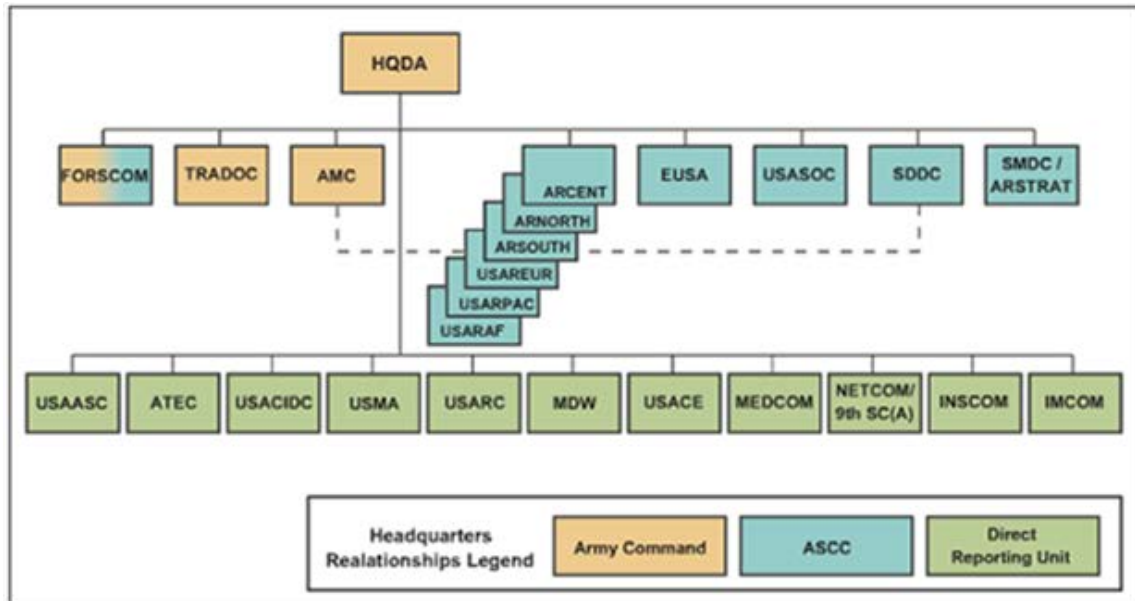
Regardless of the component, the Army conducts both operational and institutional missions (AMC). According to information provided by DASA-P, the AMC supports the warfighter by supporting the institutional mission, including delivering worldwide contracting support for contingency, mission, research and development, weapons, training, and base operations (personal communication, August 18, 2016). The AMC supports Army commands and geographical commands by providing training, equipment, and services designed to sustain and maintain existing and future capabilities, as well as procuring strategic and tactical capabilities in support of the overall mission of the Army—to fight and win our nation's wars.

The AMC has command authority over the Army Contracting Enterprise (ACE), which includes the Army Contracting Command (ACC). Figure 5 depicts the organizational command structure of the AMC and ACC.

Figure 5.   Command Organizational Relationship of AMC and ACC.
Source: Army Contracting Command (n.d.).
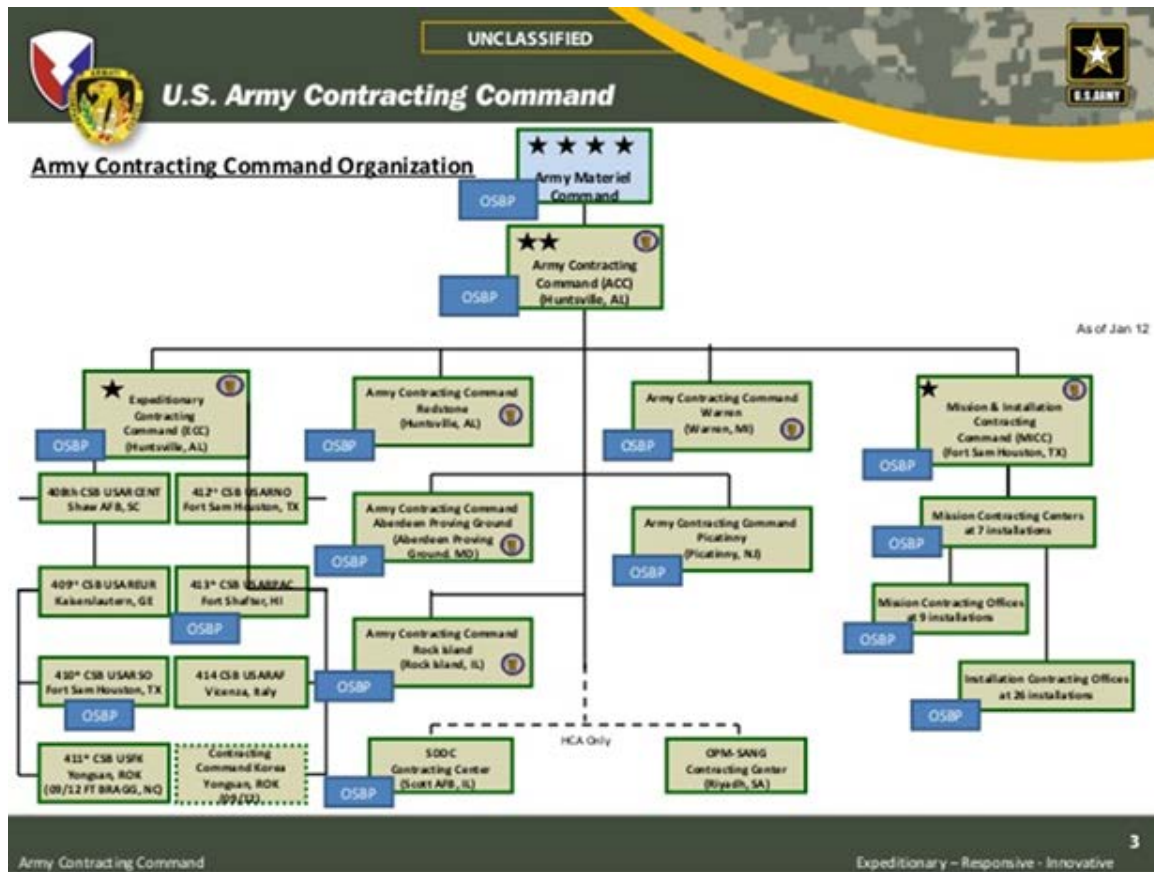
The vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Army Contracting Enterprise (ACE) emphasize the importance of the Army's contracting organizations as strategic assets to COCOM. The Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Army Acquisition Executive (AAE), and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, & Technology (ASA[ALT]) head the Army's contracting workforce. The DASA-P supports the ASA(ALT) by providing world-class leaders who deliver excellence by recognizing innovative contracting experts that influence acquisition solutions, and by being the services leader in contracting training. The Army's contracting subordinate command structure supports contracting actions that support various CONUS and OCONUS locations. The contracting workforce also supports program management offices (PMOs) for various major weapon, information, and software-intensive systems.

The Army contracting workforce structure is comprised of four heads of contracting activities (HCAs) and 33 principal assistants responsible for contracting (PARCs). Within this structure, the ACC is responsible for six contracting centers, the Army's ECC, four MICCs, and field duty offices (FDOs) that are geographically located all over the globe. Figure 6 shows the Army Contracting Command structure and the three major subordinate organizations within the ACC.

Figure 6. Army Contracting Command Structure. Source: Office of the DASA-P (personal communication, August 18, 2016).
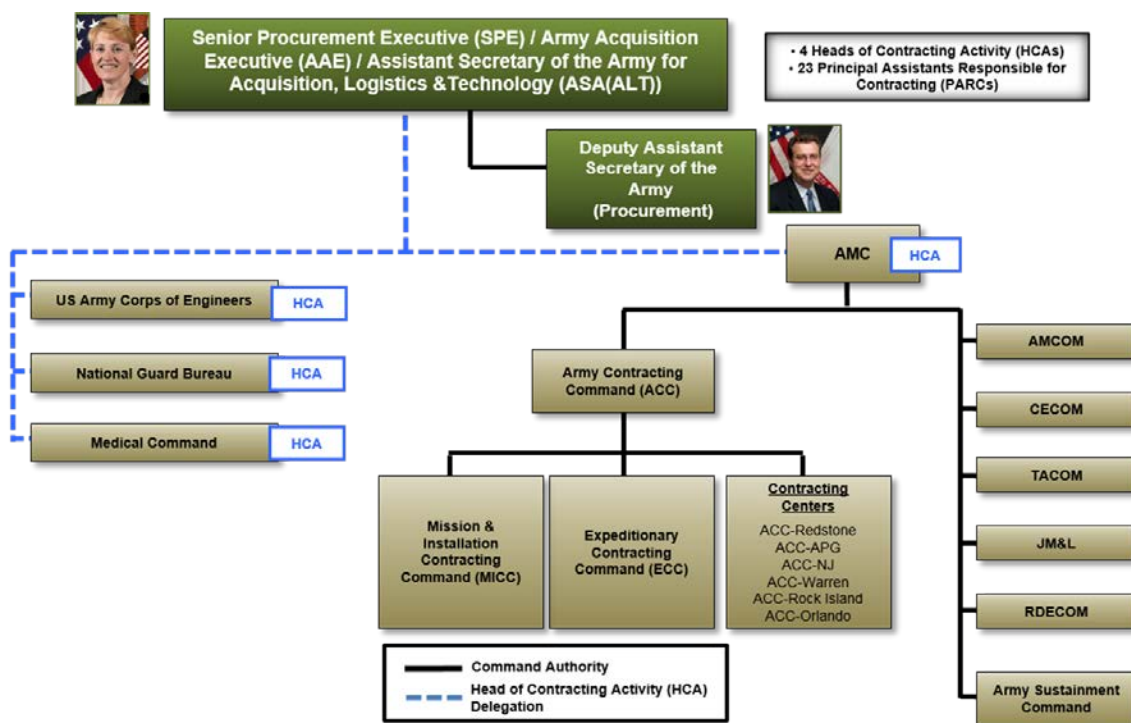
The mission of the ECC is to "provide effective and responsive contracting support for OCONUS installation operations" (ECC, n.d., Mission Statement, para. 1). The ECC has contracting command authority of eight contracting support brigades that are located in over 24 locations CONUS and OCONUS. The majority of contingency contracting teams (CCTs) support the contracting actions of ECC. CCTs are comprised of only active-duty officers and enlisted members of the contracting workforce. Each CCT is designed to support the

regional area it supports but is primarily composed of active-duty military. CCTs are primarily comprised of an officer as the team leader and three to four enlisted members.

The MICC provides base and installation contracting support to all the tenants of that base. The Army currently has three MICC brigades that provide base and installation support in 19 states, and field directorate offices (FDOs) that support contracting actions in 10 states.

Regardless of the location, all Army contracting professionals are comprised of civilian and military contracting professionals of varying Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) levels located in various parts of the world to support the warfighter. To meet the increasing demands of more complex contracting actions, the Army's contracting workforce must possess the requisite skills in order to remain relevant. One way to remain relevant is to emphasize a contracting workforce that is well educated and experienced in various aspects of acquisition, and to educate our customer base. Emphasizing the criticality of the contracting workforce as a strategic asset to combatant commands is only one means of remaining relevant within the acquisition workforce. The next section discusses the criticality of the Army's contracting workforce and the implications of developing a competent workforce.

F.   THE CRITICALITY OF THE ARMY CONTRACTING WORKFORCE

The president's Army base budget request was $126.5 billion, which was $5.4 billion more than the previous year's presidential budget request, with an additional $6 billion invested in readiness and procurement (Odierno & McHugh, 2015). According to the DASA-P, in FY2016 (1st–3rd quarter), the Army obligated over $72 billion in funds in support of operations CONUS and OCONUS, with over 297,000 contracting actions. The criticality of the Army contracting workforce is multifaceted. The contracting workforce skill set goes beyond the basics of conducting market research, providing sound contracting advice to COCOMs, and assisting end-users on requirements development. The Army contracting workforce also includes superior knowledge in contract administration and management, and exemplifies a collaborative network with acquisition and non-acquisition workforce members. The contracting professional must have an unwavering ethical demeanor, astute business acumen, and effective communication and writing skills. Many of

the skills the contracting workforce are required to have cannot be taught in a classroom. This is where experience is the best teacher. The majority of the knowledge base and experience with contracting actions reside with our civilian contracting professionals. According to a recent Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, the DOD acquisition workforce consisted of 156,457 personnel, where 90% were civilian and the remaining 10% were military members (Schwartz, Francis, & O'Connor, 2016). Although initiatives have promoted the growth of both the acquisition workforce, contracting still lags behind the procurement needs of today's fighting force. Figure 7 depicts the growth of the civilian and military acquisition workforce from 2005 to 2016. The figure highlights that the contracting actions supported by military contracting professionals is only a small fraction compared to their civilian counterparts.

Figure 7. Defense Acquisition Workforce Size, FY2005–FY2016.
Source: Schwartz et al. (2016).
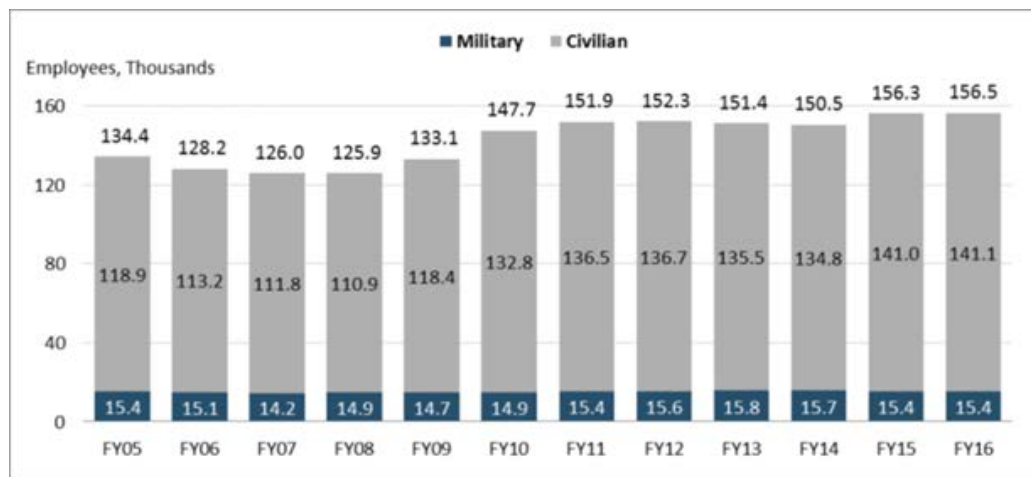
When Secretary of Defense Robert Gates came into office, he gave new meaning and a greater emphasis of the importance of growing the contracting profession. Increases within the engineering and contracting fields showed significant progress, according to a 2013 RAND report (Gates, Roth, Srinivasan, & Daugherty, 2013). Although some of the increases within several of the acquisition career fields were attributable to re-coding non-acquisition positions and in-sourcing, the increases in contracting left some disparities in education and contracting experience. According to Schwartz et al. (2016), "the size of the

acquisition workforce increased by approximately 21%, and DOD contracting obligations has increased at approximately 43%" (p. 11). In order to keep pace with the volume and complexity of DOD contracting actions, having a contracting workforce with the appropriate skill set and expertise are critical for reducing some of the vulnerabilities of contract mismanagement. Figure 8 depicts the increase of the acquisition workforce by career field from a 2015 report.

Figure 8.   Acquisition Workforce by Career Field, as of December 31, 2015. Source: Schwartz et al. (2016).
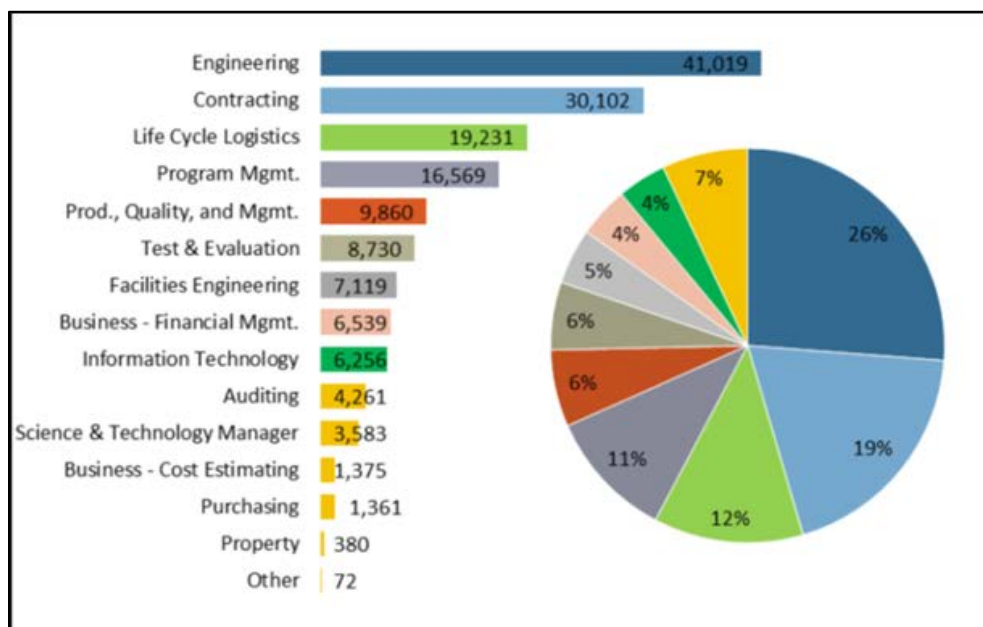
DOD acquisition workforce members are some of the most educated professionals within the DOD. According to the same report dated July 29, 2016, "96% of DOD acquisition workforce members have met DAWIA certifications requirements, and 83% of the acquisition workforce have bachelor's degrees or higher" (Schwartz et al., 2016, p. 2). The credit for increasing the knowledge base of the Army's contracting workforce can be given to DOD and Army initiatives. These initiatives and incentives funded by the DOD Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF), which support the Better Buying Power (BBP) 3.0 and other human capital investment plans, help to mitigate the effects of contracting errors, promulgated in various DOD reports.

Addressing the educational and technical expertise within Army contracting is one thing, but addressing the knowledge gap of industrial norms is another that begs serious considerations. Some of the known shortfalls within the contracting workforce involve the technological advances within information technology (IT)/cyber communities, increasing the cross-talk of major weapons systems knowledge within the PMO and supporting PMO staff, and increasing contracting collaborations of inter-service contracting actions. Having a voice in educating combatant commanders and end-users of bona-fide need requirements are also considerations that not only involve the contracting workforce, but non-acquisition combatant commanders in understanding the importance of the contracting workforce as a strategic asset. The statutory and regulatory guidance that contracting professionals adhere to is often met with contempt or seen as a roadblock. Articulating requirements development into actionable contracting actions that serve the public's interest is one of the challenges the Army contracting workforce must overcome in becoming a more effective steward of the public's trust.

With troop drawdowns in both Iraq and Afghanistan, contingency contracting immediately saw signs of increased contracting actions through contractor-led service support. Latham (2009) reveals that "as contractors replace Soldiers, the Army either loses or fails to develop the professional skills that define its core competency, thus diminishing its own expertise" (p. 43). This shift from organic service support to contractor-provided services also increases the need for contracting professionals to effectively manage the services and their associated networks. This reduction of technical and knowledge base skills increases our dependence on contractor knowledge and expertise. While many combatant commanders understand that contingency contracting is inherently valuable in supporting their troops, recent contracting reforms have exhibited an aggressive posture of implementing performance-based logistics that excludes the very customers its supports.

The importance of the Army's contracting workforce is that it must cultivate a professional workforce that has the requisite knowledge base of dealing with the culture clash between government and contractors. According to the DASA-P, during the end of FY2015, the Army procured more than $72 billion worth of goods and services, a total of over 276,000 contracting obligations. The Army remains the only contingency contracting capability in the DOD, where the AMC "accounts for 70 percent of the Army's contract dollars" (AMC, n.d.-a).

According to a 2016 CRS report, the acquisition workforce increased by approximately 21% from 2001–2015, but contract obligations have more than doubled during this same timeframe (Schwartz et al., 2016). According to the 2010 Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Strategy, during this increase, the Army acquisition workforce decreased some 3,300 positions (DAU, 2010). This reduction of positions within the Army was the effect of Army-wide cost-cutting measures felt in all organizations, and the priority of growing the contracting workforce remains paramount. The adage that Army organizational success is Army contracting success through the increased capabilities of Army commands is a testament to the contracting workforce. Without the expert wisdom and knowledge of acquisition professionals, Army organizations would have to rely on their current personnel strength in different military occupations, and with limited knowledge of acquisition policies and procedures, to procure their required goods and services. Army procurement of goods and services has increased significantly; Figure 9 illustrates the increase based on FY2013 figures.

