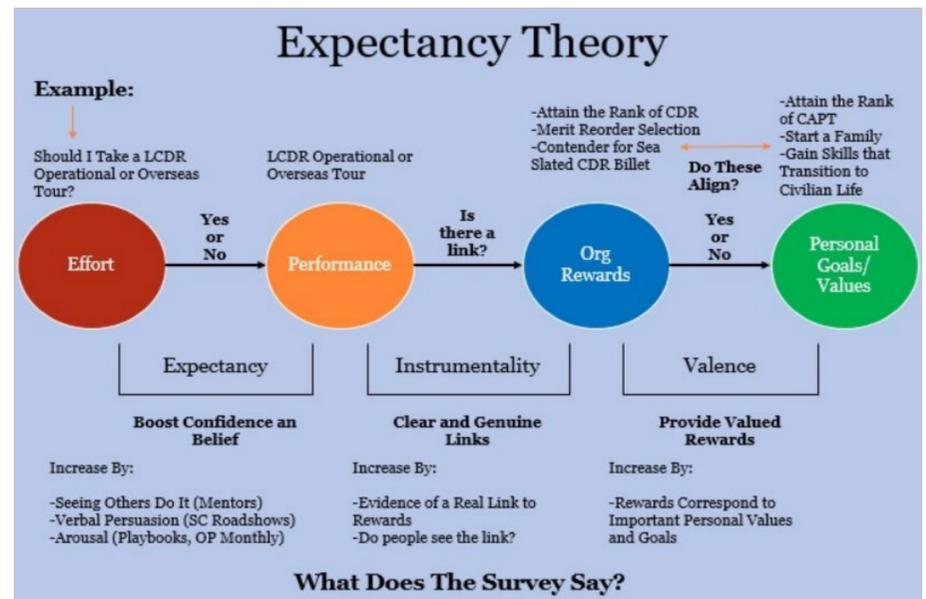


Abstract

The career development outlook for Navy Supply Corps officers is changing. The Navy Supply Corps Office of Personnel (OP) issued a new policy emphasizing that O-4s complete an operational assignment or overseas tour during their time serving as an O-4. This research aims to analyze and critically evaluate perspectives of Supply Corps officers enrolled as students at NPS on career development related issues. An independently developed, web-based, anonymous survey was disseminated to Supply Corps officers at NPS and analyzed through the lens of expectancy theory. The survey consisted of 23 closed-ended questions gauging career development perspectives related to the detailing process, promotion opportunities, incentives, retention, professional certifications, communication, and work-life balance. Forty-one NPS students returned the completed survey to the researchers, which yielded a 60.29% participation rate. Survey results suggested that weaknesses may be present in policy regarding merit reorder incentives, perception of operational tours, and timing of advanced education. Results also suggest that operational emphasis could impact retention, family planning, lack of personnel to fill critical acquisition billets, and erosion of trust in leadership. Lastly, survey results identify retention bonuses, acquisition billet guarantee, geographic preference, and expansion of the Training with Industry program as possible incentives for O-4s to complete operational tours.



Expectancy Theory Applied to Supply Corps

Methods

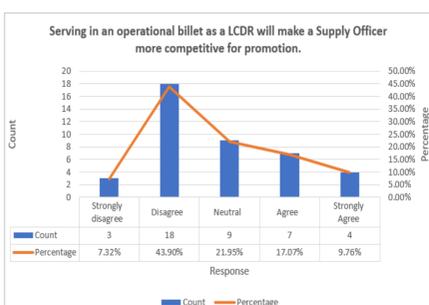
- We chose to focus our research on Navy Supply Corps officers currently enrolled at NPS because of the school's high concentration of mid-career officers. That is, the population identified represents a key demographic that is directly impacted by current NAVSUP OP policy.
- Based on the limited research on Supply Corps career development and recent shifts in career policy, we have chosen to pursue a mixed methods approach that includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to assist in answering primary and secondary research questions.
- An inductive research approach is appropriate for this research as it provides the flexibility to explore the collected data while offering recommendations for updates to existing Supply Corps career guidance geared toward mid-grade officers. We aim to evaluate relationships between survey results to aspects of expectancy theory.
- To gather substantial relevant data, the researchers constructed an online survey (via Lime Survey) exclusively for current Navy Supply Corps officers enrolled at NPS. The survey included 23 closed-ended questions gauging career development perspectives related to the detailing process, promotion opportunities, incentives, retention, professional certifications, communication, and work-life balance.

