



ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Going Full Circle: An Analysis of End-User Perspectives on the Implementation of the USMC 360-Degree Feedback Program

September 2022

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943.

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ABSTRACT

The United States Marine Corps' counseling and development process requires modernization to remain on the leading edge of talent management and to keep pace with both the public sector and the private sector. The Commandant's plan, titled Talent Management 2030, states that the Marine Corps will implement a 360-degree feedback program to bridge gaps and to retain the best, brightest, and most capable leaders. The purpose of our research is to analyze end-user perspectives to gauge support for 360-degree feedback in both developmental and evaluative capacities and offer recommendations for who should receive feedback and/or when feedback should be distributed. The sample population for our survey study is comprised of Marine Officers assigned to the Naval Postgraduate School. Most of the sample population consists of captains and majors between the ages of 26 and 35, with 6 to 15 years of military service. The results of our survey suggest that there is support for 360-degree feedback, particularly when utilized in a developmental capacity. Our analysis suggests that 360-degree feedback should be targeted toward junior or mid-career company grade officers and should relate to a significant occasion, such as advancement to a position with substantial oversight or influence. Our implementation and scaling recommendations consider civilian organization "best practices" and try to achieve meaningful results, enable growth, and avoid survey fatigue.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCLEB	Commandant's Career-Level Education Board
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CPIB	Commandant's Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board
DOD	Department of Defense
FITREP	Fitness report
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MCMP	Marine Corps Mentoring Program
MOS	Military occupational specialty
MRO	Marine Reported On
NAVMC	Navy and Marine Corps form
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
PHDP-S	Marine Corps Doctor of Philosophy Strategist Program
PHDP-T	Marine Corps Doctor of Philosophy Technical Program
PME	Professional military education
RO	Reviewing Officer
RS	Reporting Senior
RV	Relative value
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SMO	Senior Marine Office
SNO	Subject named officer
SWO	Surface warfare officer
TIS	Time in service
TM	Talent management
TMX	Talent Management Strategy Group
USMC	United States Marine Corps



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I. INTRODUCTION

Is the United States Marine Corps (USMC) adequately developing its leaders? Like many institutions, the USMC seems overdue for an overhaul on talent management. In 2017, the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) released an order for the Marine Corps Mentoring Program (MCMP) that opened, “While a formalized, structured approach to mentoring is no longer prescribed, mentoring remains an important component of developing Marines” (Headquarters United States Marine Corps [HQMC], 2017, p. 1). Until the introduction of Talent Management (TM) 2030 in 2021, this is the last formal order released by USMC leadership that addresses the development of Marines. The order provides practical tools to assist leaders in mentoring Marines.

The introduction of TM 2030 brought revolutionary change to the way in which the USMC assesses, retains, evaluates, and develops Marines. In his November 2021 message to the force, TM 2030, the CMC proposed using 360-degree feedback in the promotion process, stating “360-degree feedback...includes the perspectives of a larger number of seniors, peers, and juniors and can include unflattering feedback that is prohibited from inclusion in a Marine’s FITREP. This feedback is thus an important vehicle for expanding our understanding of a Marine’s strengths and weaknesses, which are critically important” (Berger, 2021, p.11). 360-degree feedback, also known as, “multisource or multi-rater feedback...is the systematic collection and feedback of performance data on an individual...derived from a number of stakeholders in their performance” (Ward, 1997, p. 4). In this system, an employee receives aggregated performance feedback from seniors, peers, and subordinates via an anonymous process. Data collected from 360-degree feedback questionnaires from every level are compiled and presented to each individual in a consolidated report. While these perspectives can provide valuable feedback for the evaluation of a Marine Officer, a more effective use of 360-degree feedback reports would be in *developing* better leaders. According to Garavan et. al. (1997), when implemented as a development tool, individual critiques from 360-degree feedback were more honest, whereas when built into the evaluation, promotion, and compensation system, employees tended to “pump up” friends’ scores and were lukewarm on rivals’ scores (p.137).



Crucial to this study is the differentiation between developmental and evaluative implementations of 360-degree feedback. According to the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), the developmental model “is a great tool for giving leaders clear feedback from their peers, employees, and managers. It creates strong motivation and specific focus to improve skills and performance...they go far beyond a job description to create a template for “ideal” performance” (Lloyd, 2009). Conversely, the evaluative model is directly tied to employment, position, pay, and promotions within an organization. This will be discussed in further detail in later chapters; however, this differentiation is utilized throughout the survey, literature review, and results sections of this project. Our analysis suggests that 360-degree feedback would be more beneficial when used for the development of individual personnel.