Figure 9.   Army Contracting Command Procurement Posture Based on FY2013. Source: Hutchison (2014).
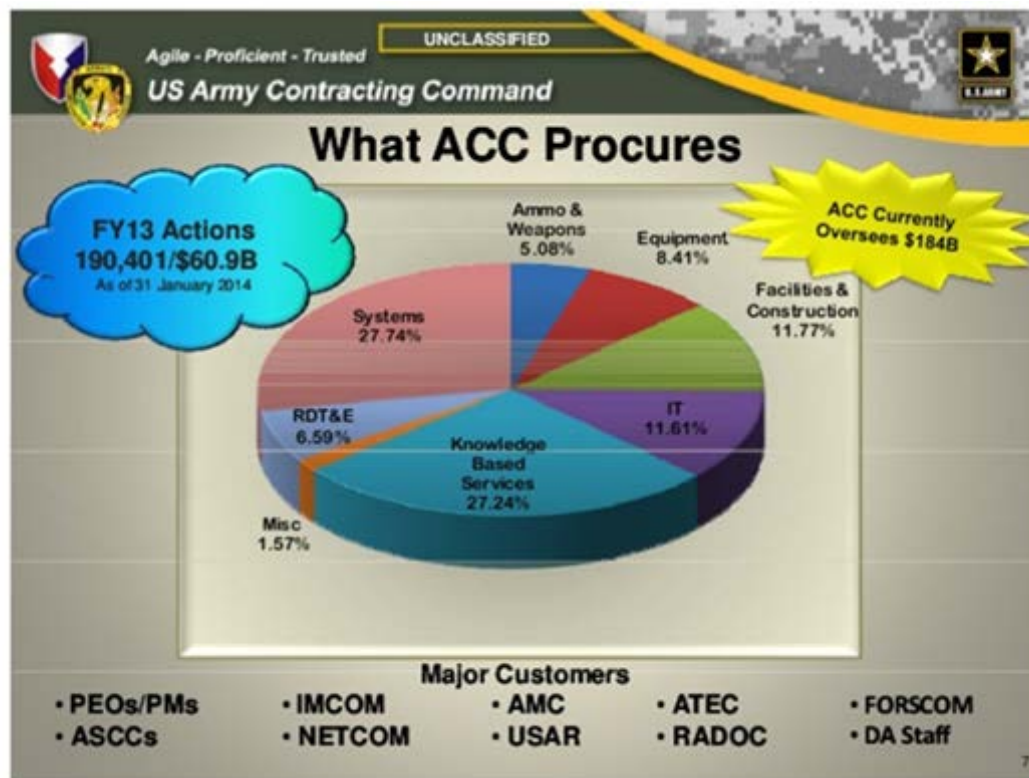
Increasing foundational contracting knowledge of non-acquisition professionals through COR and other DAU courses can assist in mitigating many of the pre-award errors that often result in fraud, waste, and abuse. Supporting the Army's modular force structure requires an Army contracting workforce versed in numerous disciplines, coupled with the technical expertise of both contractors and the customers we support. Increases within the Army contracting workforce numbers are second to targeting the knowledge gap of the current and future contracting professionals.

The DOD continues to implement Better Buying Power (BBP), and Human Capital Strategic Plans (HCSP) initiatives, with the objective of recruiting, developing, and retaining a more agile, competent contracting workforce. Additionally, the DOD has authorized its departments to incentivize its acquisition workforce with bonuses and educational initiatives to mitigate the effects of the retirement-eligible, aged contracting workforce. While investigative reports from RAND, CRS, and GAO, all highlight and criticize the DOD's less aggressive human capital methods and initiatives, the DAWDF has financially fueled several DAU and HCSP initiatives to mitigate the effects of the expected depletion of the DOD's senior acquisition professionals. These reports claim that the increases in acquisition workforce numbers are strictly due to re-coding, or arbitrarily increasing the contracting workforce with new hires. Neither of these initiatives targets the root causes of addressing the discrepancies of pre-award, post-award, and contracting administration contracting actions. The design of recent investments in human capital initiatives within the DOD and IGOs are to promote recruiting and retaining well-rounded, competent contracting professionals. The following section discusses the most recent initiatives within the DOD's Human Capital Strategic Plan (HCSP).

G.   2016–2019 AT&L HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIC PLAN

Published in June 2006, HCSP 3.0 was "created to help [senior leaders] understand and initiate strategies to address evolving global, national, federal and DOD workforce challenges" (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 3). Not only does the HCSP address the needs and challenges of various agencies, the HCSP is aligned with several of the top governing policies and directives. The HCSP is designed to ensure that initiatives within the President's Management Agenda (PMA), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), the

National Military Strategy (NMS), the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR), the DOD Civilian HCSP, and other DOD human capital plans are aligned, are consistent, and are in support of the DOD's strategic goals and missions (DAU, 2015). The DOD's continued efforts of operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with external influences that instigate terrorist's attacks, have resulted in a higher operational tempo of the Army's acquisitions workforce, and especially the contracting workforce. These threats and emerging informational technological advances have created an increased need for contracting professionals with homeland defense skills, IT and anti-access expertise, and an increased knowledge of industrial norms to mitigate the effects of exploiting our vulnerabilities. The premise of the HCSP is to ensure that "agencies have the talent, skill, and experience mix they need to cost-effectively execute their mission and program goals" (Dodaro, 2012, p. 1). Where the previous HCSP focused on identifying critical challenges within federal and DOD constructs related to the contracting workforce, HCSP 2016–2019 primarily focuses on core competencies, addressing these challenges by incorporating three domains of learning within the DAU acquisition learning model, shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10.   Defense Acquisition University Learning Model.
Source: DAU (n.d.-a).

The 2016–2019 HCSP acquisition learning model has three main domains of learning, and its primary focuses are Foundational Learning, Workflow Learning, and Performance Learning. In contrast, the areas of interest in HCSP 3.0 were as follows:

- Transformation of mission from new and evolving asymmetrical threats to protracted conflicts around the world
- New challenges associated with homeland defense
- Potential loss of retirement-eligible personnel
- Greater competition for talent with the private sector
- Evolving the DOD Total Force Construct to strategically manage contractor support. (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 8)

So how does the HCSP support the initiatives within the BBP and keep up with a depleting U.S. workforce pool of highly talented professionals in these areas of concern? The 2016–2019 Strategic Plan addresses these concerns by implementing rigorous face-to-face and online training opportunities for current and future acquisition professionals. The HCSP addresses the challenges of a depleting workforce in critical skills within the acquisition workforce by incorporating initiatives designed to appeal to generations X, Y, and millennials. These initiatives include supporting the efforts of directors of Acquisition Career Management (DACMs) in improving their components' "acquisition workforce through education, training and career management" (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 5). Older employees are characterized as having stronger work ethics and an attitude of "work to live" and "do whatever it takes," which fostered a stronger sense of employer loyalty, where their work defined them (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 11). They also did not require personal affirmation, but maintained a belief that "the system will take care of me" (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 11). In contrast, generation X, Y, and millennials' lack of the acquiescence of accepting what is given has placed more emphasis on creating a working environment that fosters increases in collaboration and continuous learning. According to the same study, younger generations are more interested in gaining "marketable skills and experience to prepare for future opportunities" (USD[AT&L], p. 11). Because younger generations have experienced the information boom that enables vast amounts of information to be accessed more speedily, targeting these professionals will necessitate an appeal to their motivations, commitments, and personal self-interests (USD[AT&L], 2007). To help improve the acquisition outcomes, a GAO report identified that the DOD needs to focus on building

workforce skills and expertise, as opposed to increasing the size of the acquisition workforce (Hutton, 2011). The following section includes a discussion of the required training and certifications of the acquisition workforce.

H.   DAWIA TRAINING AND CERTIFICATIONS

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) of 1990 was the result of failures within the National Defense Authorizations Act (NDAA) to provide the DOD with educated and experienced acquisition workforce professionals. Through the DAWIA, the DOD acquisition workforce became the only DOD agency to have a structure designed to increase the core competencies and experiences within its civilian and military members. There are three categories of certifications levels within the 14 acquisition career fields (ACFs). As determined by the DAU, DAWIA Level I, the basic or entry-level category, ranges from GS-5 through GS-9. Level II, intermediate or journeyman, are categorized at GS-9 through GS-12. Lastly, Level III, advanced or senior members, are categorized at GS 13 and above. Civilians and military members are eligible to attain their appropriate DAWIA level based on education, training, and experience. Within Army contracting, civilian and military members are required to attend two basic courses, the Army Acquisition Foundation Course (AAFC) and the Army Acquisition Basic Course (AABC). These three-week courses serve as the foundation for providing "participants with a knowledge and understanding of basic materiel acquisition and contracting principles and processes and how to apply those across the acquisition life cycle from cradle to grave" (USAASC, n.d., Scope section, para. 3). After completion of these two basic courses, civilian and military members do not have a DAWIA certification level if they have no prior contracting experience. Civilians, assessed officers, and enlisted members within the contracting career field (commissioned officers in the ranks of captain and above) "must have a baccalaureate degree or higher with 24 business hours" to obtain DAWIA Level I (USAASC, 2016, Army Acquisition Foundation Course section, para. 3). Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) must have an "associate's degree or 60 semester credit hours (with a minimum of 24 semester hours in business related fields) and have a minimum of two years of operational contracting experience" in order to be DAWIA Level I (USAASC, 2016, Army Acquisition Foundation Course section, para. 3). For civilians to be DAWIA

Level I, they must be in the grade of GS 07–13, "have a baccalaureate degree or higher, have 24 business hours," and be a member of the acquisition workforce (USAASC, 2016, Army Acquisition Foundation Course section, para. 3).

The challenge the DOD has and will have in the coming years is keeping up with the demand for more complex contracting actions. The DAU curriculum cannot keep up with increases in services and with the complexity of major weapon and information systems. Some of the initiatives within the DAU include hiring outside industry working professionals to teach at DAU centers, both online and traditional campuses, which increases value-added instruction to DAU courses and certifications. This is all in an attempt to increase the knowledge of the DOD contracting workforce within the entry- and mid-level career fields. The next section highlights the effects of the DAWDF in relation to the contracting workforce.

I.   DOD ACQUISITION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUND

The statutory purpose of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF), established by the FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), is for the DOD to restore the organic defense acquisition workforce by funding initiatives in three categories. Number one is training and development; secondly, recognition and retention; and lastly, hiring and recruitment (OUSD HCI, n.d.). The DAWDF became the mechanism to "prime the pump" in initiating new acquisition workforce hiring initiatives after recognizing that in 2015, over 76% of the DOD's current acquisition workforce would become eligible for full retirement (U.S. Army Acquisition Corps, 2011, p. 3). Wanting to minimize the effects inherent in a declining workforce, where a majority of the corporate knowledge would be lost, the fund aggressively initiated growth incentives that increased the overall workforce by 10,000 in-sourcing positions and 10,000 new hires by FY2015 service-wide (U.S. Army Acquisition Corps, 2011, p. 3). Since the fund's establishment, a FY2016 fund increase request of $84.140 million has been aggressively targeting the early- and mid-level career field capabilities gap. Additionally, the fund has been focusing on ensuring the workforce has capable, fully trained, and proficient professionals within all of the 14 acquisition career fields (ACFs) through 2030 (DOD, 2015). Of the identified high-risk areas from the GAO's 2015 *High-Risk List*, the contracting workforce within the

contracting, weapon systems, engineering, among others, continue to be major issues of concern. In 2009, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated that "we must reform how and what we buy," and said that recommendations for reform mean "a fundamental overhaul of our approach to procurement acquisition and contracting" (Eide, 2012, p. 104). The workforce's lack of breadth and depth of industrial norms, promulgate that the workforce does not have the appropriate experience in leveraging the government's bargaining power. Because of this, the military departments have started authorizing incentive programs designed to attract talent outside of the DOD (GAO, 2012c).

The DAWDF has increased funding to address the decline of critical acquisition positions that originated after the 1990s. The workforce has been strategically shaped to support future year group capacity and experience needs into 2020 and 2030 (DOD, 2015). The DAWDF-funded initiatives focus on rebuilding a strategy that reshapes the acquisition workforce year groups from a workforce in which the majority were senior career to a workforce with a better balance across the early-, mid- and senior-year groups.

The FY2016 DAWDF-funded and enacted obligation was $491,326 million, a program change of $105,052 from FY2015, but a financial decline of $10,612 million from FY2015 (DOD, 2015). The FY2017-estimated projection of $471,556 million is much less than previous years' obligations; however, the DAWDF continues to support DAU and BBP 3.0 initiatives by increasing the acquisition business acumen and other workforce capabilities. By expanding DAU classrooms to 57,000 and increasing the student resident and distance learning capacity to support 160,000 students, BBP 3.0 objectives are supported by targeting the professional, technical, leadership, and contractor networking relationships skills vital for getting the acquisitions outcomes the DOD desires (DOD, 2015). The DAWDF supports new hires initiatives highlighted in the HCSP, BBP 3.0, and other governing policies directed to increase the acquisition workforce capacity. GAO Report 16–80 reveals that "a skilled acquisition workforce is vital to maintaining military readiness, increasing the department's buying power, and achieving substantial long-term savings through systems engineering and contracting activities" (GAO, 2015b, p. 1) The future of the contracting workforce is discussed in the following section.

J.   THE FUTURE OF THE CONTRACTING WORKFORCE

The faces of tomorrow's acquisition professionals will be the faces of middle-aged, highly educated, and dedicated employees that embody mission accomplishment and exhibit all the qualities and values that are conducive to fostering effective, productive, and agile working environments. While GAO reports identify the challenges and issues surrounding the collaboration of government and for-profit workforces, other reports and articles implicitly reveal that the contracting workforce remains relevant and vital to achieving the acquisition outcomes stated in BBP 3.0 and other DOD guidance (OUSD[AT&L], 2015). There is a direct link between the projected decrease in civilian and contractor workforces and the increase of contracting professionals managing positions and services once overseen by their civilian and contractor counterparts. A RAND report entitled *The Future of the Army's Civilian Workforce* examined the effects of FY2017 civilian employment reductions. The report examined several scenarios using the RAND Inventory Model (RIM), which considered attrition patterns, hiring objectives, and hiring freezes. Interestingly, the findings revealed that if substantial cuts to Army civilian employment were implemented "to meet a workforce size of 200,000 civilians or below by FY17, the expected reductions would reduce total nominal costs to the Army by 20 percent, to $20.1 billion by FY2017" (Nataraj, Hanser, Camm, & Yeats, 2014, p. 20). While the report only describes a few selected scenarios to emphasize the importance of these workforce and projected budget cuts, many from the civilian population will look to industry to support their financial needs. The report further explains that reductions within the acquisitions workforce would have to go beyond historical reductions in hiring rates, and with the most recent HCSP and BBP initiatives, the likelihood of that occurring is less than likely. The DOD's acquisition, technology, and logistics workforce model describes civilian contracting employees by cohorts. Differentiating civilian contracting employees by cohort is to visualize the recruiting, developing, and retention objectives of the contracting workforce. This allows senior leaders to target specific cohort motivations in retaining talent. Figure 11 reflects the AT&L workforce life-cycle model.

Figure 11.   AT&L Civilian Contracting Workforce Life-Cycle Model.
Source: DAU (n.d.).
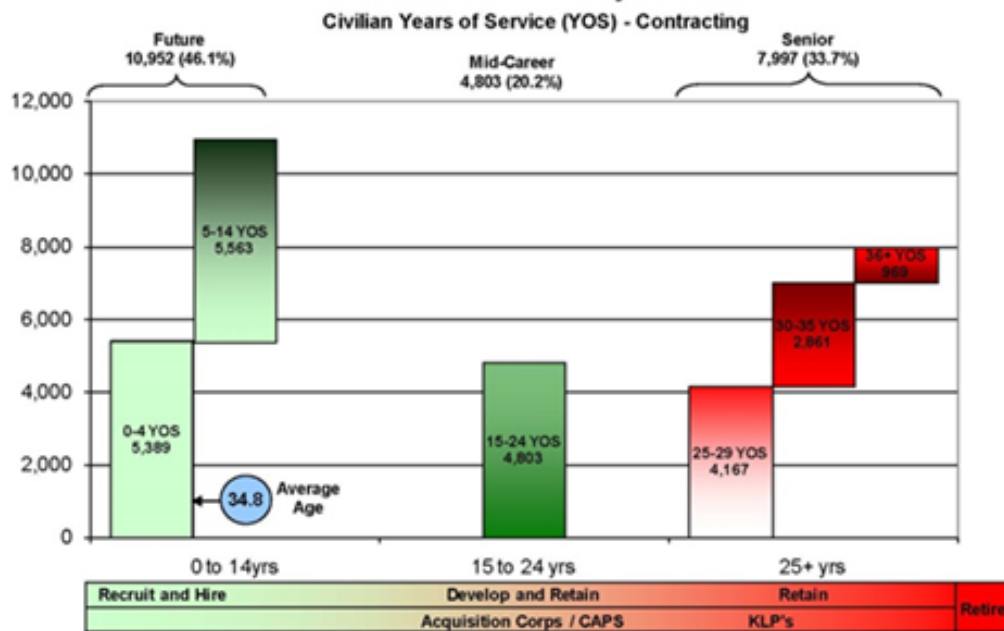
In order to maintain the talent of these cohorts, the Army, in partnership with HCSP, DAU, and BBP initiatives, has established various incentives to encourage current and future acquisition and contracting professionals to remain within the DOD.

Many of the Army's acquisition incentives are designed to encourage new entrants and current Army acquisition workforce members to optimize the opportunities for self-improvement while maintaining current employment. Some incentives focus on increasing educational opportunities, whereas others focus on inter-service and inter-agency collaboration with other contracting professionals. For a list of the Army's initiatives and incentives, refer to the Appendix; some of the acquisition workforce incentives include the following:

- The Civilian Education System: new, progressive leader development program that provides leader development and education opportunities for Army civilians throughout their careers

- Executive Leadership Program: created by the USAASC, focuses on building and enhancing leadership skills for civilian SES members and General Officers.

- Future Acquisition Student Training (FAST) Track Program: 2-year comprehensive career development program that recruits rising junior-year college students business-related degrees. This serves as a feeder program for Army Contracting and Acquisition Career Program interns.

- Senior Leadership Development Program: a unique, interagency learning experience that draws on the latest research on leadership development. (USD[AT&L], 2007, p. 29).

The result of the HCSP, which includes these incentives, is to return highly effective acquisition and contracting teams to achieve successful program and mission outcomes. These initiatives and incentives are what senior Army leaders suggest will increase the talent within the contracting workforce, but will also appeal to the early-, mid-, and senior-level contracting professionals' desires for self-improvement. The incentives are chosen to target professionals who have the appropriate skills to achieve the acquisition outcomes that the DOD desires. The next section discusses talent management within the Army.

K.   TALENT MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE ARMY

How is the Army addressing talent management within the contracting profession? In 2008, the Army officially created the Acquisition branch, which allowed basic branch qualified officers and NCOs to transfer into the acquisition branch, where over 50% were assessed to the contracting ACF. Although the Acquisition Corps' roots extend as far back as the Army itself, identifying a specific procurement branch assisted in recruiting and reclassifying officers and mid-grade level NCOs to a profession that praises the incorporation of lessons learned and best practices of procurement within their basic branches.

Military members are subject to rigorous assessments prior to acceptance within the acquisition workforce. Similarly, but less rigorous, the talent management tactics designed to appeal to highly competitive civilians include some of the initiatives already addressed. Other initiatives meant to appeal to Generation X and millennials encourage high school seniors to obtain degrees in IT, SE, and other identified critical key acquisition fields. Some services have incorporated bonuses, while the Army focuses on fostering better working environments by encouraging teleworking and encouraging advanced degrees for promotion or self-improvement.

Having a supportive organizational climate within the contracting workforce is just as vital as employing the right people, with the right skills and experience, at the right price. Organizational climate and the effects on the contracting workforce require some basic acceptable work environment norms. An organization's climate describes the tone and culture of an organization. It implicitly and explicitly reveals the perceptions of the organization as well as the loyalty of its members. The next section discusses the Army contracting structure and its organizational climate.

L. THE ARMY CONTRACTING STRUCTURE AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

The Army's contracting workforce strength is approximately 10,000 civilians and military responsible for procuring all of the Army's required resources. The Army's contracting workforce is composed of the civilians and military members charged to procure the DOD's resources in support of U.S. interests. The contracting workforce is held to higher ethical, moral, and legal standards compared to other professions within the Army. The contracting profession is the sounding board of ensuring that protecting public funds and investments are paramount, and contracting professionals must master the art and science of contract management. This responsibility applies to contracting actions from cradle to grave. Although these two basic categories of civilians and military are simple, the hierarchical nature and structure of the Army's contracting workforce is somewhat complex.

While civilians and military may work side by side, military members are normally part of a contracting team (CT) or contingency contracting team (CCT) if OCONUS. Both military and civilian contracting professionals can support operations overseas; however, military members are more likely than their civilian counterparts to be deployed in support of such operations. These teams, with their civilian counterparts, support the warfighter in all their acquisition needs but are more effective when they collaborate. That experience and the opportunity to be exposed to various contracting actions are based on DAWIA level and the workload of the organization.

As with any organization, the professionals with greater knowledge and expertise in their skill set often have a more demanding workload than less experienced contracting professionals. The higher the DAWIA certification level, the greater the responsibility, and

the more complex the contracting actions, and also the more stressful the environment a contracting professional will experience. The opposite situation can also be true. DAWIA Level I contracting professionals are given lower dollar contracting actions, which require little to no supervision and technical skill. However, this can cause dissension between the levels of expertise when higher DAWIA level professionals are required to manage their workloads and also mentor entry-level professionals. Consideration, business acumen, and past experiences also play significant roles in determining which contracting actions to assign. Not only do contracting professionals have to be subject matter experts in many aspects of contract management, but they also have to manage the culture clashes between contractor and government network environments.

A major challenge within the contracting profession is being a strategic leader that can balance both the statutory regulations required for contracting actions and also be a team player to servicing units. Additionally, contracting professionals must appropriately manage relationships between government and contractor employees. The position of being a contracting professional creates a heightened sense of awareness of unethical, immoral, or illegal intentions in contracting actions. This relationship can sometimes lend itself to intended or unintended inappropriate behaviors that may be acceptable in nongovernment organizations, but unethical when they involve government employees expected to be good stewards of the public's interests. Having to balance the notion of supporting the warfighter and abiding by statutory guidelines can cause members to experience high levels of stress.

Each contracting professional experiences varying levels of stress throughout their careers. Nevertheless, there seems to be some dissension between the military and civilian contracting workforce in the areas of education, experience, and longevity. Even within this dissension, there is some disparity between officers and enlisted contracting professionals. As with other organizations, organizations that must rely on both civilian and military expertise seem to exhibit stagnant growth in team cohesion. Military members are on a permanent change of station (PCS) rotation every two to three years, limiting their ability to gain expertise in one aspect of contracting, not to mention the challenge they face trying to experience contracting functions from different departments or sections within an RCO. One important reason for the division is that the military often feel like "hired summer help." This creates uneasiness between military members who eagerly want exposure to various

contracting actions, but face reluctance of their civilian counterparts to assign contracts that will increase exposure to different contracting actions. Every organization considers longevity when assigning tasks, and the contracting profession is no different.

Another disparity is the issuance of warrants to contracting officers. While some military professionals may be apprehensive to strive for or achieve a warrant initially, civilians consider this a rite of passage. A warranted contracting professional is a contracting officer, who is appointed to obligate the federal government for the procurement of goods and/or services. The warranted contracting officer is limited to the dollar value of the warrant, and does not have signatory authority of contracts in excess of their warrant. Similar to those contracting professionals who have greater knowledge and experiences and thus a greater workload, the higher the warrant of a contracting officer, the greater the responsibility in obligating the government.