- Forty-one NPS students returned the completed survey to the researchers, which yielded a 60.29% participation rate. The raw data from Lime Survey was extracted and imported to Microsoft Excel for further analysis. Questions using the Likert scale were broken down using the qualitative ordinal data and are also displayed as quantitative results by frequency and percentage reflecting respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with the statement in the survey.
- Because expectancy theory will be the framework used to explore the results of the survey, responses to survey questions were analyzed for their relevance to expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (positive and negative). At the conclusion of individual analysis, we evaluated the responses holistically for patterns related to elements of expectancy theory.
- A confidence level of 95% that resulted in an ideal sample size of 25 and 99% confidence level that resulted in an ideal sample size of 34 demonstrated that the actual participation of 41 out of 68 students exceeded ideal sample size requirements for significance. Quantitative method of research findings is justified because actual sample size exceeded ideal sample size with a margin of error of 15.811% and a confidence level of 99%. Based on accuracy analysis, Supply Corps officer population at NPS would most likely mirror the larger Navy Supply Corps population with similar progression on the career timeline.

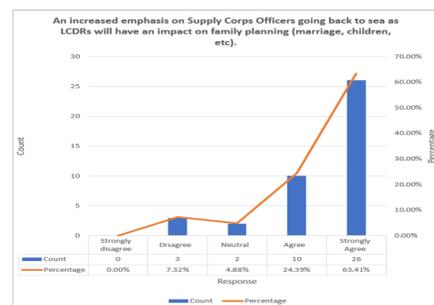
Results

- Results from the survey reveal that strengths in the career development path include educational opportunities offered to Supply Corps officers. Additionally, there is some evidence that Supply officers have been afforded an opportunity to develop an acquisition competency that parallels civilian counterparts prior attending NPS. In contrast, results from the survey indicate weaknesses in the career development path that emphasizes an increase in operational commitment for mid-career Supply Corps officers. These weaknesses include a disconnect between the merit reorder incentive and perceived value, the fact that officers within the community do not appear to value O-4 operational tours, and that the timing of educational opportunities does not allow for competency development and operational commitment prior to O-5 promotion board.

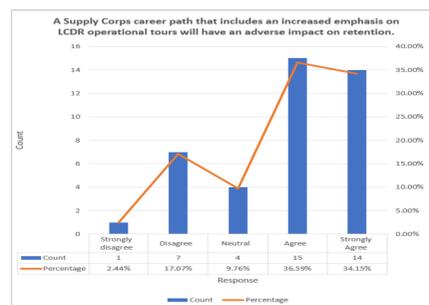
- Our survey results suggest possible community wide impacts could result due the policy shift that increases emphasis on O-4s completing operational tours. These impacts include possible adverse implications on long-term retention, family planning, and a lack qualified personnel to fill critical acquisition billets. Additionally, a potential erosion of trust with community managers and senior leadership due lack of transparency is also a concern.
- Survey results reveal that possible incentives for Supply officers to serve in additional operational tours include retention bonuses, acquisition billet follow-on guarantee, geographic location preference, and possible expansion of the Training with Industry program. Merit reorder is a current incentive offered by the Navy and Supply Corps for completing an O-4 operational tour. However, there was only marginal support among mid-grade officers for this incentive within the survey.



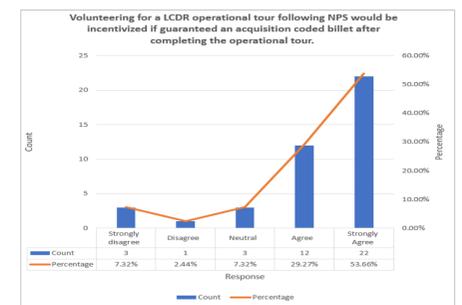
Op Tour and Promotion



Op Tour and Family Planning



Op Tour and Retention



Op Tour and Billet Incentive