One practical challenge is how to best implement these practices to cultivate better leaders across the entire force. Each Marine’s career might include 360-degree feedback opportunities at different times, including promotions, education boards, and special duty assignments, among others. Additionally, TM 2030 does not specifically identify a 360-degree feedback target population; our study considers only the unrestricted Marine Officer population. With a force of over 20,000 officers, determining appropriate career timing and frequency is integral to successful program implementation to avoid survey fatigue and to ensure personnel can focus on their normal duties.

A. STUDY’S PURPOSE

Considering the size of the Marine Officer population, it is imperative to develop a scalable model that focuses on quality responses. The purpose of this study is to assist in the formulation of the 360-degree feedback program by reviewing scholarly articles and by fielding a pilot survey. We intend to use our research to provide recommendations to Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) on the appropriate population and timing of feedback. Additionally, we intend to make recommendations to HQMC on effectively scaling the model to provide opportunities for enhanced feedback to end users.



B. SCOPE

The scope of this thesis is to determine the appropriate applicability of 360-degree feedback for the unrestricted Marine Officer population. We develop and field a survey to assess familiarity and opinions on the appropriate population, occasions, and career timing of 360-degree feedback. This pilot survey has been fielded within the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Marine Officer population only. Although a broader survey of Marine Officers with a variety of career experience may enhance the results to achieve more granularity on appropriate population, timing, and frequency, the sample utilized for this survey includes board-selected Marine Officers who will be future end users of the program.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) Primary Question

- What does a scalable and effective 360-degree feedback program for the Marine Corps look like?

(2) Secondary Questions

- What is the effective timing and frequency for implementing 360-degree feedback for development purposes in the Marine Officer career path?
- Who should receive 360-degree feedback? Should certain populations be excluded from 360-degree feedback?

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter II provides pertinent background information and a literature review for understanding the history and use of 360-degree feedback in both civilian and military sectors. Chapter III details the study's methodology and survey design. Chapter IV presents the raw data results of the survey conducted, providing supporting data. In Chapter V, the results of the survey are discussed and analyzed, correlating to information provided in Chapter II. Finally, Chapter VI provides recommendations based on the information presented throughout this thesis.



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II. 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK: APPLICATION AND TRANSFERABILITY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information on the history of 360-degree feedback, FITREPs, Marine Corps Counseling Programs, and TM 2030. It is important to understand the historical background of these topics to gain better insight into why the Marine Corps is adopting this concept. The 360-degree feedback concept is one that has been used in the business world dating back to the 1950s and has seen much success when implemented correctly. Civilian private sector practices are reviewed for comparison and integration with the concept of a 360-degree feedback in a military environment. We identify several factors that are considered in civilian human resource environments, including the timing (within the fiscal year), type of performance metrics, and whether the 360-degree feedback is used for evaluative or developmental feedback. Evaluative feedback means that the results of each 360-degree feedback are directly tied to employment, promotions, or pay; while developmental use is focused on identifying and addressing strengths and weaknesses of an individual employee to facilitate improvement over time. These concepts are then transferred to military contexts to present applicability and integration of 360-degree feedback into the Marine Corps' processes. Finally, we present a brief description of scalability, which is a major focal point for the Marine Corps' implementation concept.

B. USE IN WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II

The origins of 360-degree feedback have been traced back over a century to World War I. In this era, American troops used a similar framework, though it lacked subordinate feedback (Gupta, n.d.). The United States military's first use was more of a 180-degree feedback, including only peers and seniors (Gupta, n.d.). Questionnaires formed the basis of a merit rating system to identify low performers who could be recommended for separation due to substandard performance (Peoplegoal, n.d.).



During World War II, the German military introduced a full 360-degree feedback approach, which considered subordinates, peers, and supervisors (Fleener & Prince, 1997). Each individual's evaluations in these reports were often tied to promotion. "The fundamental premise was that information gathered from multiple perspectives was thought to be more comprehensive and objective than the information obtained from only one source" (Fleener & Prince, 1997, p. 61).

C. MARINE CORPS COUNSELING PROGRAM

The United States Marine Corps' counseling program was formally established in 1986, via the publication of Navy and Marine Corps Form 2795. This very detailed document walks the user through the entire counseling process, heavily nested within the contents of the FITREP and its 14 attributes (HQMC, 2010). Usage over time has unofficially changed in the absence of published guidance and varies greatly depending on the relationships within the command, individuals' performance within the command, and individuals' effort to ensure counseling is completed. The focus of the counseling, though, is undoubtedly on improving the performance of the counselee based on the attributes within the FITREP.

As described by the Performance Evaluation System (Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1610.7), the counseling process is not mandatory, though it is part of the recommended FITREP process (HQMC, 2010). In the scope of this thesis, the counseling process is not considered inherently defective, it is the subject of proposed modernizations. Some of the benefits of the counseling process are that it is tied closely to the metrics used for promotion, framed around development of personnel, and flexible for mentors and mentees to customize the counseling process. Conversely, some of the shortcomings of the counseling process are it is voluntary in nature, often considered a procedural exercise, does not account for a holistic view of the individual because it is so tightly coupled with FITREP attributes, and success and failure depends on the individuals participating.