The end of the fiscal year is like the Super Bowl for the contracting workforce. Even with assurance dates, many organizations wait until the last minute to request contracting support. This is where the stress level within the contracting workforce is extremely heightened. Organizations wanting to meet deadlines often take risks in contracting actions, just to get the job done. The saying "you're just a mod away from the perfect contract" is sometimes perceived to be the norm. It is frowned upon when organizations implement streamlined actions at the end of the fiscal year that under normal circumstances would not be implemented. These perceived shortcuts sometimes cause contracting professionals to question the organization's ethics. The current contracting workforce environment needs some improvement, and former DOD Comptroller Robert Hale wrote,

> Efficiency requires change, and change is difficult to implement in any organization—public or private. To have any chance of success, there must be an incentive to change. Incentives start with climate created by top leaders. … But commitment must extend beyond the senior leadership to the Defense Department's field commanders and managers. Efficiencies at the base or installation level could add up to substantial savings, and the individuals running these bases will be more likely to implement changes if they have incentives to do so. (Schwartz, 2013, pp. 16–17)

Implementing many of the changes within the contracting workforce revolve around improving the organizational climate. Addressing organizational climate concerns can pay big dividends in improving the overall climate of an organization. A discussion on organizational climate is within the following chapter.

M.   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the literature related to the DOD, acquisition, and the Army's contracting workforce; articulated the importance of DOD contracting; covered the big business of DOD contracting; and reviewed DOD IG and GAO reports highlighting deficiencies within the contracting workforce. This chapter also discussed the criticality of Army contracting, the AT&L Human Capital Strategic Plan, DAWIA certification levels, and the Army's contracting structure and its organizational climate.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes 13 dimensions of organizational climate and explains some of the effects of organizational climate on the Army's contracting workforce. Understanding the dimensions of organizational climate provides a periscope view of the Army's acquisition workforce climate, which can be used to improve the Army's recruiting and retention goals.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Organizational climate has been assigned various attributes by theorists in different academic fields. Mahal (2009) describes the most commonly shared organizational climate attributes (originally identified by Denison, 1996) as "(1) a supportive climate, (2) a climate of risk taking, (3) a climate of cohesiveness, and (4) a climate with the motivation to achieve" (p. 39). The intent of this research is to see where the Army contracting workforce falls within these dimensions. While organizations will differ, our intent is to aggregate the survey to identify and analyze the major dimensions within the Army contracting workforce. This research also highlights the dimensions that Army senior leaders can focus on in decreasing the negative effects on the contracting organizational climate. Understanding organizational climate will provide insight into whether members of an organization can and do familiarize their personal values and beliefs with that of the shared organization. Contracting professionals who exhibit positive correlations between their values and beliefs and the perceived values and beliefs of an organization have a positively correlated outlook on the organization as a whole. In contrast, contracting professionals who exhibit values that are more self-serving and are not conducive to the accepted characteristics or dimensions of organizations that foster organization-centered, cohesive, data-sharing environments, have a negative outlook of the organization as a whole (Thumin & Thumin, 2011).

Organizational climate suggests that not only can climate be described as an independent, dependent, or intervening variable, but also the measures of organizational climate, perceptual and objective, can be broken down into further detail. Authors

Borkowski, Deckard, Weber, Padron & Luongo (2011) support the notion that there is a positive correlation between organizational climate and job performance, while other organizational attributes, such as job satisfaction, are purely an individual's perception and cannot be objectively compared to organizational climate (Borkowski et al., 2011). Organizational climate hypotheses also suggest that members of an organization share these perceptions, and that early researchers failed to consider or expand on whether perceptions of climate vary when compared to the objectivity of climate in regards to age, sex, educational level, and so forth. Hellriegel and Slocum (1974) researched over 30 studies, and then created a framework that identifies two major environmental dimensions. These two environmental dimensions serve as a degree of uncertainty in the environment for subsystems:

> The two major environmental dimensions are: simple-complex and static-dynamic. The simple-complex dimension is defined as the number of factors taken into consideration in decision making (e.g., marketing department, customer demand, production scheduling, governmental regulation, and the like). The static-dynamic dimension is defined as the degree to which these factors in the decision unit's environment remain basically stable over time or are in a continual process of change. These environments and their degree of uncertainty are hypothesized as follows:
> (a)   simple-static – low uncertainty; (b) static and complex – moderate uncertainty; (c) simple and dynamic – moderately high uncertainty; and
> (d) dynamic and complex – high uncertainty. (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974, p. 259)

The next section defines organization climate.

1.   Organization Climate Defined

According to Wallace et al. (2016), organizational climate "refers to the shared perceptions among members of an organization with regard to policies, procedures, and practices" (p. 842). One interesting note that may be counterintuitive is that "climate is an experientially based description of what people see and report happening to them in an organizational situation" (Wallace et al., p. 842). The objective word—*perceived*—can be viewed in either a perceptual or objective context. Hellriegel and Slocum (1974) state that when considering *perceptions* of climate measures, there could be as many climates within the same organization as there are members of that organization. Hellriegel and Slocum

identify studies from other authors in which there are positive relationships or correlations between organizational climate and job performance. These include studies from "Kaczka and Kirk (41), Dunnette (12), Frederickson (17), Pritchard and Karasick (53)," among others (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974, p. 263). While job satisfaction and some of the other 12 climatic attributes may exhibit positive correlations, job performance and the contracting workforce is of significant importance. There is a difference between an organization's climate and an organization's culture. The next section differentiates between the two.

C.   CLIMATE VERSUS CULTURE

Denison (1996) describes culture as "refer[ring] to the deep structure of organizations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by organizational members" (p. 624). These values, beliefs, and assumptions can be projected positively or negatively within the organization. Members who feel organizational injustice based on their workload assignment or because of preferential treatment of certain members may exhibit adverse reactions when performing their duties. In contrast, members who believe that the organization's values, beliefs, and assumption are more in line with their own personal beliefs of recognizing and rewarding talent, organizational justice, opportunities for advancement/promotion, and being a part of the team, all can have positive effects on the organization. Intuitively, we recognize culture as being stable, developed over time, and consistent regardless of the leadership in place. In contrast, climate "portrays organizational environments as being rooted in the organization's value system, but tends to present these social environments in relatively static terms, describing them in terms of a fixed (and broadly applicable) set of dimensions" (Denison, 1996, p. 7). The term *climate* suggests something temporary, that varies from one organization to the next, and that is made up of the collective perceptions of the members involved. The next section describes the 13 dimensions of organizational climate.

D.   CLIMATE DIMENSIONS

1.   Job Satisfaction

Scholars generally define job satisfaction as "an employee's affective reactions to a job based on comparing actual outcomes with desired outcomes, and "is generally recognized as a

multifaceted construct that includes an employee's intrinsic and extrinsic job elements" (Fields, 2002, p. 1). Job satisfaction includes the intrinsic and extrinsic values that employees place on an organization's ability to fulfill their needs and expectations, and often changes when the organizational atmosphere changes. Such organizational changes can have a negative or positive effect on an employee's perception of job satisfaction. Counterintuitively, organizations are interested in employees' job satisfaction not because of the overall effect of increasing productivity or appealing to their affective attributes of positive moods or feelings, but because fostering a satisfactory emotional environment appeals to the behaviors that might invoke these outcomes (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981).

2. Supervisor-Related Commitment

Supervisor-related commitment describes employee commitment to a supervisor. This attribute describes the identification with a supervisor and a second describing internalization of the same values as the supervisor (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996).

3. Job Role Ambiguity

Fields explains that "according to role theory, every position in an organization should have a clear set of responsibilities so that management can give appropriate guidance and employees can be held accountable for performance" (Fields, 2002, p. 145). Job role is described within this study using three primary measures of assessment, which include work method, scheduling, and performance. Job roles provide structure within an organization, as well as context of what is expected of employees. Intuitively, the role of an employee requires the level of education, level of training, and ability to accomplish tasks or functions, among others (Breaugh & Colihan, 1994).

4. Job Characteristics

The job characteristics dimension has five key characteristics: "skill variety, task identity, task significance, and autonomy and job feedback" (Fields, 2002, p. 67). These key characteristics are described as having "more internal motivation and better performance" organizational outcomes as opposed to other validated measures that "focus only stressful, demanding, or unusual" that distract from the focus of assessing "general job-related

cognitive schema's based on aspects of the job other than control" (Fields, 2002, pp. 67–69). Control is described as the level of control an employee has that affects their job performance given the five key characteristics listed above (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

5.   Job Stress

Job stressors are defined as "those aspects of a job that produce excessive and undesirable constraints or demands on the individual" (Davey, Kinicki, & Scheck, 1997; Fields, 2002, p. 121). However, Fields warns researchers of distinguishing among others the effects of the transactional nature of the stress process. This includes understanding that "stress does not reside solely in the environment or solely in the individual but is established when the interactions between the two are appraised as demanding enough to threaten well-being" (Dewe, 1992; Fields, 2002, p. 121).

6.   Work–Family Conflict

Work–family conflict has been defined as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible and the demands of participation in one role make participation in the other role more difficult" (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Fields, 2002, p. 197).

7.   Commute Stress

Commute stress is about the way that employees travel to their work sites. Kluger (1998) developed a measure that "assesses the degree to which employees are strained by the length and hassles of their commute to and from work. [Commute stress] taps both the employee's cognitive evaluation of the commute to work and his or her affective reactions to the commute" (Fields, 2002, p. 139). The stress of commuting is derived from the measure developed by Kluger (1998).

8.   Commute Safety

Commute safety relates to the personal fear one feels while commuting to and from work (Kluger, 1998).

9. Organizational Justice

Justice theory holds that "fair treatment is central to people and a major determinant of their reactions to decisions" (Fields, 2002, p. 163). Perceived procedural fairness affects more people and is more favored than the perceived fairness of a decision itself. Organizational justice encompasses eight main semi-independent elements. These include distributive justice, procedural justice, interactive justice, employee voice, justification, perceived injustice, procedural fairness, and fairness perceptions (Dulebohn & Ferris, 1999). Within each of these sub-topics, organizational justice or the perception of injustice has positive or negative implications on organizational behavior and climate.

10. Job Fit

An employee's ability to perform his or her assigned role within the demands of the job within that role is a determining factor of perceived ability–job fit. Xie (1996) describes the fit or alignment of an employee's perceived ability compared to the "interaction of job demands and control" (p. 1599).

11. Workplace Values

The formation of values is influenced by "culture, society, and personality. Compared to attitude, the beliefs, needs, goals, criteria for choosing goals, criteria for choosing behaviors and preferences are linked to motivation" (Fields, 2002, p. 263). The values or self-imposed standards a person displays can be considered cognitive, affective, or behavioral. Many studies have been conducted that assess the overall effectiveness of workplace values as they relate to overall job satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, and team-cohesion (Fields, 2002; Randhawa & Kaur, 2015; Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008; among others).

> Instrumental values are those that concern desirable modes of conduct, either having a moral focus or a competence focus. Moral-focused instrumental values are those referring to behavior without thought of the end state, such as honesty. Competence-focused instrumental values are those referring to self-actualization, without concern for morality. (Fields, 2002, p. 264; Rokeach, 1973)

Literature supports that there is a positive correlation between workplace values and organizational performance (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994).

12. High Quality Relationships

High Quality Relationships include those working relationships that add value to both the individual and the organization, as well as positively influence the social structure of an organization. Such high quality relationships do not encompass negative qualities that are considered indecent, improper, and the like. Fields (2002) explains that high quality relationships focus on keeping organizational values that are similar to employees' personal values, and this infusion creates synergy that fosters cross-functional or cross-organizational collaboration. Carmeli and Gittell (2009) draw on the concept that high quality relationships that encompass information sharing, shared goals, and mutual respect foster positive psychological safety that enables employees to learn from their failures.

13. Demographics

The demographics dimension include pertinent information required to populate information from the three major populations. These populations include Civilian versus Military, Warranted versus Unwarranted, and DAWIA certification levels. This dimension is not the focus of this research, but used to gather data on respondents as they relate to the major populations for analysis.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed organizational climate, as well as 13 dimensions within organizational climate. The next chapter includes a discussion of the methodology used in this research.

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IV. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research approach and defines and describes the 13 climate dimensions used to analyze the Army's contracting workforce. The data collection method as discussed in this chapter consists of the subjects of the survey, the instruments used in surveying the Army's contracting workforce, and the procedures used to analyze the collected data. This chapter also provides the data analysis approach used to survey the Army's contracting workforce populations, including civilians and military personnel in 1102, 1105, 1109, and 0800 job categories. The following section describes the approach in correlating the 13 climate dimensions based on the four dominate populations within the Army's contracting workforce. These include the Army contracting commands populations, civilian versus military populations, warranted versus non-warranted populations, and DAWIA certification level populations.

B. RESEARCH APPROACH

The purpose of this research is to assess the Army's contracting workforce on 13 dimensions of organizational climate. The research approach is to survey the Army's contracting workforce to see if there is any correlation between the contracting workforce climate environment and job performance dimensions. The survey was distributed to 10,000 civilians and military members within the Army's contracting workforce. The demographics of the Army's contracting workforce structure are discussed in Chapter IV. The survey was launched using Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) LimeSurvey. The target audience for this study is the Army contracting professionals within the 1102, 1105, 0800, and their military equivalents, as well as the Corps of Engineers. The research does extend to the National Guard Bureau (NGB) but not to the National Reserves. In order to ensure a purer data collection sample, all non-acquisition professions that may assist contracting personnel (i.e., contracting officer representatives and all non-organic comptrollers) have been excluded from the survey. Only those professionals that have a statutory right to obligate government funds were considered and surveyed.

The responses to the survey were obtained using a 7-point Likert-type scale in which 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. The research questions were derived from a previously developed Navy survey of the Navy contracting workforce. The survey was comprised of 136 questions. Four of the 136 questions are fill-in-the-box and open-ended, that is, respondents were encouraged to provide written comments on how they would like improvement in certain aspects of their organizations.

The literature review within Chapter III described organization climate, defined organization climate, and differentiated organizational climate from organizational culture. Organization climate describes organizations being in two types of environments, internal and external, where the two environmental dimensions are identified as simple-complex or static dynamic (Nguyen & Kim, 2013). The simple-complex dimension definition is characterized as "the number of factors taken into consideration in decision making" (Nguyen & Kim, 2013, p. 111). Examples include marketing departments, high customer demand, production scheduling, and governmental regulation, among others. The static dynamic dimension is described as "the degree to which these factors in the decision unit's environment remain basically stable over time or are in a continual process of change" (Nguyen & Kim, 2013, p. 111). The Army contracting workforce mirrors these types of environments and dimensions. Contracting professionals must manage the internal and external influences that affect job performance.

The performance that contracting professionals provide is extremely important. They are appointed to be fiscally responsible by being good stewards of taxpayer dollars when procuring goods and services. Job performance for a contracting professional is not always manifested in a well-written contract. Job performance entails contract management, which includes pre-award, award, and post-award actions. This is where the gray lines of organizational climate and job performance can be ambiguous. A brief discussion within the literature review articulated the difference between organizational climate and organizational culture. Survey questions were derived from 13 dimensions within organizational climate, and the next sections highlight the quantity of questions per dimension. Within the context of this research, perception measures were used and

analyzed, while considering objective climate measures broken down within the demographics of the survey.

C. SURVEY COMPOSITION

The composition of the survey entails four main sections, where section four is the demographics of the surveyed contracting professional. Personally identifiable information (PII) was not captured or incorporated within this research. Lastly, analysis of race, sex, gender, and grade/position were not analyzed.

Section one of the survey encompasses eight job satisfaction–related questions. Of the eight questions, one fill-in-the-box, open-ended question encourages respondents to provide any improvements related to job satisfaction. Additionally, section one entails nine supervisor-related questions, 10 survey questions relating to job roles, and five questions related to job characteristics.

Section two begins with 17 job stress–related questions. All of the questions are negatively worded and evaluate an employee's stressors given their work environment (supervisor, workload, tasks, schedule, advancement, safety, and comfortability), as well as family or personal stressors that may affect job performance (Fields, 2002). Also incorporated within section two are 13 questions relating to work–family conflict, four questions relating to work commute stress, and 13 questions relating to work commute safety.

Section three begins with seven questions related to organizational justice. Of the seven questions surveyed within section three, respondents were encouraged to provide feedback for improvements within their respective organizations as it relates to organizational justice. Section three encompasses five job fit questions, 12 questions relating to workplace values, and 20 questions relating to high quality relationships.

Section four includes the survey respondents' demographic information. This includes the participants' gender, ethnicity, command, time in service, and DAWIA certification level. Section four also asks whether the respondent possesses a warrant.

1.   Climate Dimensions

The research questions have both positively and negatively worded questions. The 13 climate dimensions include the following:

- job satisfaction
- supervisor-related commitment
- job role
- job characteristics
- job stress
- work family conflict
- commute stress
- commute safety
- organizational justice
- job fit
- workplace values
- high quality relationships
- demographics

The validated dimensions presented in this research are consistent with organizational climate research within the organizational behavioral workforce (Fields, 2002).

D.   DATA COLLECTION

1.   Subjects

Respondents of the survey included both the civilian and military communities within the Army. Within the civilian workforce, all eligible 1102, 1105, 1109, 0800 job categories and their military counterparts within the 51C Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) were surveyed for responses regarding their work experience and the climate in which they work. Contracting professionals were asked their specific DAWIA and Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) certification levels.

Survey respondents were asked to provide the level of DOD and civilian certifications they had received. Based on the respondents' responses to these questions, assumption could be drawn on whether an individual's certification level better supports the Army's contracting goals highlighted within the Better Buying Power 3.0 (BBP), and also

supports the human capital initiatives to manage a workforce with the right skills and capabilities compared to workload assignment. Identifying an individual's DAWIA certification level only allows the researcher to identify correlations with how one perceives their particular organization regarding one or more of the organizational climate dimensions. This also allows the researcher to identify whether the re-coding or insourcing initiatives designed to increase the contracting workforce numbers highlight any disparities in work performance, workload assignment, and perceived justice within their organizations' environments.

The purpose of DAWIA levels within the DOD is to signify an individual's contracting expertise. DAWIA levels are arranged from Level I through Level III. A DAWIA Level I is indicative of novice experience and knowledge of contracting policies and procedures, usually assigned pre-award minute tasks, whereas Level III (the highest level achieved) is for expert knowledge. DAWIA Level III professionals are at the pinnacle of their careers. The range of their knowledge and expertise varied widely, which require expert knowledge of contracting actions within the DOD as well as industry. The United States Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) website provided the definitions and explanations of DAWIA certification levels.

According to the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), "The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) required the Department of Defense (DOD) to establish a process through which persons in the acquisition workforce would be recognized as having achieved professional status" (DAU, DAWIA Certification section, para. 1). "Certification is the procedure through which a military service or DOD Component determines that an employee meets the education, training, and experience standards required for a career level in any acquisition, technology, and logistics career field" (DAU, DAWIA Certification section, para. 1).

The demographics of the civilian contracting workforce are as follows:

Positions in the GS-1102 series apply a specialized knowledge of statues, judicial decisions, and executive agency decisions and regulations that affect the contracting process." [These] positions [in this] series "advise and assist in developing acceptable specifications and evaluation criteria, determine the method of procurement, issue the solicitation document, and conduct the

contracting process. (Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 1983, pp. 3–4)

[Positions in the GS-1105 series] involve supervising or performing work to acquire supplies, services, and construction by purchase, rental, or lease through (a) delivery orders and/or (b) small purchase procedures [described in detail below as a footnote].[1] This work also requires knowledge of commercial supply sources and common business practices with respect to sales, prices, units of measurement, deliveries, stocks, and shipments. (OPM, 1993, p. 2)

[Positions in the GS-1109 series] include positions which manage, supervise, lead, or perform administrative business, policy, and analytical work involving: (1) the management, award, and/or obligation of funds for grants, cooperative agreements, and other related instruments and services such as discretionary and mandatory grants, using financial, administrative, business and negotiation procedures; (2) the competitive or non-competitive evaluation of grants proposals; and/or (3) the administration or termination, and/or closeout of grants and/or grants assistance and agreement awards. (OPM, 2010, p. 5)

[0800 Engineering & Architecture positions usually within the Corps of Engineer career fields within the acquisition workforce structure require application of a professional knowledge of engineering or other sciences.] This position provides advice on, administer, supervise, or perform professional, scientific, or technical work concerned with engineering or architectural projects, facilities, structures, systems, processes, equipment, devices, material or methods. Positions in this group require knowledge of the science of art, or both, by which materials, natural resources, and power are made useful (Federal Jobs, 2016, para. 1). [These positions assist in the development or evaluation of technical requirements in connection with the negotiation, administration, or termination of contracts, as classified to the Engineering Group, GS-0800, or other appropriate professional or scientific series].

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[1]According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in 1983, "simplified purchase procedures include: (a) imprest fund (cash) accounts; (b) informal open-market methods, such as repeat suppliers, price catalogs, and oral solicitations; (c) orders under Blanket Purchase Agreements (charge accounts); (d) orders under indefinite delivery contracts, e.g., Federal Supply Schedules; (e) purchase orders, invoices, vouchers, or priced purchase orders. In some situations, purchases are accomplished through established, structured plans including prenegotiated pricing arrangements and preestablished terms and conditions. Simplified purchase procedures are characterized by: (a) low dollar value (e.g., under $10,000 in some agencies and under $25,000 in other agencies); (b) use of pre-negotiated pricing arrangements when negotiation of price is not required; (c) standard products or specifications; (d) competitive prices from available price lists or catalogs; (e) award by purchase order or other instrument where terms and conditions are pre-established, such as basic ordering agreements; (f) short contractual periods (usually within 30 days); (g) large volume of actions; and (h) adequate sources of supply, usually within the local area" (OPM, 1983, p. 4).

Military positions within the Army contracting workforce belong to the 51C MOS within the acquisition career field (ACF), which includes both officers and enlisted personnel. Officers are assessed between 8–10 years of active-duty service, where early assessment into this field begins with captains. Enlisted personnel are accessed between the ranks of sergeant (E-5) to staff-sergeant (E-6). Both officers and enlisted personnel come from various MOSs and with varying educational backgrounds. Both officers and enlisted receive the same contracting entry level training, which is comparable to the entry-level series of civilian job series GS-1102. Initially, officers and enlisted become contract specialists, who perform all of the functions of a GS-1102 series, but with the military commitment.

Requirements in acquiring DAWIA certification levels are identical for civilian and military. All requirements must be satisfied in order to obtain the respective certification level.

2. Instruments

(1) Employee Surveys

The survey instrument used for this research was launched using NPS's LimeSurvey, the survey engine approved for requesting information for NPS research. The LimeSurvey was administered to the Army's acquisition workforce, and responses were void of all personally identifiable information (PII). Survey respondents were asked to complete the survey in one sitting, which took on average 20 minutes.

3. Procedure

(1) Survey Administration

After receiving approval from the DASA-P, the survey was launched through the Workforce Development Directorate Office of the DASA-P office. The procedure of obtaining information from the Army's contracting workforce required approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to launching the survey. The survey was launched to the entire active Army acquisition workforce for a period of two weeks. The primary investigator of this research is the only person with access to the respondents' PII, but the researcher of this study was not exposed to any PII. The researcher was not provided any

information that could be used to identify any individual respondents at any time. All responses to the survey were provided for analytical purposes.

E. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher has considered the reluctance of participants responding to a survey related to their own organizational climates. As such, because of the various sizes of contracting organizations, analysis of the results will be aggregated at the command authority levels. Because of the structure of the survey demographics, respondents were only provided the option to identify which organization they support at the command authority level. At no point will analysis reveal a particular contracting office below the command authority level, due to perceived or actual retribution for employees responding to survey questions. These command authority levels are highlighted in Figure 6. No self-identifying information will be aggregated to indicate patterns regarding race, sex, gender, or any other personal information. Results may indicate patterns, which will be aggregated at DAWIA certification levels to correlate between experienced professionals and the 13 climate dimensions, including survey respondents' demographic information, identified within this research. Results may reflect negative responses to any of the 13 dimensions of job performance, where these results will be aggregated at the command authority level. All best practices, lessons learned, and other useful techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs) will be highlighted at the command authority level. The researcher and/or the sponsor may want to highlight specific best practices and/or TTPs to bring credit to that organization. Only specific responses to the open comments section of the survey can identify contracting organizations at the regional contracting office (RCO) level. Analysis may also indicate specific patterns depending on the geographical area(s) within the contracting workforce, that may be easily identified compared to the other CONUS or OCONUS contracting commands. The aggregated patterns identified within geographical OCONUS locations in support of contingency operations will also be assigned at the higher command authority level.

Analysis of the Army's contracting workforce climate will be measured given the 13 organizational climate dimensions. Respondents were asked to provide candid responses in all 13 climate dimensions. The results of the survey indicate which climate dimensions

positively and negatively affect the Army's contracting workforce as they relate to performing agency needs. The researcher will provide the Army's DASA-P and other senior leaders (as appropriate) the results of this research. The Army's DASA-P has the authority to restrict the release of some or all the results of this research.

F.   SURVEY POPULATIONS

Our research analyzes the following populations: civilian versus military, warranted contracting professionals versus non-warranted contracting professionals, and DAWIA certification levels. Analysis was conducted on all three populations given the 13 climatic dimensions described in section A of this chapter. Additionally, participants indicated that they associate themselves within the seven commands listed below. Each table highlights the demographics of the given populations. Figure 12 displays the Army contracting commands' populations. Figure 13 shows the civilian versus military populations. Figure 14 displays warranted versus non-warranted professionals' populations, and lastly, Figure 15 shows the DAWIA certification level populations.

Figure 12.   Army Survey Respondents Contracting Commands Population.
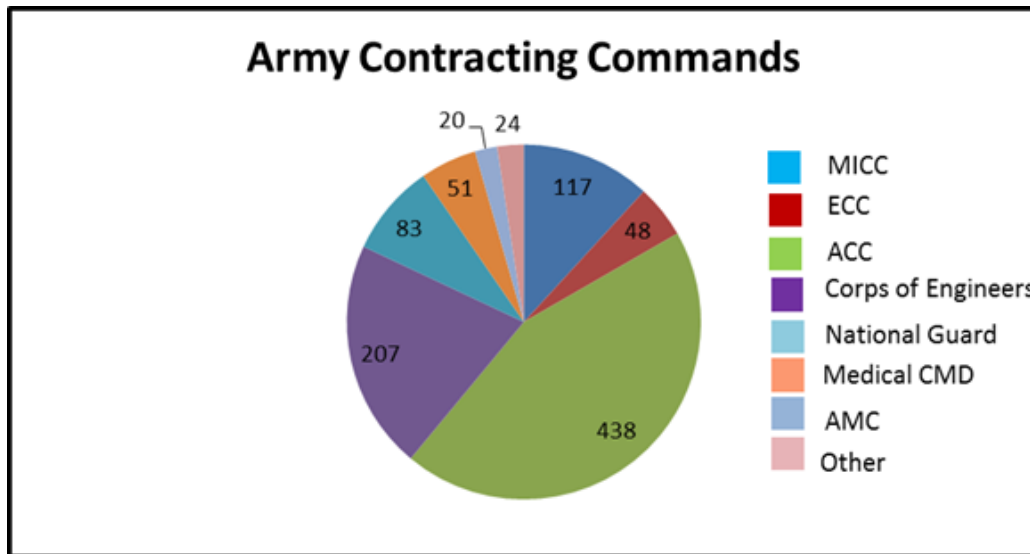
Figure 13.   Army Civilian versus Military Populations.
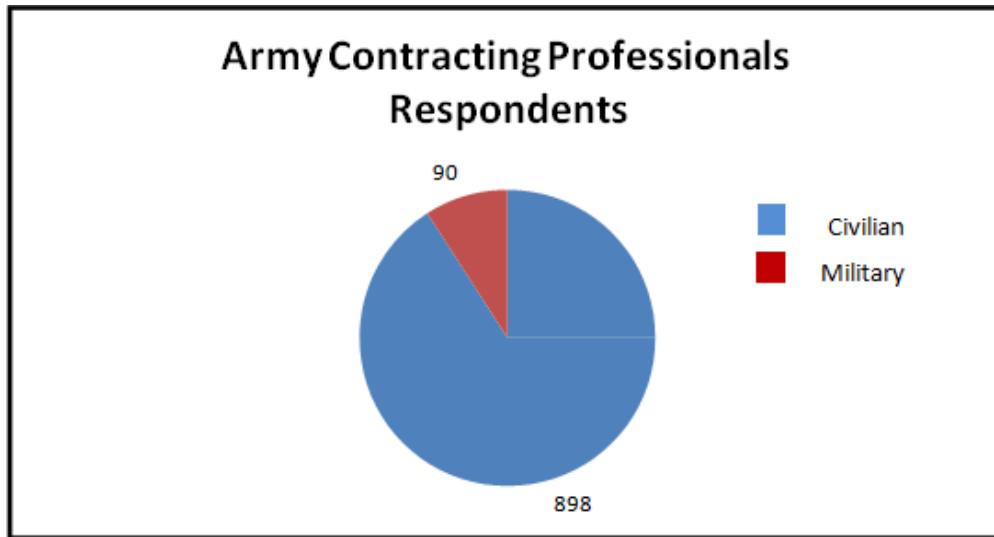
Figure 14.   Army Warranted versus Non-Warranted Contracting
Professionals Populations.
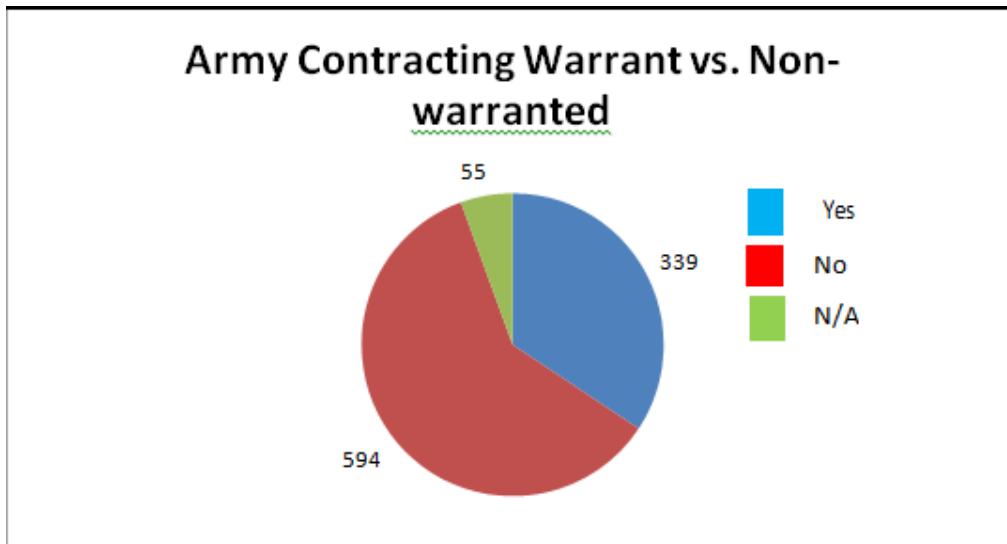
Figure 15.   Army DAWIA Levels Populations.
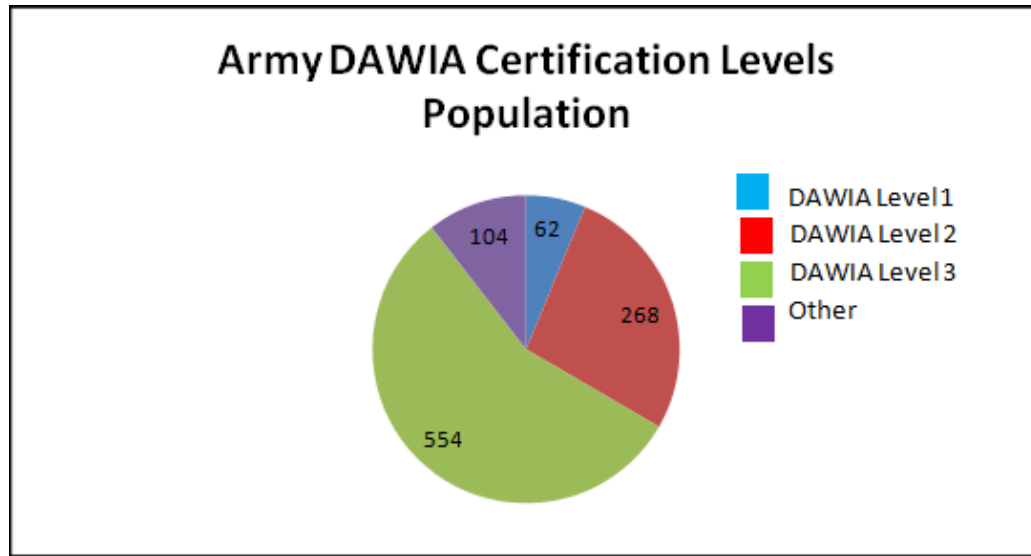
G.   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research approach, data collection, and data analysis. Within this chapter, the subjects, instruments used, and procedure of administering the survey to the Army's contracting workforce were discussed. The following chapter provides the summary, conclusion, and areas for further research.

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V. FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the findings of the survey administered to the Army's contracting workforce. Outlined is a description of survey results and an analysis. This is followed by recommendations to senior Army leaders on how to improve the recruitment and retention goals of the Army. Correlations among the three populations named in Chapter II and the 13 climatic dimensions reveal strengths and areas for improvement within the Army's contracting workforce.

The approach to assessing the Army's contracting workforce was through a voluntary, previously developed, web-based survey. Of the 10,000 Army contracting professionals within the 1102, 1105, 1109, and 0800 series, 1,455 responses were received. Due to incomplete responses, 988 responses were used for analysis, resulting in a 10% response rate. The populations for analysis are military versus civilian contracting professionals, warranted versus non-warranted contracting professionals, and the three DAWIA level certifications. Analysis within the 13 climatic dimensions were applied to all three target populations. The responses to the survey were obtained using a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. Descriptive statistics and correlation tables are described in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Dimensions Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
JobSat AVG	1.0000	7.0000	4.805471	1.3713752
SupCom AVG	1.0000	7.0000	4.272776	1.4516510
JobCha AVG	1.0000	7.0000	4.675785	1.5893275
JobRole AVG	1.0000	7.0000	5.627104	1.1088405
JobStrain AVG	1.0000	7.0000	2.948016	1.0364255
WKFMConfl AVG	1.0000	7.0000	3.519359	1.7384779
Comm-AVG	1.0000	5.9167	2.623381	1.1541298
OrgJus AVG	1.0000	4.0000	3.153225	0.7677415
JobFit AVG	1.0000	5.0000	3.711905	0.8178923
WKPLVal AVG	1.0000	7.0000	4.441551	1.3990884
HQC-Capacity AVG	1.0000	7.0000	4.687489	1.3581466
HQC-Experience AVG	1.0000	7.0000	5.240387	1.2759614

Table 2. Dimensions Correlations

		JobSat AVG	SupCom AVG	JobCha AVG	JobRole AVG	JobStrain AVG	WKFMConfl AVG	Comm-AVG	OrgJus AVG	JobFit AVG	WKPLVal AVG	HQC-Capacity AVG	HQC-Experience AVG
JobSat AVG	Pearson	1	.591**	.630**	.461**	-.698**	-.379**	-.239**	.574**	.531**	.698**	.618**	.563**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SupCom AVG	Pearson	.591**	1	.602**	.455**	-.538**	-.221**	-.125**	.584**	.372**	.509**	.423**	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
JobCha AVG	Pearson	.630**	.602**	1	.481**	-.534**	-.161**	-.122**	.555**	.505**	.565**	.471**	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
JobRole AVG	Pearson	.461**	.455**	.481**	1	-.435**	-.209**	-.183**	.485**	.595**	.459**	.444**	.440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
JobStrain AVG	Pearson	-.698**	-.538**	-.534**	-.435**	1	.597**	.312**	-.578**	-.430**	-.605**	-.575**	-.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
WKFMConfl AVG	Pearson	-.379**	-.221**	-.161**	-.209**	.597**	1	.312**	-.209**	-.156**	-.347**	-.345**	-.220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Comm-Combined-	Pearson	-.239**	-.125**	-.122**	-.183**	.312**	.312**	1	-.188**	-.160**	-.251**	-.274**	-.228**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
OrgJus AVG	Pearson	.574**	.584**	.555**	.485**	-.578**	-.209**	-.188**	1	.384**	.510**	.440**	.413**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
JobFit AVG	Pearson	.531**	.372**	.505**	.595**	-.430**	-.156**	-.160**	.384**	1	.473**	.437**	.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
WKPLVal AVG	Pearson	.698**	.509**	.565**	.459**	-.605**	-.347**	-.251**	.510**	.473**	1	.664**	.544**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
HQC-Capacity	Pearson	.618**	.423**	.471**	.444**	-.575**	-.345**	-.274**	.440**	.437**	.664**	1	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
HQC-Experience	Pearson	.563**	.401**	.449**	.440**	-.503**	-.220**	-.228**	.413**	.450**	.544**	.785**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

B. ANALYSIS OF CORRELATION TABLE

Analysis of the findings of the survey compared to the 13 climate dimensions reveals significant correlations. The correlation table provides insight on whether dimensions are independent or dependent on each other. The correlation table suggests that any given dimension may have a positive or negative affect on the other dimensions. Analysis is discussed in the following sections.

1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction involves an employee's intrinsic and extrinsic feelings based on actual outcomes compared to desired outcomes (Fields, 2002). Overall job satisfaction includes the feelings of an employee towards the work performed the interaction and relationship with co-workers, the interaction and relationship with supervisors or upper management, promotion opportunities, pay, progress, and the organization in which they are members. Job satisfaction within section 1 of the survey consisted of seven questions and one fill-in-the-box, open-ended question. Job satisfaction questions included the following:

- All in all, how satisfied are you with the persons in your work group?

- All in all, how satisfied are you with your supervisor?

- All in all, how satisfied are you with your job? (Fields, 2002, p. 10)

a. *Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Satisfaction*

Overall, responses from both the military and civilian contracting workforce indicated that they neither agree or disagree to slightly disagree that they were satisfied with their job at their current organization. Civilians scored job satisfaction slightly higher than their military counterparts did: Civilians scored job satisfaction at 4.85, whereas the military scored job satisfaction at 4.39. These scores reveal that on average, the civilian contracting professionals are more satisfied with their jobs than the military. However, the overall average score of 4.80 indicates that in general, both civilians and military members neither agree nor disagree to slightly disagree that they are satisfied with their jobs. Figure 16 reflects the civilian versus military populations' results within the job satisfaction dimension.

Figure 16.   Civilian versus Military Populations and
Job Satisfaction Results
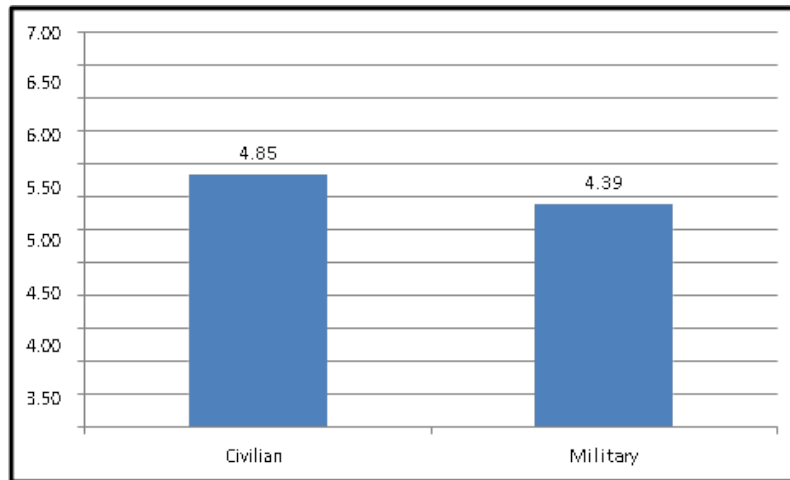
Many of the fill-in-the-box, open-ended questions reveal that members are generally not satisfied in regards to working relationships with co-workers, supervision, and organizational processes, as shown in remarks such as the following:

"Increase communication from top down and listen to communication from bottom up. Do not assume that employees are not competent."

"Remove the back room deals and favoritism."

"I would make the pay grades commensurate with the workload. KOs with all the responsibility should not be at the same pay grade as a mid-level CS."

b.   *Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Job Satisfaction*

Contracting professionals possessing warrants scored slightly higher on job satisfaction than those that do not have warrants. Warranted contracting professionals' scores of 4.83 indicate that they are slightly more satisfied than that of the non-warranted populations' scores of 4.80. Those within the N/A category either misunderstood the question or identified that they possess other DAWIA certifications, not specific to contracting. Overall, warranted and non-warranted contracting professionals indicated that in general, they slightly agree that they are satisfied with their job, with an overall job satisfaction score of 4.81. Figure 17 reflects the warranted versus the non-warranted populations' results within the job satisfaction dimension.

Figure 17.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and
Job Satisfaction Results
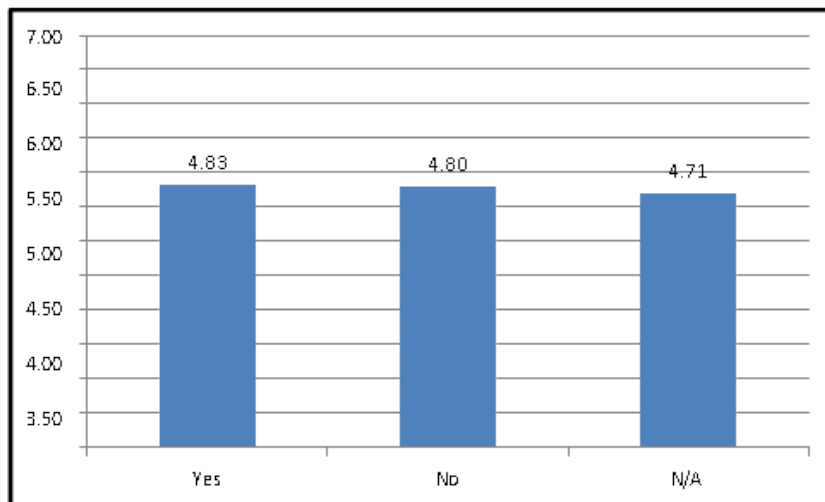
c.   *Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Job Satisfaction*

Figure 18 shows that the contracting professionals in DAWIA certification Levels I and II have indicated that they neither agree nor disagree to slightly disagree that they are

satisfied with their jobs than those possessing DAWIA Level III certifications. Those in DAWIA certification Level III scored an average of 4.82, indicating that they are slightly more satisfied with their jobs than DAWIA certification Levels I and II at 4.75 each. Overall, the average score of 4.79 for all three certification levels indicates that they neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree that they are satisfied with their jobs.

Figure 18.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and
Job Satisfaction Results
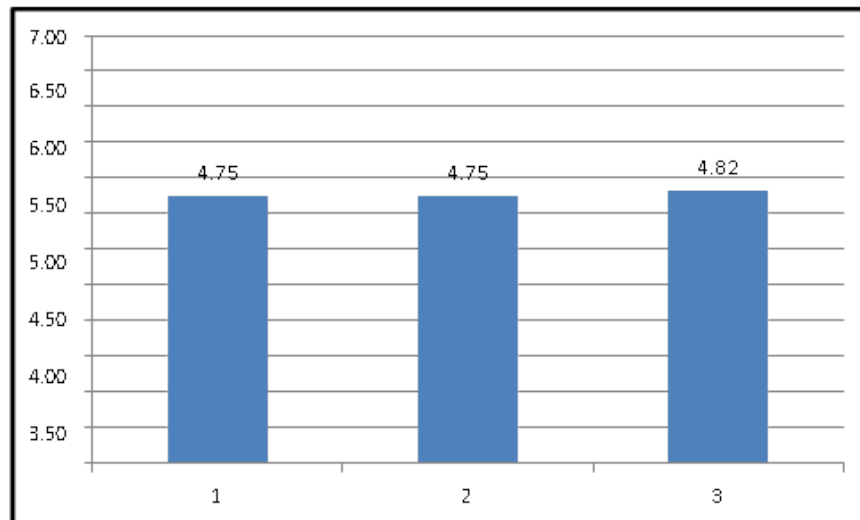
2.   Supervisor-Related Commitment

Supervisor-related commitment describes the commitment and/or relationship between a supervisor and employee, and whether they have shared values. The communication and interaction between an employee and supervisor are indicative of whether the commitment of the employee toward the supervisor is positive or is experiencing challenges. Some supervisor-related commitment questions include the following:

- When someone criticizes my supervisor, it feels like a personal insult.
- I feel a sense of "ownership" for my supervisor.
- If the values of my supervisor were different, I would not be as attached to my supervisor. (Fields, 2002, p. 65)

a. Civilian versus Military Populations and Supervisor-Related Commitment

Compared to the military score of 4.34, the civilian score of 4.26 indicates that civilians are slightly less committed than military to their supervisors. The overall populations' score of 4.27, as shown in Figure 19, indicates that both the civilians and military contracting professionals neither agree nor disagree that they are committed to their supervisors or share common values. The slight increase in the military score could be a result of the shared Army values and the hierarchical structure of the Army.

Figure 19.   Civilian versus Military Populations and Supervisor-Related Commitment Results
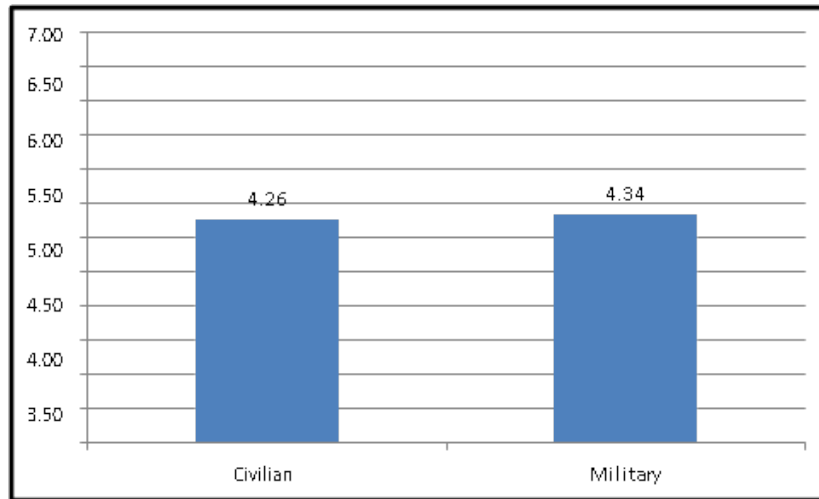
b. Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Supervisor-Related Commitment

Contracting professionals possessing warrants scored slightly higher on supervisor-related commitment than those that do not have warrants. Those possessing a warrant scored 4.33, whereas those without a warrant scored 4.23. Figure 20 shows that the warranted and non-warranted contracting professionals populations indicated that, in general, they neither agree nor disagree that the relationship they and their supervisors have are positive, with an overall populations' score of 4.27.

Figure 20. Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Supervisor-
Related Commitment
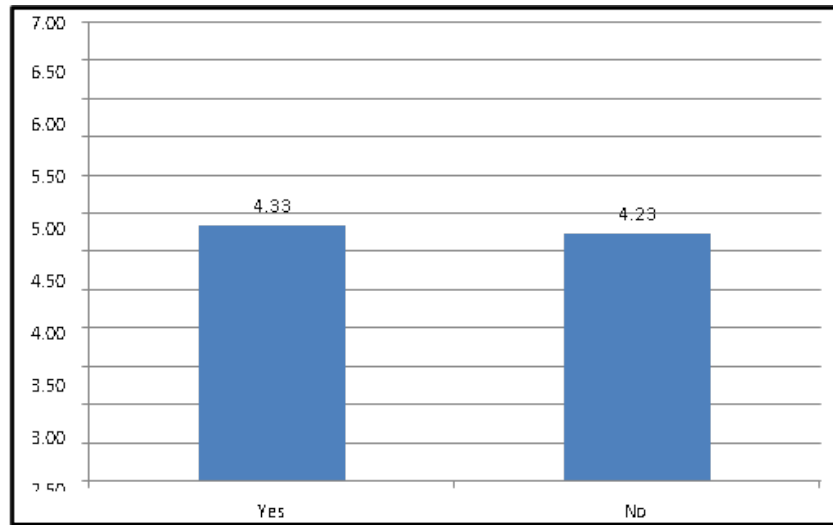
c. Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Supervisor-Related Commitment

Contracting professionals in DAWIA certification Levels I and II indicate that they are slightly less satisfied with their relationship with their supervisor than those possessing DAWIA Level III certifications. DAWIA certification Level I populations' score of 4.21—compared to Level II at 4.23 and Level III at 4.30—show that they are slightly less committed to the relationship between themselves and their supervisors. Overall, all three certification levels indicate that they neither agree nor disagree with a positive commitment towards their supervisor, with overall populations' score of 4.28. This could indicate that contracting professionals possessing DAWIA Level III certification were more committed to their supervisors in upper management due to their increased roles and responsibilities that may result in higher visibility by upper management. Figure 21 reflects the DAWIA certification level populations' results in relation to supervisor-related commitment.

Figure 21. DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Supervisor-Related Commitment Results
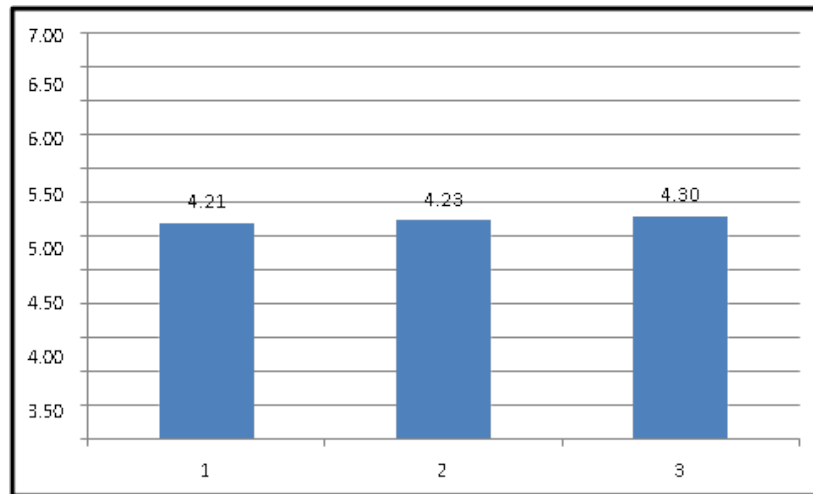
3. Job Role Ambiguity

Job role ambiguity measures the work methods, the work scheduling, and the evaluation of an employee's performance. Job role ambiguity measures whether employees know a particular aspect of their job, and the activities or methods the organization prefers in accomplishing tasks. Job role ambiguity also involves whether employees understand how they will be evaluated in relation to their performance against the role they are assigned. Job role ambiguity can have negative effects on an employee's tenure, which can result in high attrition rates or extended vacant positions. The following questions within job role ambiguity include the following:

- I am certain how to go about getting my job done (the methods to use).

- I know what is the best way (approach) to go about getting my work done).

- I know how to get my work done (what procedures to use). (Fields, 2002, p. 158)

a. Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Role Ambiguity

Civilians' job role ambiguity score of 5.64 is slightly higher than that of the military, with a score of 5.47. The scores could indicate that both populations slightly agree to agree that they understand the methods, schedule, and performance evaluation factors within their organizations. Although both populations may be aware of the roles and responsibilities of their positions, the results do not indicate that they are performing to the level of their assigned position. Overall, both populations' average score of 5.63, with responses ranging from slightly agree to agree, indicates that their organizations have effective methods to reduce employee uncertainty related to methods, scheduling, and evaluation performance measures. Figure 22 reflects the civilian versus military populations' results relating to job role ambiguity.

Figure 22.   Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Role Ambiguity Results
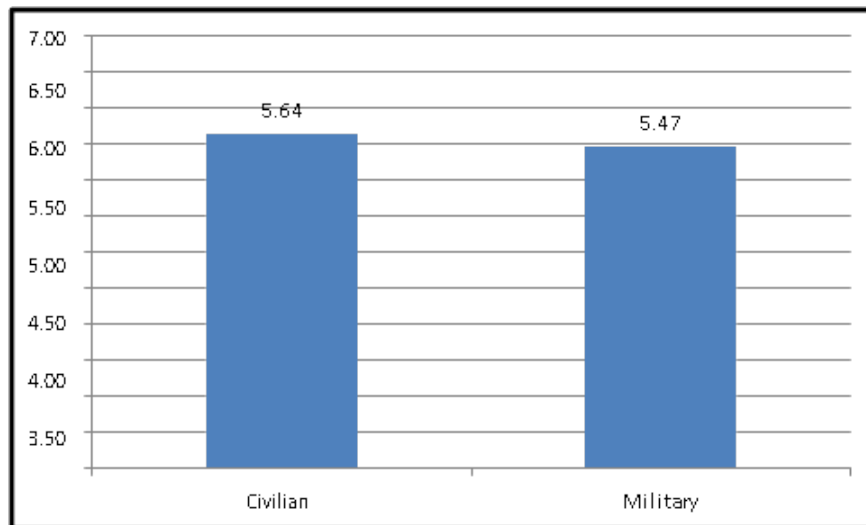
b. Analysis of Warranted versus Non-warranted Populations and Job Role Ambiguity

According to Figure 23, both warranted and non-warranted contracting professionals slightly agree to agree that they are aware of the activities, processes, and approaches in accomplishing their assigned tasks. The warranted contracting professionals score of 5.80 is slightly higher on the Likert scale, ranging within the slightly agree to agree scale, compared

to non-warranted contracting professionals' score of 5.53. Overall, both populations' average score of 5.63 indicates that employee uncertainty is minimal on the activities within the organization and the employee expectations within the organization.

Figure 23.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Job Role Ambiguity Results
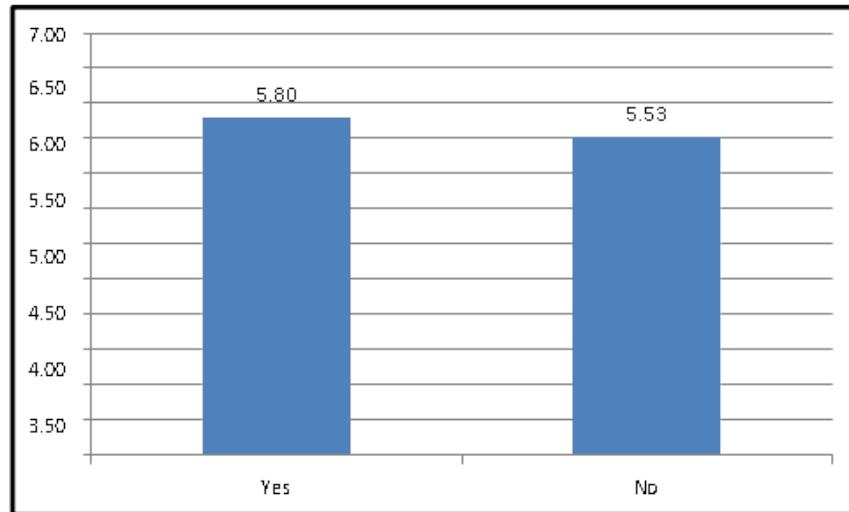
c.   Analysis of DAWIA Level Populations and Job Role Ambiguity

The scores among the DAWIA certification levels in relation to job role ambiguity have a positive incline as the DAWIA certification levels increase, as depicted in Figure 24. The scores of those possessing DAWIA certification Levels I and II indicate that they may not be aware of all of the expectations of the job or the expectations of the organization. Compared to the DAWIA certification Level III score of 5.73, the scores of Levels I and II at 5.22 and 5.61, respectively, could indicate that the higher the DAWIA certification level, the better understanding employees may have of the organization's processes, methods, and approaches.

Figure 24.   DAWIA Level Populations and Job Role Ambiguity Results
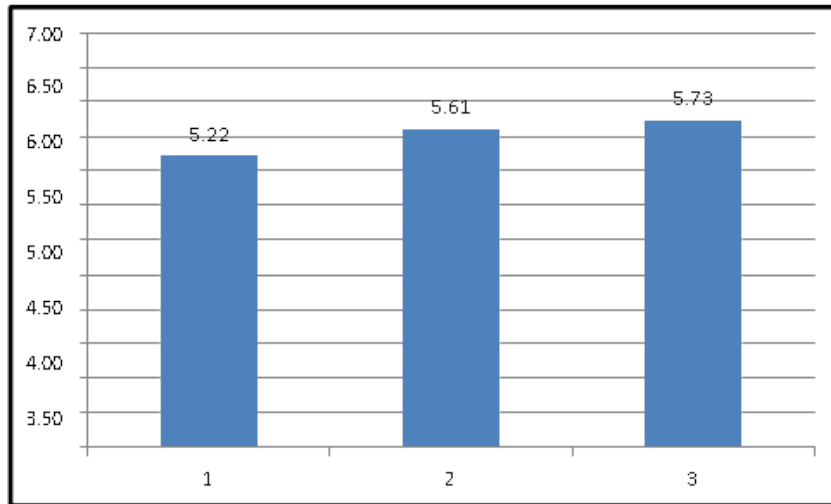
4.   Job Characteristics

Job Characteristics is the formal and informal investment an organization makes in the training and development of its employees. The role an employee assumes should allow some formal and informal developmental experiences and opportunities for progression. Many of the fill-in-the-box, open-ended questions reveal that placing more emphasis on rotating members through different sections or divisions of an organization increases employees' developmental experiences. Some comments include the following:

> 1. In-house training by having each directorate discuss the specifics or unique challenges they have to promote understanding, awareness and appreciation.
> 2. More in house developmental opportunities.

> I would ensure assignments are based upon an individual's abilities and need for growth/additional experience vice always giving the favorites the 'plum' assignments.

> Provide developmental opportunities for civilians with industry partners and the Federal sector—DOD only offers opportunities within your branch. Being in the Army, it would be interesting to see first-hand how Navy or Air Force conduct business, or spend time with our industry partners to better understand their challenges.

The following were the survey questions relating to job characteristics:

- In the positions that I have held at [my current work center], I have often been given additional challenging assignments.

- In the positions that I have held at [my current work center], I have often been assigned projects that have enabled me to develop and strengthen new skills.

- Besides formal training and development opportunities, to what extent have your managers helped to develop your skills by providing you with challenging job assignments? (Fields, 2002, p. 109)

a.   Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Characteristics

Both the civilian and military populations' scores range from neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree with their organization providing formal and informal opportunities to increase their developmental experiences or opportunities. As shown in Figure 25, civilians scored job characteristics at 4.70, which is slightly higher than that of the military at 4.47; this could be a result of the military's permanent change of station (PCS) rotations preventing the opportunity to be exposed to opportunities that could better develop their skills within and across the organization. The overall populations' score of 4.68 indicates that both populations view the job characteristics range between neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree.

Figure 25.   Civilian versus Military Populations and
Job Characteristics Results
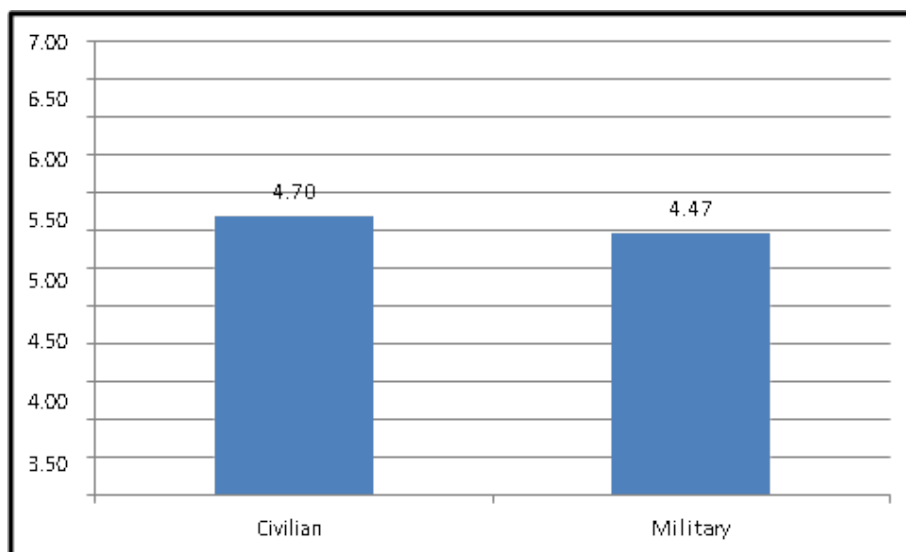
b.   Analysis of Warranted versus Non-warranted Populations and Job Characteristics

Those possessing warrants scored job characteristics slightly higher than those without warrants, at 4.82 and 4.60, respectively. The warranted populations indicate that their organizations provide formal and informal opportunities for increasing their personal developmental needs. The non-warranted populations indicate that opportunities inside and outside of the organization have not been provided to them, and that their non-warranted position or role does not merit outside informal training. The non-warranted populations' score could also indicate that greater emphases on day-to-day functions are of greater importance than outside informal networking skills. The overall populations' average score of 4.68 indicates that both the warranted and non-warranted populations neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree that their organizations are providing formal and informal opportunities to increase their professional development skills. Figure 26 reflects the warranted versus non-warranted populations' results relating to job characteristics.

Figure 26.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Job Characteristics Results
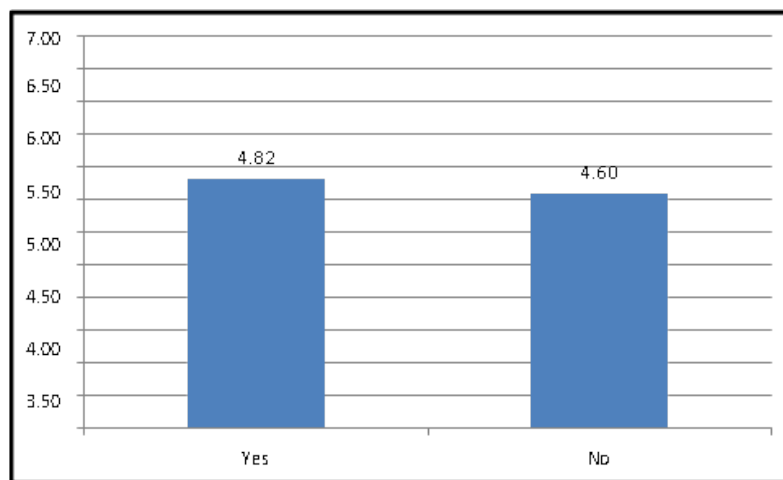
c.   Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Job Characteristics

As reflected in Figure 27, DAWIA certification Level I populations' score indicates that they may not understand all of the job's characteristics compared to the contracting professionals in DAWIA Levels II and III. The scores of DAWIA certification Level I and

below could result from the organization's emphasis on basic contracting functions and understanding the normal operations and methods of the organization. DAWIA certification Level I populations scored at 4.55, followed by Level II at 4.68, and Level III at 4.67. DAWIA certification Levels II and III scores could indicate that opportunities for professional development and challenging projects or assignments are available to them, or they are aware of such opportunities. Overall, the DAWIA certification levels' average score was 4.66, ranging between the neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree on the Likert scale.

Figure 27.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and
Job Characteristics Results
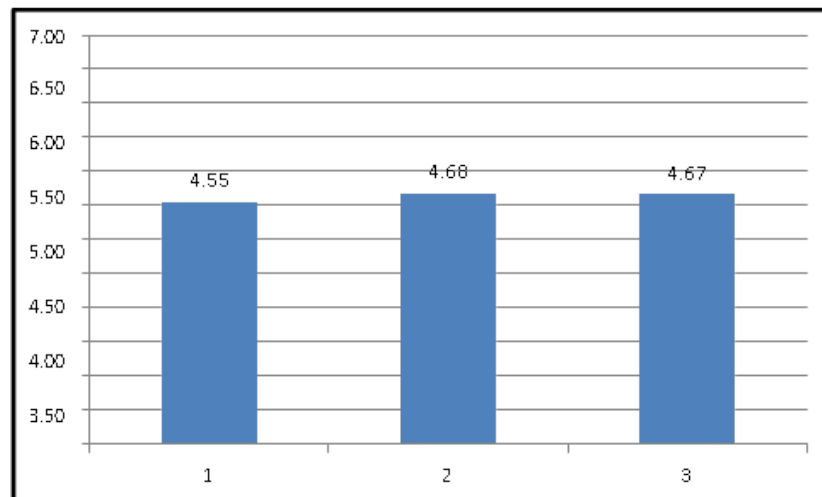
5.   Job Stress

The subcomponents of job stress include the demands of the workplace, the environment where limited growth opportunities are present, personal/family crisis that impede an employee from fully engaging in their job, and the working conditions where the work is performed. The survey results could be influenced by the timing of the survey's launch, which was during the busiest time of the fiscal year. The researchers considered the timing of the survey; however, the researchers believe that participants' responses were candid and took into account the entire year, regardless of the timeframe the survey was administered. Questions asked of respondents regarding job stress include the following:

- My supervisor makes poorly planned changes that directly affect me.

- My supervisor is unrealistic in the demands placed on me.

- I have unrealistic schedule demands. (Fields, 2002, p. 141)

a. Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Stress

Overall, both the civilian and military populations indicate that they slightly disagree that their organizations cause job-related stress, with an overall score of 2.95. The civilian populations' score of 2.94 is slightly lower than that of the military at 3.03. These scores could indicate that the overall demand of contracting actions compared to the appropriate alignment of the workforce are managed adequately, thus reducing job-related stress. Figure 28 reflects the civilian versus military populations' results in relation to job stress.

Figure 28.   Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Stress Results
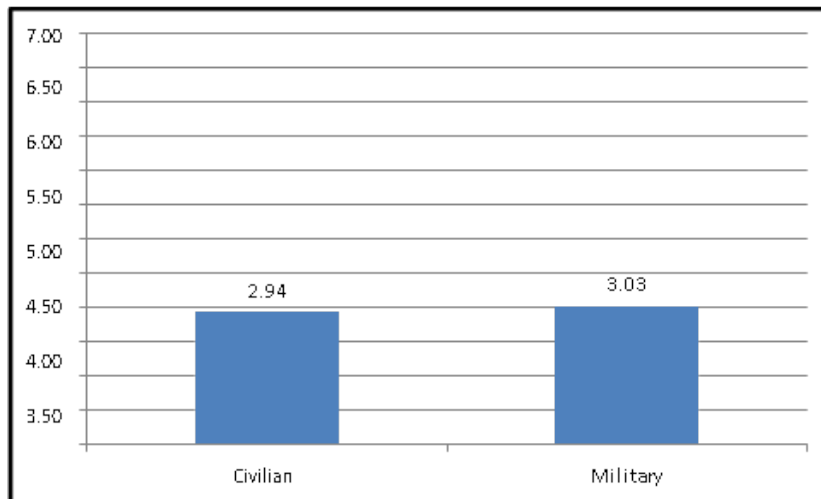
b. Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Job Stress

Figure 29 reflects the warranted contracting professionals' score of 2.99 compared to non-warranted contracting professionals' score of 2.93, which indicates that they disagree to slightly disagree that their organizations cause stress. Both populations' overall score of 2.95 could indicate that the workload distribution with the organization is according to the contracting professionals' ability, thus reducing job-related stress on individual members or on the organization as a whole.

Figure 29.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and
Job Stress Results
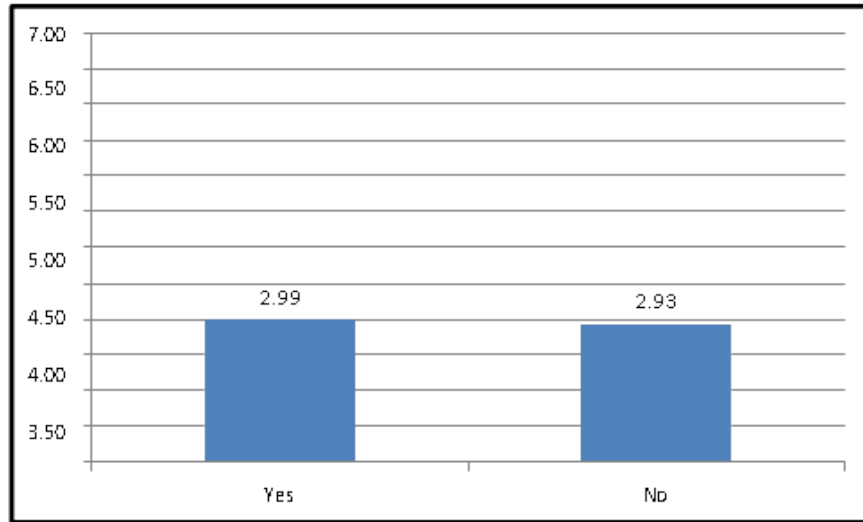
c.   Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Job Stress

Overall, all DAWIA certification levels populations' scores range between disagree to slightly disagree that their organizations causes job-related stress. Figure 30 shows that the DAWIA certification Level I score of 2.89 is slightly lower than DAWIA certification Level II and III populations at 2.97 each. The overall populations' scores of 2.97 could indicate that not all DAWIA certification level populations see their organizations as causing them job-related stress.

Figure 30.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and
Job Stress Results
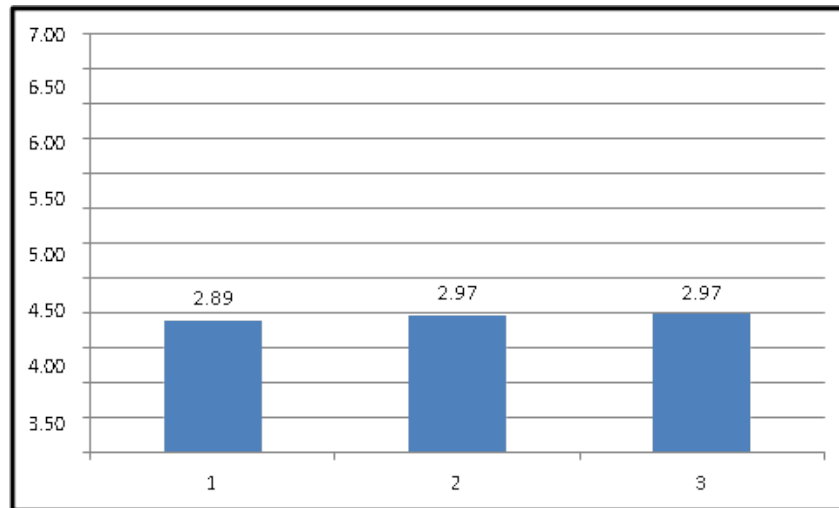
6.   Work–Family Conflict

Work–family conflict assesses the work and family inter-roles and the conflicts between the two that may negatively affect job involvement. Reversing the wording of the questions to focus on the impacts of family demands in relation to work demands allows the analysis of whether spillover of these family stressors negatively influences an employee's performance. There is a positive correlation between work–family conflict and an employee's job involvement/engagement. Work–family conflict questions include the following:

- My work schedule often conflicts with my family life.
- After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do.
- On the job, I have so much work that it takes away from my other interests. (Fields, 2002, p. 201)

a.   *Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Work–Family Conflict*

In Figure 31, the civilian populations' score of 3.51 is slightly lower than the military populations' score of 3.57, which ranges from slightly disagree to neither agree nor disagree. The overall score of 3.52 for both the civilian and military populations' indicated that no work–family conflict exists that would interfere with their job performance.

Figure 31.   Civilian versus Military Populations and
Work–Family Conflict Results
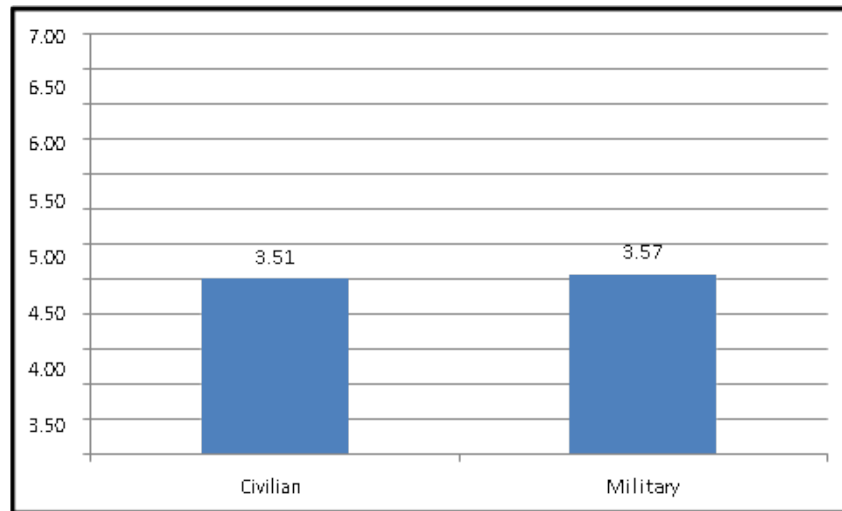
b.   Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Work–Family Conflict

The populations of warranted contracting professionals' average score of 4.01 indicates that they neither agree nor disagree that their family roles have a negative influence on their job involvement. The non-warranted populations' score of 3.25 indicates that they slightly disagree that the roles or functions within their family structure do not interfere with their job involvement. The overall populations' score of 3.52, which ranges from slightly disagree to neither agree nor disagree, indicates that a conflict between their roles and responsibilities within their family structure with that of their work structure are nonexistent. Figure 32 reflects the warranted versus non-warranted populations' results relating to work–family conflict.

Figure 32.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Work–Family Conflict Results
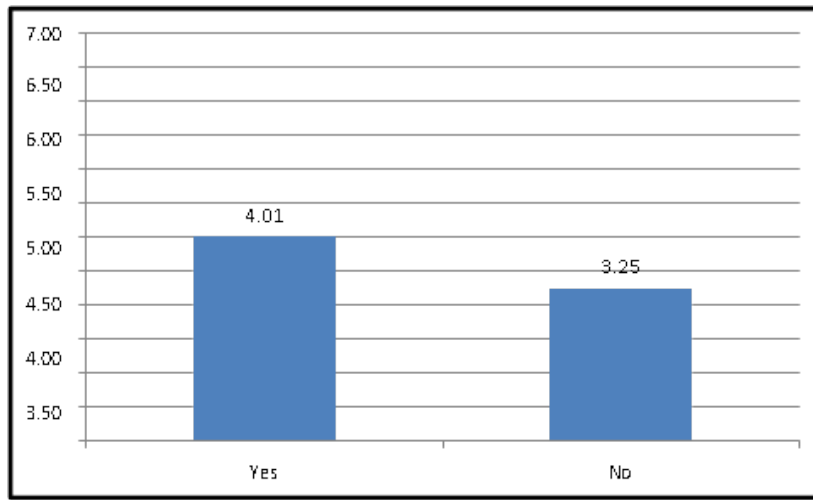
c.   *Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Work–Family Conflict*

Overall, all DAWIA certification levels scores' range between slightly disagreeing to neither agreeing nor disagreeing that their family roles and responsibilities interfere or conflict with their work involvement. DAWIA Level I populations scored this dimension at 2.97, while Levels II and III scored this dimension slightly higher at 3.45 and 3.68, respectively. The populations' overall score of 3.56 could indicate either that across all DAWIA certification levels, they slightly disagree to neither agree nor disagree that they experience issues with their work and family roles and responsibilities conflicting. Figure 33 reflects the various DAWIA level certifications relating to work–family conflict.

Figure 33.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Work–Family
Conflict Results

A bar chart showing three bars labeled 1, 2, and 3, with values 2.97, 3.45, and 3.68 respectively. The vertical axis ranges from 2.00 to 7.00.
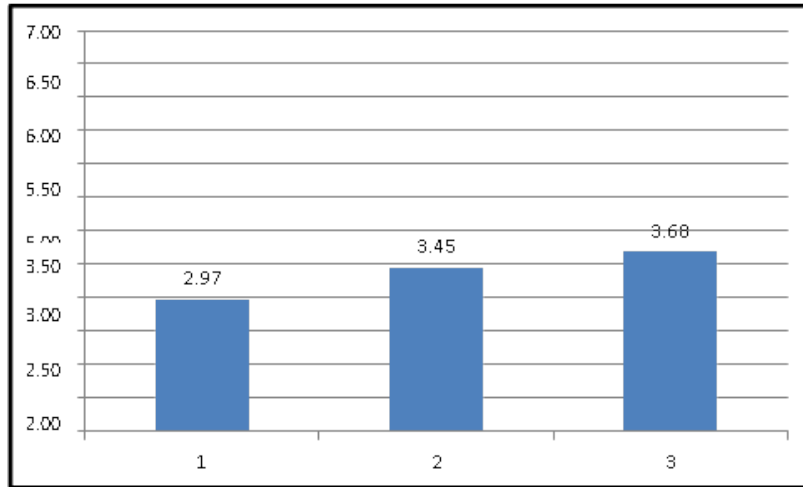
7.   Commute Stress

Commute stress also includes commute safety, which assesses the strain an employee feels when commuting to and from work. Commute stress also assesses whether an employee feels safe when commuting to and from work. Commute questions include

- I resent the length of my commute.

- In general, how do you feel about your commute when seeing accidents?

- In general, how do you feel about your commute when constantly being under time pressure? (Fields, 2002, p. 139)

a.   Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Commute

Figure 34 reflects that both the civilian populations' score of 2.65 and military populations' score of 2.39 ranges between disagreeing to slightly disagreeing that their commute causes stress that directly affects their job performance. The overall populations' score of 2.62 could indicate that both populations do not attribute commute stress as a factor that negatively affects their job performance.

Figure 34.   Civilian versus Military Populations and Commute Stress
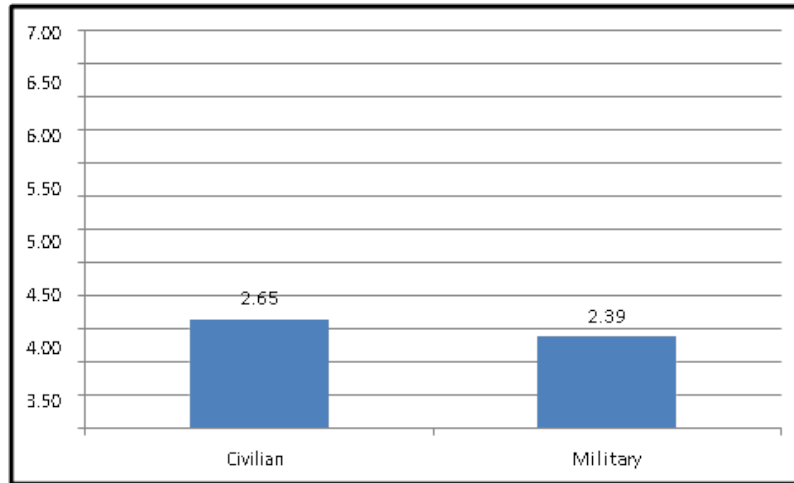
b.   Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Commute

Both the warranted populations' score of 2.53 and non-warranted populations' score of 2.66 range between disagreeing to slightly disagreeing that their commute has no effect on their job performance. The overall populations' score of 2.62 could indicate that commute stress has minimal to no effect on employees performing their jobs. Figure 35 reflects the warranted versus non-warranted populations' results relating to commute stress.

Figure 35.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Commute
Stress Results
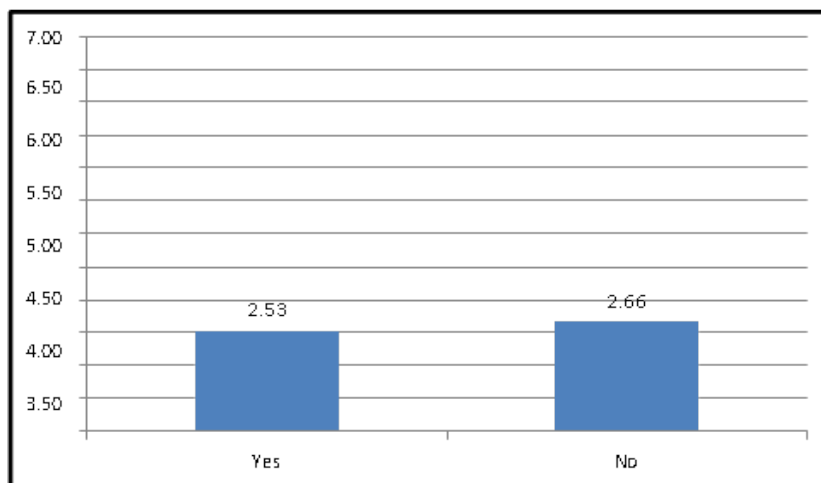
c. *Analysis of DAWIA Certification Levels Populations and Commute*

DAWIA certification Level I scores of 2.78 compared to Levels II and III at 2.51 and 2.69 indicate that they disagree to slightly disagree that their commute interferes with their job activities. The overall populations' score of 2.64 could indicate that commute stress does not have a negative impact on the functionality on employee jobs across all three DAWIA certification levels. Figure 36 reflects the DAWIA certification level populations' results relating to commute stress.

Figure 36.　　DAWIA Certification Levels Populations and Commute Stress Results
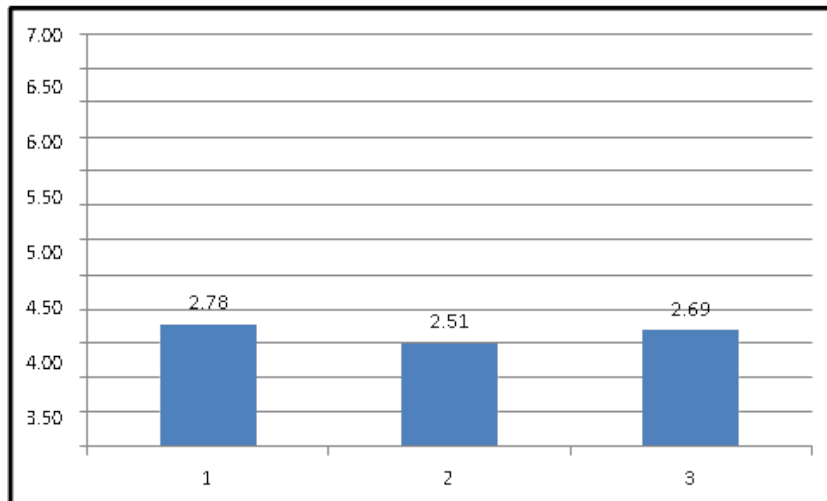
8. Organizational Justice

Organizational justice assesses an employee's perception of whether the processes and procedures used for professional performance evaluations include accurate and important information when being evaluated by a supervisor. Some questions within organizational justice include the following:

- The supervisor considered the important aspects of your work when rating you.

- The supervisor rated you on how well you did your job, not on his/her personal opinion of you.

- The supervisor treated you with consideration when giving you your performance appraisal results. (Fields, 2002, p. 192)

Many of the fill-in-the-box, open-ended questions reveal that favoritism and organizational dysfunction are prevalent from both the civilian and military perspectives. The following comments are from respondents.

Supervisor[s] need to be fair when rating, stop rating employees that do not perform to standard the same rate with employees that are over worked.

The current appraisal process is not a useful tool for evaluating performance and/or driving performance improvement. It is basically a check-the-box.

The measure of effectiveness is equal to or based [on] the amount of awards created and often does not take into consideration the quality of amount of administration required to manage other ongoing contracts. In many cases the measure is quantity and not quality of the work being performed.

a.   *Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Organizational Justice*

Overall, both populations disagree to slightly disagree that their organizations are fairly evaluating employees based on appropriate procedures and processes. As illustrated in Figure 37, the civilian populations' score of 3.17 is slightly higher than the military population's at 2.95. The overall populations' score of 3.15 could indicate that organizational justice within the contracting organizations and those that provide contracting support within non-contracting organizations do not afford employees an opportunity to question performance rating or provide them a voice in discussing performance rating decisions.

Figure 37.   Civilian versus Military Populations and Organizational Justice
Results
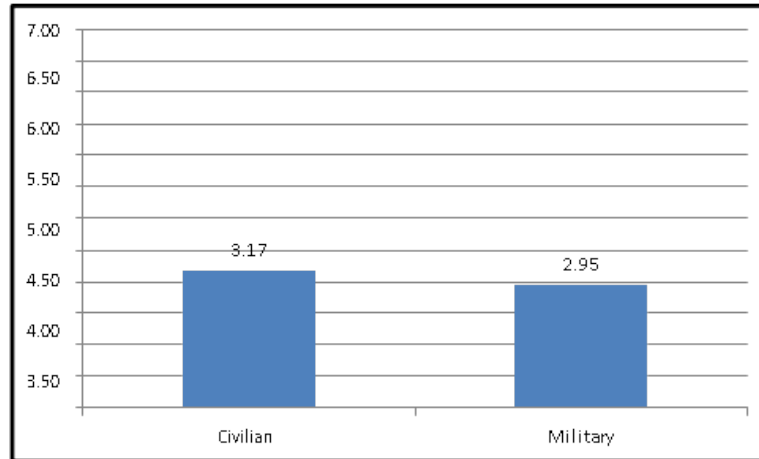
b.   *Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Organizational Justice*

The warranted populations' score of 3.24 is slightly higher than the non-warranted populations' score of 3.10. The overall populations' score of 3.15 indicates that they slightly disagree that their organizations are treating their members fairly amongst their co-workers, and evaluating their performance against the tasks they perform. The non-warranted populations' lower score could indicate that work distribution is not assigned appropriately (see Figure 38).

Figure 38.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and
Organizational Justice Results
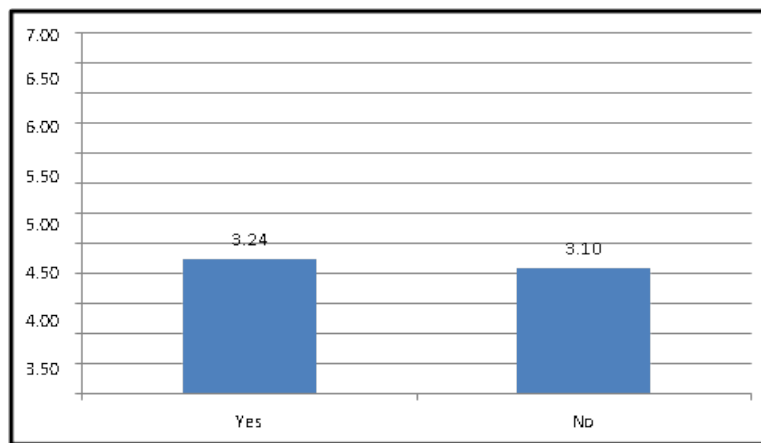
c. Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Organizational Justice

In Figure 39, DAWIA certification Level I populations' score of 2.92 is slightly lower than Levels II and III at 3.16. Overall, the DAWIA certification level populations' average score of 3.14 indicates that respondents slightly disagree that their organizations are treating its members fairly, or that they allow employees to voice their concerns regarding performance rating decisions.

Figure 39. DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Organizational Justice Results
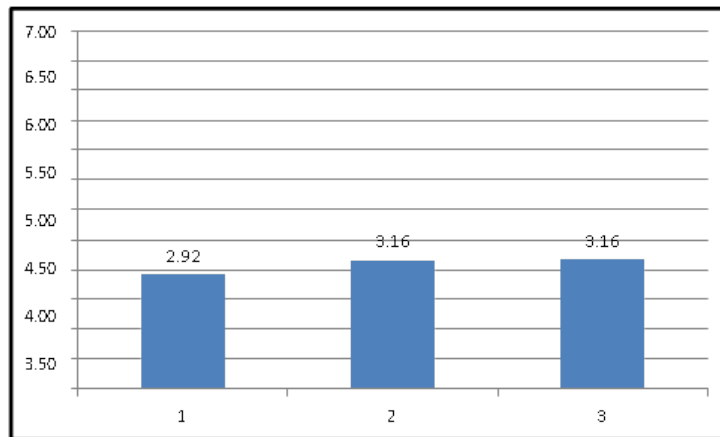
9. Job Fit

Job fit measures an employee's perceived ability given the level of job demands.

Job fit questions include

- I feel that my work utilizes my full abilities.
- I feel competent and fully able to handle my job.
- My job gives me a chance to do the things I feel I do best. (Fields, 2002, p. 233)

a. Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Fit

The civilian populations' score of 3.73 is slightly higher than that of the military at 3.55. Overall, both populations' score of 3.71 indicates that they neither agree nor disagree that their organizations fully utilize all their skills sets given the workload. These scores

could also indicate that certain skills are being over-utilized, while other skill sets are being under-utilized (see Figure 40).

Figure 40. Civilian versus Military Populations and Job Fit Results
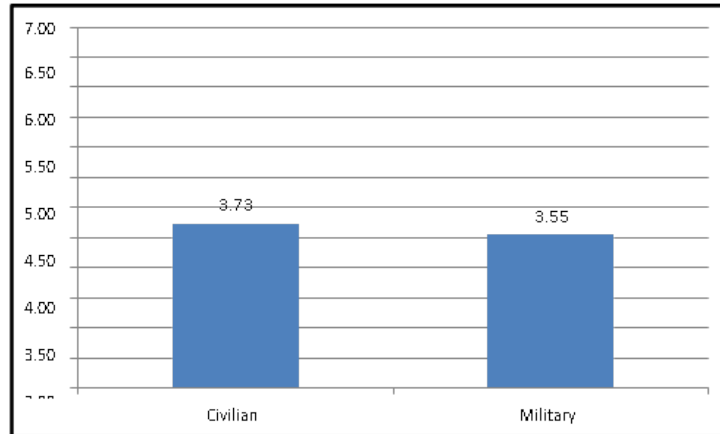
b. ***Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Job Fit***

Within Figure 41, both warranted and non-warranted populations' average score of 3.85 and 3.64 indicates that they neither agree nor disagree that their skills are not aligned appropriately with the demands of the organization. The overall populations' score of 3.71 also indicates that organizations are not maximizing the skills sets of their employees based on the organization's workload.

Figure 41. Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and
Job Fit Results
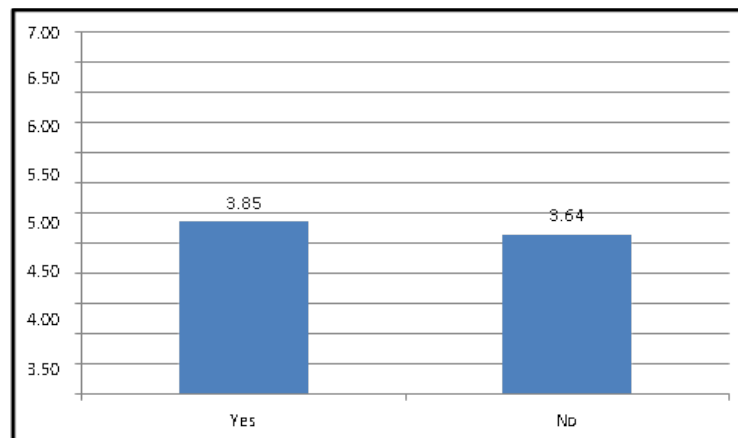
c. *DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Job Fit*

Job fit within DAWIA Level I populations' score of 3.54, followed by Level II of 3.63, and Level III of 3.79, all have a positive incline. The overall populations' score of 3.73 could indicate that the higher the DAWIA certification level, the greater the decrease in job role ambiguity and lack of skill set alignment, compared to the demands of the organization. The populations' score could indicate that they slightly disagree to neither agree nor disagree that their organizations have the right personnel assigned to the appropriate functions of the organization. Figure 42 shows the DAWIA certification level populations' results relating to job fit.

Figure 42.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Job Fit Results
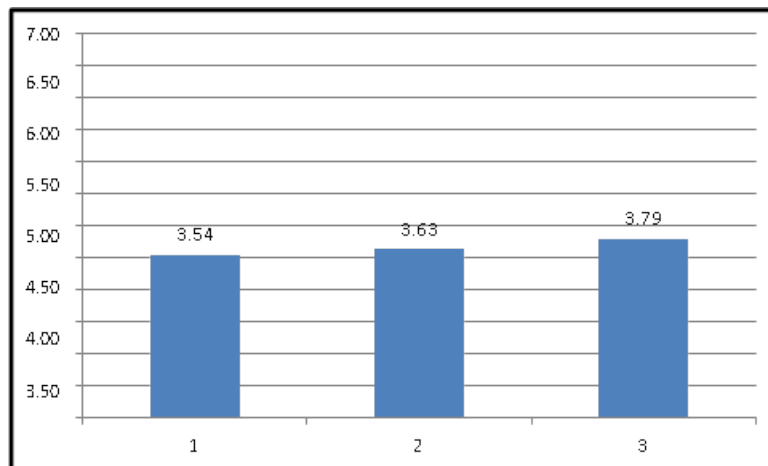
10. Workplace Values

Workplace values describe the shared values between the organization and its employees. These shared values "describe the extent that employees believe the organization places an importance on innovation, quality, cooperation and participation" (Fields, 2002, p. 284). Workplace value questions include

- High quality products and services are of central importance.
- Individual employees are recognized and rewarded for superior performance.
- Reputation for quality surpasses [Army contracting agencies]. (Fields, 2002, p. 284)

a. Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and Workplace Values

Both the civilian and military populations neither agree nor disagree that they share similar workplace values within their organizations. The civilians' populations' score of 4.46 is slightly higher than that of the military populations' of 4.29. The overall populations' score of 4.44, could indicate that employees may have some organizational shared values, but the individual shared values of co-workers and/or supervisors may differ, or an employee's perception of co-workers or a supervisor's values differ compared to their own values. See Figure 43, which reflects the civilian versus military populations' results relating to workplace values.

Figure 43. Civilian versus Military Populations and Workplace Values Results
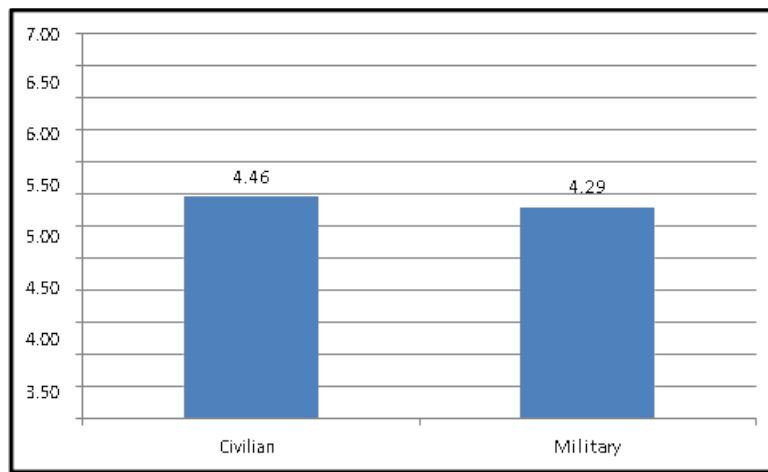
b. Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Workplace Values

Both the warranted and non-warranted populations' overall score of 4.44 indicates that they neither agree nor disagree that the values they share with that of their organizations are similar or compatible. Figure 44 reflects the warranted contracting professionals' score of 4.48 is slightly higher than the non-warranted population of 4.42. These populations' scores could indicate that employees and the organizations in which they serve may share some values, or there may be some disparity between the shared values of individual co-workers and that of their supervisors.

Figure 44.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and Workplace
Values
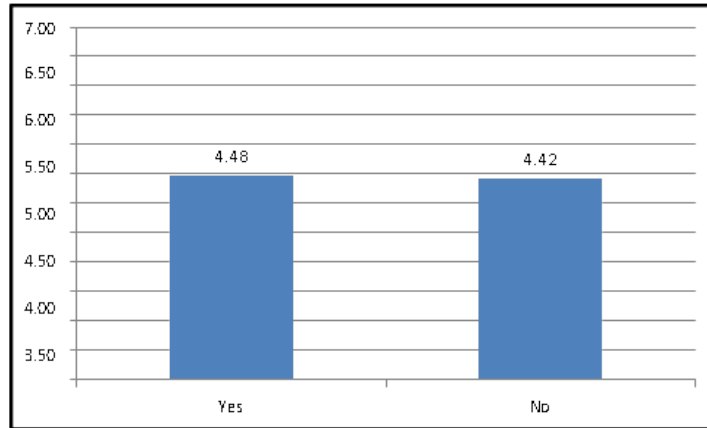
c.   *DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Workplace Values*

Those in DAWIA certification Level I populations scored workplace values at 4.73, which ranges from neither agree nor disagree to slightly-agree. DAWIA Levels II and III populations' scores of 4.44 and 4.37 could indicate that they also neither agree nor disagree. The overall populations' score of 4.42 could indicate that entry-level contracting professionals are more inclined to accept the organization's values and incorporate these values as their own; whereas the values of employees in DAWIA Levels II and III may share some values but may be subjective to the individuals they support or the organization's leadership (see Figure 45).

Figure 45.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and Workplace Values
Results
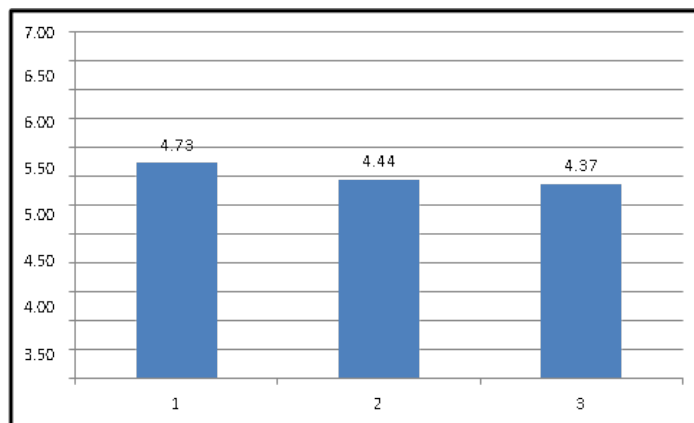
11. High Quality Relationships

Relational coordination, as described by Carmeli & Gittell (2008), enables high quality relationships by integrating shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect. These shared goals, knowledge, and mutual respect increase the information sharing capacity and experience within an organization (Carmeli & Gittell, 2008, p. 713). Two general concepts of high quality relationships that are described in greater detail are the capacity that high quality relationships increase and the experiences that high quality relationships.

Two important aspects within high quality relationships are

> psychological safety, which focuses on learning from failures, and the other concerning perceived organizational support. Psychological safety examines the fundamental attributes of high reliability approaches, which encourages employees to call attention to failures, through an environment of open communication. Organizational support relates to an employee's belief that his or her organization is generally concerned for them, values and appreciates their contributions to the organization. (Carmeli & Gittell, 2008, pp. 713–714)

This climate dimension is sub-divided into high quality capacity and high quality experiences.

a. *High Quality Relationships Capacity*

High quality capacity enables effective coordination of work by supporting high quality communication among the members of the organization. When work is interdependent, time constrained, uncertain, or requires extensive information-processing, high quality relationships is the connective tissue that connects the distinctive roles in the organizational division of labor, which promotes effective relational communication efforts. Questions supporting this dimension include the following:

- My co-workers and I do not have any difficulty expressing our feeling to each other.

- We are not afraid to express unpleasant feelings at work.

- Whenever anyone at work expresses an unpleasant feeling, she/he always does so in a constructive manner. (Powley, 2016, p. 19)

(1)   Analysis of Civilian versus Military Populations and High Quality Relationships Capacity

Both the civilian and military populations' scores of 4.69 and 4.68 indicate that they neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree that the working relationships within the organization support high quality communication among its members. The overall populations' score of 4.69 could indicate that they neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree that the working relationships within their organizations help facilitate high quality communicative relationships, which increases information capacity that supports the organization's desired outcomes. Figure 46 reflects the civilian versus military populations' results relating to high quality relationships.

Figure 46.   Civilian versus Military Populations and High Quality Relationships Capacity Results
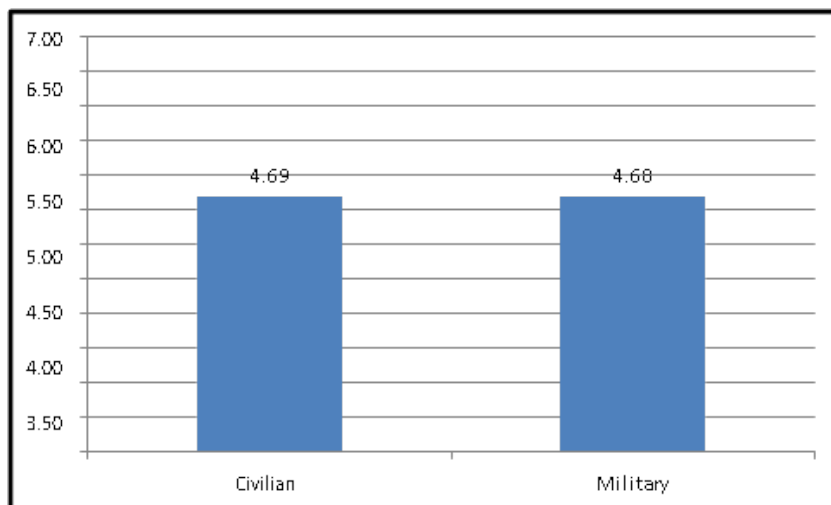
(2)   Analysis of Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and High Quality Relationships Capacity

Overall, both the warranted and non-warranted populations viewed high quality relationships in regards to capacity ranging from neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree. Figure 47 shows that the warranted contracting professionals populations' score of 4.72 is slightly higher than that of the non-warranted contracting professionals populations' score of 4.69. Overall, these populations' score of 4.70 could indicate that employees believe that the working relationships within their organizations facilitate increases in the capacity of

maintaining high quality relationships. These capacity increases in high quality relationships enable increases in information processing among its employees, which assist in facilitating more organizational transparency, trust, and collaborating.

Figure 47.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and High Quality Relationships Capacity Results
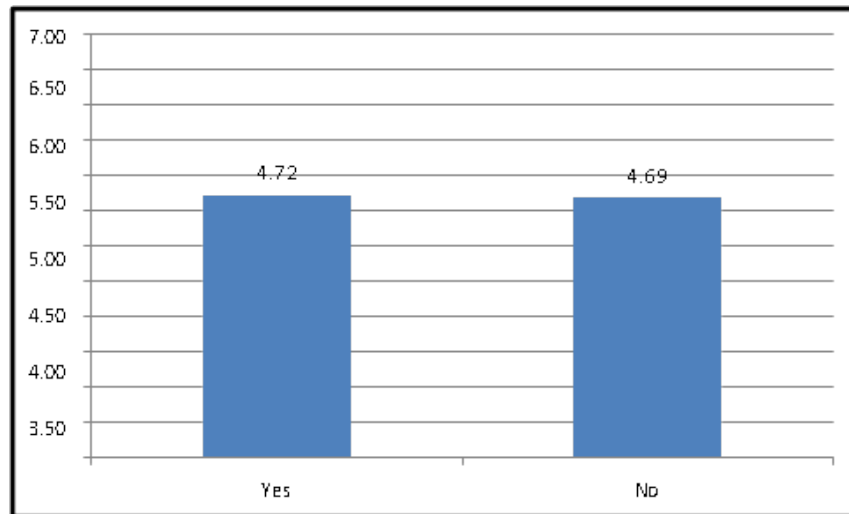
(3)   Analysis of DAWIA Certification Level Populations and High Quality Relationships Capacity

DAWIA certification Level I populations' score of 4.48 is slightly lower than DAWIA certification Levels II and III at 4.67 each. The overall populations' score of 4.65 could indicate that all DAWIA certification level populations neither agree nor disagree to slightly agree, that their work relationships facilitate an increase in information processing capacity, through collaborative work networks, that support the organization's desired outcomes (see Figure 48).

Figure 48.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and High Quality
Relationships Capacity Results
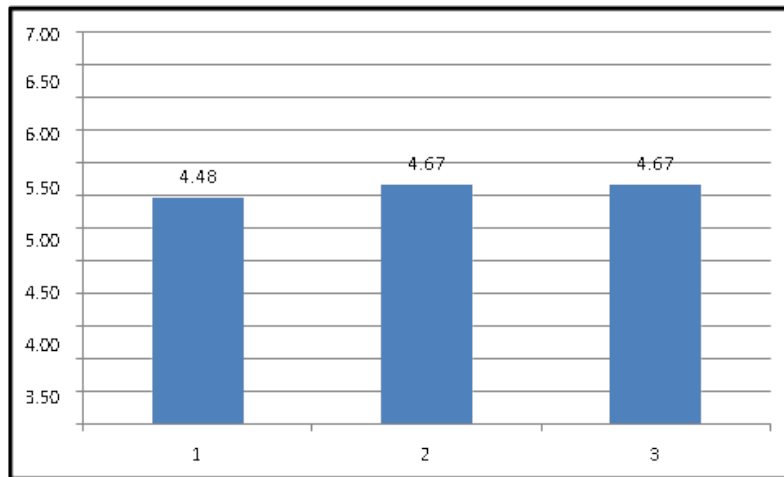
b.   ***High Quality Relationships-Experiences***

As organizations seek better ways of accomplishing their desired outcomes, organizations have embraced the need to incorporate its organizations' members' experiences. The adage that behavior rewarded is behavior repeated exemplifies the desire of decreasing negative behaviors or non-value-added processes, and promoting those behaviors or processes that increase the probability of an organization's end-state. High quality relationship questions include the following:

- I feel that my co-workers like me.
- I feel that my co-workers and I try to develop meaningful relationships with one another.
- I feel that my co-workers understand me. (Powley, 2016, p. 20).

(1)   Civilian versus Military Populations and High Quality Relationships-Experiences

Overall, both the civilian and military populations' score and the overall populations' score of 5.24 indicate that they slightly agree that the relationships between co-workers are valued and that employees display mutual respect for one another. The scores could also indicate that this empathy and connection among employees increases mutual respect among organization members, which promotes stronger collaborating efforts (see Figure 49).

Figure 49.   Civilian versus Military Populations and High Quality
Relationships-Experiences
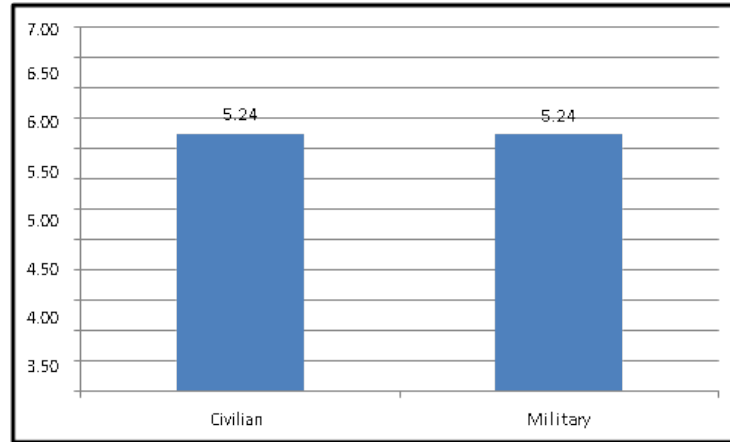
(2)   Warranted versus Non-warranted Populations and High Quality
Relationships-Experiences

The warranted contracting professionals' populations' score of 5.37, is slightly higher than that of the non-warranted contracting professionals' populations' score of 5.20. Overall, both the warranted and non-warranted populations' scores of 5.26 indicate that they slightly agree that the relationships within their organizations foster an environment where co-workers are valued, have mutual respect for one another, and the organization's members are committed to one another. Figure 50 reflects the warranted versus non-warranted populations' results relating to high quality relationships.

Figure 50.   Warranted versus Non-Warranted Populations and High Quality
Relationships-Experiences Results
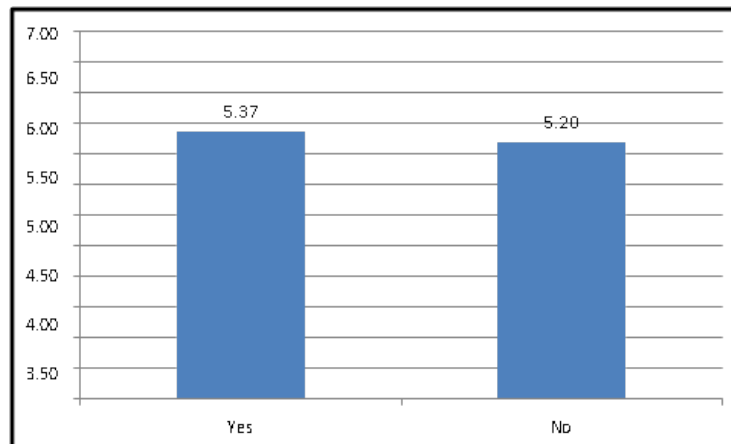
(3)   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and High Quality Relationships-Experience

DAWIA certification Level I populations' score of 4.95 is slightly lower than those in DAWIA certification Levels II and III at 5.18 and 5.27, respectively. The overall populations' score of 5.22 indicate that they slightly agree that their organizations place value on co-worker relationships. The results of these scores could indicate that co-worker relationships have meaning, with mutual respect as the basis, that co-workers convey empathy for one another, and that co-workers are committed to one another. Figure 51 reflects the DAWIA certification level populations' results relating to high quality relationships.

Figure 51.   DAWIA Certification Level Populations and High Quality Relationships-Experiences
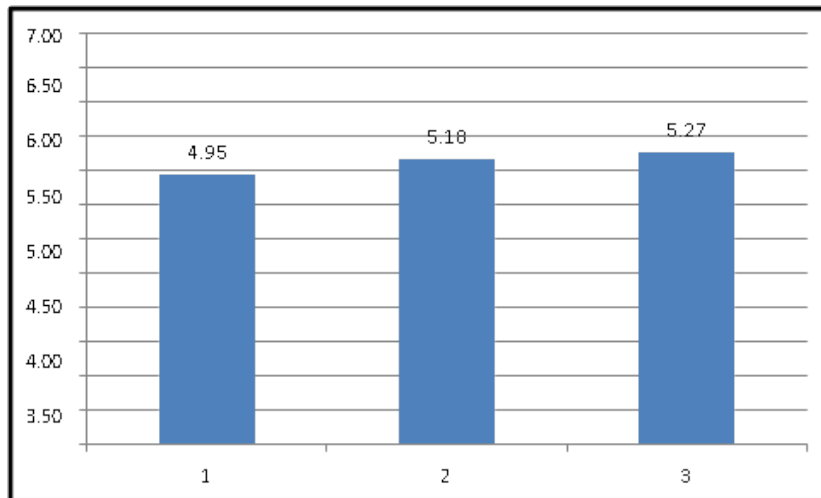
C.   ANALYSIS OF ARMY COMMANDS AND THE DIMENSIONS

Survey participants fell into one of the seven commands. The category listed as other included USSOCOM, PACOM, ODA, DCMA, Army North, Army Research Lab, or the Army Reserves. Table 3 displays the overall averages of the major commands' results as they relate to all of the climate dimensions.

Table 3. Climate Dimensions and Contracting Commands Correlations

Row Labels	JobSat AVG	SupCom AVG	JobCha AVG	JobRole AVG	JobStrain AVG	WKFMConfl AVG	Comm-Combined- AVG	OrgJus AVG	JobFit AVG	WKPLVal AVG	HQC-Capacity AVG	HQC-Experience AVG
ACC	4.90	4.22	4.70	5.58	2.86	3.42	2.65	3.19	3.66	4.54	4.74	5.30
AMC	4.39	3.89	3.86	5.67	3.15	2.75	2.82	3.00	3.57	3.73	3.79	4.38
ECC	4.32	4.33	4.27	5.76	3.10	3.56	2.54	3.08	3.68	4.38	4.78	5.23
Medical Command	5.16	4.44	5.00	5.92	2.87	3.10	2.81	3.18	3.90	4.45	4.71	5.33
MICC	4.56	4.25	4.63	5.66	3.04	3.60	2.63	3.14	3.70	4.38	4.66	5.16
National Guard Bureau	4.57	4.47	5.00	5.55	3.05	4.17	2.56	3.06	3.77	4.42	5.07	5.53
US Army Corps of Engineers	4.97	4.34	4.75	5.70	2.99	3.59	2.54	3.18	3.81	4.45	4.60	5.19
-oth-	4.67	4.16	4.32	5.45	2.95	3.44	2.67	3.08	3.63	4.12	4.39	5.00
(blank)	5.20	4.35	4.90	5.86	2.21	2.03	2.81	2.67	3.84	4.42	5.03	5.26
Dimension Total	**4.81**	**4.27**	**4.68**	**5.63**	**2.94**	**3.51**	**2.62**	**3.15**	**3.71**	**4.44**	**4.69**	**5.24**

Overall, all commands exhibit challenges in all 13 dimensions from the surveyed participants. Responses from survey participants indicate that they neither agree nor disagree with their commands' encompassing environments that positively affect the organization. The commute stress and commute safety dimensions were combined into one overall dimension. Of the 13 dimensions, job role ambiguity and high quality relationships-experience were among the highest scored dimensions. Job roles ambiguity's score of 5.63 could indicate that employees slightly agree to agree that they understand the roles and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate approaches and processes in accomplishing their assigned activities. High quality relationships-experiences' score of 5.24 could indicate that employees slightly agree that their organizations are utilizing their employees' experiences for the demands of the organization, or that opportunities exist for employees to exhibit superior experiences given the workload.

D.   DIMENSION CORRELATION ANALYSIS

From the dimension correlation table (see Table 3), an analysis of the correlations between the job satisfaction, organizational justice, and job fit dimensions are discussed in the following sections.

1. Correlation of Job Satisfaction

The dimension of job satisfaction includes the intrinsic and extrinsic feelings an employee has given the totality of internal and external activities that may affect their job involvement. These activities include the functions or roles of their job, their perceptions of their job performance, as well as the internal and external relationships that may affect their involvement at work. Of the 13 climate dimensions discussed in Chapter IV, the highest correlation with job satisfaction was workplace values at .698, job characteristics at .630, and high quality relationships capacity at .618. Those with high negative correlations with job satisfaction were job stress at -.698 and work–family conflict at .379. The dimensions of job stress, organizational justice, and job fit are of particular importance in relation to job satisfaction and are discussed in the following section.

a.   *Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Job Stress*

The correlation between job satisfaction in relation to job stress is of particular interest because of its highly negative correlation score of -.698, compared to the overall average of job strain within the commands of 2.94. Job stress' overall average of 2.94 could indicate that employees are not experiencing high levels of stress within their organizations. Job strain is the overall category term; however, for the purposes of this research, *job stress* is considered synonymous with *job strain*. The negative correlation between job satisfaction and job stress could indicate that when employees are experiencing moments of job satisfaction, the stresses of the job are low or nonexistent. Similarly, when job stress is high, employees may feel overwhelmed by the demands of the organization and are thus less satisfied in their jobs.

b.   *Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Justice*

Job satisfaction in relation to organizational justice suggests that employees are satisfied overall with their jobs when the procedural justice within the organization is fair and consistent. The correlation score of .574 between job satisfaction and organizational justice indicates a significant correlation. The average organizational justice score of 3.15, which suggests that employees slightly disagree that their organizations are treating all members fairly and consistent, free of biases and favoritism, could indicate that

organizations are engaging in behaviors that are not conducive to fostering positive environments. Comments from the fill-in-the-box, open-ended questions suggest that many organizations are fostering environments that promote and provide opportunities to those within particular groups, based on personal relationships between an employee and their supervisor or upper management. While descriptive statistics or correlation tables cannot identify inappropriate behaviors, correlations suggest whether a strong or weak relationship exists between the dimensions of discussion. When there is a perception that organizational justice is high, the overall employee job satisfaction is low. In contrast, employees are most satisfied with their jobs when the organizations' procedural justice is free from biasness and favoritism.

c.   Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Job Fit

The correlation score between job satisfaction and job fit of .531 indicates a significant correlation. Job fit in relation to job satisfaction accounts for employees' particular skills and experiences being in alignment with the organization's activities for the organization's desired outcomes. The average job fit score of 3.71 could indicate that employees slightly disagree that their organizations consider the skill sets and experiences of all the members within their organizations, and that organizations appropriately align or distribute the organization's workload.

2.   Correlation of Organizational Justice

Organizational justice includes the procedural justice in employee performance appraisals. Other factors within organizational justice are whether employees have a voice based on their performance ratings, and the degree of control employees have over the performance rating decisions. Of the correlations between organizational justice compared to the other climate dimensions, the supervisor commitment correlation score of .584 is the highest, followed by job satisfaction at .574. The correlation score between organizational justice and job stress of -.578 was the highest negatively correlated dimension, followed by a work–family conflict correlation score of -.209. The correlations between the organizational justice dimension and job stress, and organizational justice and job fit dimensions are discussed in further detail in the following section.

a. Correlation between Organizational Justice and Job Stress

The correlation between organizational justice and job stress is of particular interest because of the significant negative correlation score of -.578, compared to these dimensions' overall averages. The negative correlation between these two dimensions suggests that when organizations foster environments where employees are evaluated based on their own merits, and employees believe supervisors are using accurate information when conducting performance appraisals, job stress is low. Conversely, when employees perceive that supervisors are not fully gathering accurate assessment information when conducting evaluations and/or appraisals, an employee's level of job-related stress is high.

b. Correlation between Organizational Justice and Job Fit

The correlation between organizational justice and job fit is of particular interest because this has direct implications on the retention goals of the organization. If employees perceive that the skills and experiences of their co-workers are being under- or over-utilized, this causes distrust within the organization and can have a negative effect on the retention goals of the organization. Some factors that hinder the proper alignment of organizational justice and job fit are favoritism, improper or inappropriate personal employee–supervisor relationships, gossip, and subjective evaluation measurements. The correlation score between these two dimensions of .384 is significant enough to suggest that there is a positive relationship between the perceived ability-fit of individual members within an organization, and the organizational justice of assigning work according to members' abilities.

3. Correlation of Job Fit

Job fit involves those requisite skills and experiences an employee has that support the overarching goals of the organization. Job fit supports other dimensions, such as job satisfaction, as discussed earlier; job role; and job characteristics. When job fit has a positive correlation with these said dimensions, an organization should expect a positive environment with superior outcomes. Of the 12 dimensions that job fit corresponds with, job roles' correlation score of .595 and job satisfaction's correlation score of .531 were the highest. The dimension that displays a strong negative correlation with job fit is job stress.

The correlations between job fit and job stress, and job fit and job role are discussed in the following sections.

a. Correlation between Job Fit and Job Stress

Correlations relating to job stress have suggested that job stress has a significant negative affect with job satisfaction, organizational justice, and job fit. These correlations suggest that when one of these said dimensions is up, then job stress is down, and vice versa. Job fit and job stress' significant negative correlation score of -.430 suggests that when employees believe that the skills they bring to the organization will be utilized in an efficient manner for attaining the organization's goals, they are less likely to experience job-related stress. In contrast, when employees believe that they do not have the necessary skills or experience required to accomplish assigned tasks, the level of job stress increases. The level of job stress could be associated with time constraints compared to the demands of the organizations, as well as stress induced by workload distribution compared to DAWIA certification level.

b. Correlation between Job Fit and Job Role

The correlation score of .595 between job fit and job role is the highest correlation compared to job fit and the other dimensions. The significant correlation score suggests that the role of employees, given their education, level of training, and ability of accomplishing tasks are in alignment with the organization's goal of employee–job match. This connection allows employees to be assigned tasks commensurate with the level of effort required in accomplishing organizational workload goals.

E.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to assess the Army's contracting workforce on 13 dimensions of organizational climate. The assessments of the survey identify those organizational dimensions that are causing problems with recruitment and retention within the Army's contracting workforce and provide senior Army leaders the information needed to improve the contracting workforce organizational environment. The survey results provided descriptive statistics, analysis of all the 13 climate dimensions, and correlations between the dimensions of particular interests. The dimensions that are impeding with the

Army's recruitment and retention goals within the contracting workforce are job stress, organizational justice, and job fit.

1. Job Stress Improvement

The correlation between job stress and many of the other climate dimensions suggest that job stress has a significant negative correlation on those climate dimensions that would have a positive effect on an organization's climate. Job stress was more prevalent in the work–family conflict and commute stress climate dimensions. Organizations may want to consider incorporating more opportunities for employees to telework from home when appropriate. Several open-ended responses suggested that if the respondents' organizations allowed or increased the use of teleworking from home, a reduction of their commute stress would benefit the organization. Both commute stress and work–family conflict issues could be reduced if organizations explored the idea of incorporating more opportunities for employees to telework from home. An overall decrease in commute and job stress, and work–family conflict could increase employee's overall job satisfaction.

2. Organizational Justice Improvement

One of the recommendations that Army leaders might consider based on survey responses would be to incorporate accountability measures of supervisors' performance. Based on comments from the survey, there seems to be high supervisor turnovers, supervisors not performing to the level expected, and supervisors not using evaluation performance measures appropriately. Senior leaders could consider lengthening the tenure of supervisory positions for continuity purposes, and establish a mechanism that forces greater accountability and transparency within the supervisory roles. An increase of supervisory accountability might perhaps allow greater emphasis of transparency of the day-to-day activities that possibly obstruct the Army's recruitment and retention objectives and goals. This also allows leaders at all levels to be held accountable for the organizations' negative environments. Organizations could incorporate specific leadership training tailored to target the areas that need greater emphasis for improvement. Employees' loyalty would increase due to the organization increasing the leadership's integrity, accountability, and transparency posture. Additionally, another consideration to rotate employees within the

organization would optimize greater collaborative networks by enabling employees to experience cross-functioning opportunities not normally considered.

3. Job Fit Improvement

One of the job fit recommendations for the Army's leaders is multifaceted. To improve organizational job fit, senior Army contracting leaders could better assess how they warrant their personnel based on contractual knowledge of the processes, methods, and procedures. Instead of awarding warrants to personnel based on longevity within the organization or during contingency operations, greater attention should focus on the fundamentals of contracting actions that incorporate contingency operations. Efforts to rotate military personnel within the organization and increasing the number of Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) civilians within organizations with areas of responsibilities OCONUS should be implemented to the greatest extent possible. This allows organizations to develop their members tailored to the missions they support. The organization's desired outcome should consider whether the personnel they develop are truly assessed at the appropriate DAWIA certification level given the expected workload. Another idea is to rotate supervisors/division chiefs within organizations in order to strengthen cross-functional department networks. These supervisors/division chiefs could be used as vital instruments in assessing the overall health of their division and organization based on employee ability-fit in relationship to the organization's objectives and goals.

4. Work–Family Conflict Improvement

Work–family conflict only has a positive correlation with the dimensions in which stress is a factor, specifically, job-related stress and commute stress. All the other dimensions are negatively correlated to work–family conflict. This suggests that when work and family conflict are low, dimensions such as job satisfaction, job role, and others have an opposite or positive effect. In contrast, when work–family conflict is high, job satisfaction, job role and others also decline. One recommendation, previously mentioned, might be to increase the use of teleworking. This could allow employees to continue to support the organization, while reducing family-related stress caused by long hours, commute stress, or demanding workloads. Another recommendation could be to adjust the work schedule to

support working 10-hour four-day weekdays, as opposed to 8-hour five-day weekdays. Tailoring these recommendations would be based on the organization's operations tempo and required reports/meetings.

F. SUMMARY

Four major population categories were analyzed given the 13 climate dimensions discussed within the methodology chapter. These populations include civilian versus military, warranted versus non-warranted contracting professionals, DAWIA certification levels and the various commands, compared to the 13 climate dimensions. An analysis was conducted of each of the 13 dimensions given the respective population categories showing the results and correlations among job satisfaction, organizational justice, and job fit. Job role ambiguity and high quality relationships-experiences scored the highest within all the category populations, and job stress and commute stress scored the lowest. Given all 13 climate dimensions—not including commute stress—job satisfaction, organizational justice, and job fit were of particular interest because of the implications on retaining the contracting workforce. Analysis of job stress in relation to the three correlation relationships indicates that job stress has a significant negative effect compared to job satisfaction, organizational justice, and job fit. Overall, the results indicate that the contracting workforce is not exhibiting signs of high job stress. Recommendations to senior Army leaders include aligning Army organization-wide climate assessments with required contracting reports for better transparency, and incorporating an Army-wide contracting workforce climate assessment every two years to identify trends and other correlations.

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VI.   SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A.   SUMMARY

DOD contracting is big business, and the contracting actions that support the warfighter and day-to-day government functions are becoming more complex. The contracting workforce that supports these activities must have the requisite skills, education, and experiences to support the growing complexities of equipping and maintaining the warfighter. These growing demands often strain the contracting workforce, which creates negative or stressed environments. These environments or organizational climates must facilitate trust, respect, and collaborative networks in order to demonstrate superior performance. The purpose of this research is to assess the Army's contracting workforce on 13 dimensions of organizational climate. Answers to the research questions identify those climate dimension affecting the Army's recruiting and retention goals, and provide recommendations on how to improve the Army's contracting workforce organizational climate.

An analysis of the Army's contracting workforce was conducted using a web-based survey to a population of approximately 10,000 contracting professionals on 13 climate dimensions. The 13 climate dimensions discussed were

- job satisfaction
- supervisor-related commitment
- job characteristics
- job role
- job stress
- work–family conflict
- commute stress
- commute safety
- organizational justice
- job fit
- workplace values
- high quality relationships
- demographics

Approximately 1,500 responses were received, and due to sampling errors and incomplete responses, 988 responses were used for analysis. Given the number of responses, the overall response rate was 67.9%, where the response rate given the Army's contracting workforce population was 9.8%. The research differentiated between organizational climate and organizational culture. Mahal (2009) summarizes the organizational climate attributes, as described by Denison, as having "(1) a supportive climate, (2) a climate of risk taking, (3) a climate of cohesiveness, and (4) a climate with the motivation to achieve" (p. 39). A positive organizational climate will foster a more collaborative environment where employees are valued members of the team, and the organization benefits from these collaborative networks and the experiences these members bring in accomplishing the organization's desired end-state. Organizations that foster a negative organizational climate are more likely to experience challenges with recruitment and retention of highly qualified and competent employees. While each organization's climate will differ, there is no evidence that the Army has conducted a contracting workforce climate assessment in previous years. As such, this research was not to benchmark the results of the survey against a known norm, but to get a baseline of the Army's contracting workforce organizational climate. Survey respondents fell into one of the eight contracting commands, which included

- MICC
- ECC
- ACC
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Guard Bureau
- Medical Command
- AMC
- Other

B. CONCLUSION

Survey results indicate that, overall, the Army's contracting workforce neither agree nor disagree that they are satisfied with their jobs given the climate dimensions. The highest climate dimensions were job role, high quality relationships-experience, and job satisfaction. The highest climate dimensions could indicate that the Army's contracting workforce is aware of the methods, procedures, and approaches of accomplishing assigned

tasks/activities, and that the collaborative efforts of their co-workers lead to more job satisfaction. The lowest scored dimensions were the combination of commute stress and safety, job stress, and organizational justice. The lowest scored dimensions could indicate that outside of commute stress, organizations may be fostering environments of biasness and favoritism that induce unnecessary job stress.

A summary of the answers to the research questions is presented as follows. The research questions were

1.   What insight does the assessment provide in correlating the climate dimensions?

The survey results indicate that given the climate populations between civilian versus military, warranted versus non-warranted, and DAWIA certification levels, job stress and commute stress have negative impacts on the Army's contracting workforce organizational climate. Employee job satisfaction, job fit, and organizational justice all have significant positive correlations, suggesting that they are dependent on each other. Job stress and commute stress both have negative correlations with job satisfaction, job fit, and organizational justice. Additionally, job stress negatively affects the Army's contracting workforce organizational climates, which increases attrition rates and severely impacts the recruitment and retention goals of the Army's contracting workforce.

2.   Which organizational dimensions are causing problems with recruitment and retention within the Army's contracting workforce?

Commute stress was the most prevalent dimension causing severe problems within all populations. Further analysis on commute stress was not provided because specific questions on the geographic locations of respondents would be required for thorough analysis; however, recommendations on reducing commute stress were provided. Job stress and organizational justice were analyzed, and it was found that among all the dimensions, contracting professionals are most affected when organizations foster environments of biasness and favoritism. Job stress is most prevalent when employees are not familiar with the job characteristics of the organization, and there is a misalignment within the organization's job roles, which induces job stress, decreasing overall job satisfaction. Organizational injustice, along with those dimensions that have a positive correlation with

organizational justice, undermines the collaborative networking efforts of integrating various skill sets and experiences to accomplish the organization's objectives and goals.

1. Strengths

Results indicate that the Army's contracting organizations are currently optimizing the contracting workforces' collaborative networks of influence through co-workers and through opportunities for professional development. This is evident within the highest climate dimensions of job role, high quality experiences, and high quality capacity. While organizations may not be able to cater at the individual level, the results indicate that overall, the contracting workforce slightly agrees that they are experiencing job satisfaction.

2. Areas for Improvement

Because commute stress was not analyzed to the level that would provide senior Army leaders an explanation for why some contracting professionals' commute stress is higher than others, there is no suggested improvement in this area at this time. Improvements for job stress and organizational justice are discussed in the following sections.

(1) Align organization-wide climate assessments with bi-annual contracting reports.

Of the 13 climate dimensions discussed, job stress has a significant negative correlation with all dimensions besides work–family conflict and commute stress. Army leaders may want to reduce job-related stress by incorporating bi-annual organization-wide climate assessments, as opposed to only assessing the organization when commanders arrive and depart. Mandating that organizations establish methods of reducing problematic issues within their organizations, and aligning the reporting of these issues with other required contracting updates, allows senior leaders to better assess the leaders within that organization. The Army's 360 assessment is structured to bypass how an organization functioned under the guidance of any particular leader. Additionally, 360 assessments allow the evaluated leader to self-select the leaders where they have a positive influence, and do not necessarily poll the entire organization under their tenure. Climate assessments conducted during the departing commander's tenure is not helpful in influencing changes

once that leader has departed. Conducting bi-annual climate assessments allows senior Army leaders to fully assess the climate upon commanders assuming their positions, as well as assessing how that commander positively affected the climate while in command.

> (2)   Incorporate an Army-wide contracting workforce climate assessment every two years.

There is no literature that indicates that an assessment on the Army's contracting workforce was conducted in past years. As such, there is no baseline or benchmark to establish dimension norms. Establishing an Army-wide contracting workforce climate assessment every two years would be beneficial in order to evaluate trends across the commands and across timelines. Senior leaders could use the information provided in this research to better target the gaps in its recruitment and retention goals and objectives.

C.   AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research was limited to the Army's contracting workforce; however, it would be beneficial if other services conducted the same research to identify trends across the services and other civilian agencies. Additionally, the research did not differentiate between contracting professionals in program offices versus contracting commands, a direction of research that would provide more insight on the demands of the different organizations. Lastly, this research did not differentiate between geographic locations, which could have provided insight on the commute stress dimension. This would have allowed more in-depth analysis on why geographic locations commute stress is higher than other regions.

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APPENDIX. LIST OF ARMY ACQUISITION INITIATIVES AND INCENTIVES

- Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program (ATAP)

- The University of Tennessee (UT) Aerospace and Defense MBA (ADMBA) Program

- Defense Acquisition University Senior Service College Fellowship (DAU-SSCF)

- The Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCELP)

- Excellence in Government Fellows Program (EIGF)

- The Executive Leadership Program–Team Learning Event (ELP-TLE)

- Naval Postgraduate School Master of Science in Program Management (NPS-MSPM)

- Naval Postgraduate School Master of Science in Systems Engineering (NPS-MSSE)

- School of Choice (SOC)

- Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

- Advance Civil Schooling (ACS)

- FA51 Leader Development Plan

- AAC Training with Industry (TWI)

- Advanced Education Program (AEP)

- Non-Commissioned Officer Program: MOS51C and CMF 51

- Acquisition Education, Training, and Experience (AETE)

- Acquisition Program Transition Workshops (APTW)

- Defense Acquisition University Training (DAU)

- Senior Service College Program (SSC)

- Supervisor Outreach Program

- JCS Intern Program

- Congressional Fellowship

- United States Military Academy Instructor

- School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS)/Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP)

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