In 2006, the CMC issued Marine Corps Mentoring Program (MCMP) (MCO 1500.58). This order detailed the requirement for Marines to be mentored by the next senior Marine in their chain of command (HQMC, 2006). This order also detailed the



requirements and relationship of a mentor and mentee and established a “buddy system” to ensure lateral accountability. In 2017, MCO 1500.58 was cancelled by the CMC with Marine Leader Development (MCO 1500.61), which denotes four separate terms for development: Teaching, Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring. In this order, learning from seniors — inside or outside of each Marine’s chain of command — is essential to the development of Marines. The intent is to provide a common framework for development with less formality (HQMC, 2017).

A noted addition to USMC mentorship was the Marine Corps Mentoring Program (Platoon Commander’s Notebook). Although there is no definitive publishing date, it was published between the years 2001 and 2010. This document “assists the Platoon Commander in the leadership, counseling and developing of his/her Marines. The Platoon Commander’s Notebook is a field ready tool used by Commanders to maintain and develop their Marines’ physical, mental, and moral welfare, discipline, and military training” (USMC, n.d.) This concept was introduced much more recently and addressed some of the gaps from the initial publication by providing leaders a template that fits both modern society and the Marine Corps. However, a redesign of mentorship and development is an issue that must continually be addressed in the Marine Corps.

The intent behind the counseling process is to develop better Marines over time, using specifically outlined evaluation criteria contained in the FITREP. Initial counseling should occur within the first 30 days of a newly established relationship between Reporting Senior (hereafter referred to as RS) and Marine Reported On (hereafter referred to as MRO). The initial counseling session should serve as a baseline, with subsequent counseling sessions recurring monthly, quarterly, and annually, and each one looking at different scopes to satisfy different purposes (HQMC, 2010). In the initial counseling session, RS, MRO, and Reviewing Officer (hereafter referred to as RO), collaboratively develop a billet description and set goals for the subsequent reporting period. Future sessions are linked to the initial session; they can relate to topics previously discussed but are not limited in scope by any previous counseling.



D. MARINE CORPS' PROMOTION PROCESS

The Marine Corps' promotion process exists in the form of Marine Corps Promotion Manual (MCO P1400.31) and is guided by the Performance Evaluation System (MCO 1610.7). There is no direct link between the counseling process and the promotion process; however, counseling will show an MRO their respective performance without affecting FITREPs, promotion eligibility, or the promotion board process. The Marine Corps' current promotion system will not be directly changed by any modifications to the counseling process, but instead the promotion process will see changes in competitive personnel based on modifications to the counseling process. The counseling sessions provide the MRO additional opportunities to adjust performance prior to FITREP occasions.

FITREPs are the primary evaluation tool used in the Marine Corps promotion process (Clemens et. al., 2012). Marines in paygrade E-5 (Sergeant) through O-8 (Major General) receive FITREPs in accordance with the Marine Corps Performance Evaluation System. Although FITREPs are not directly linked to counseling sessions, they should reflect what is presented during counseling sessions in terms of performance and areas for improvement. Within each evaluation report a Marine only receives feedback from his or her direct supervisor and another rater who is senior to the direct supervisor within the Marine's chain of command. For the Marine Officer population, there are 14 attributes that are specifically graded using a scale from adverse to commendatory, with the option to make a non-observed selection (HQMC, 2006; HQMC, 2010). The RS rates the MRO on the 14 attributes, which generates an average numerical value. That value is computed both at processing and cumulatively to compare the MRO against the MRO's peers (HQMC, 2006; HQMC, 2010). A table at the bottom of the Master Brief Sheet displays the comparative scores for the MRO, broken down by rank, score at processing, and cumulative score for both the RS and RO (HQMC, 2006; HQMC, 2010).

The scoring guide is outlined above each attribute, each specific definition having an associated letter and subsequent numerical value (HQMC, 2006; HQMC, 2010). This concept can also be referred to as a behaviorally anchored rating scale, which "is a tool for evaluating employees in a defined set of performance dimensions by comparing their



behaviors with specific behavior examples that anchor each performance level, usually on a five-, seven- or nine-point scale” (McCoy, 2021, para. 2). The Marine Corps uses a seven-point scale, ascending from A through G, with H being non-observed (no value) (HQMC, 2010). The number of FITREPS a Marine Officer receives in his or her career will vary depending on rank, timing, and other contextual factors, but all are compiled on the Master Brief Sheet, which is used as a reference in the formal promotion process (HQMC, 2006; HQMC, 2010).

E. CIVILIAN USE OF 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

The explosion of the use of 360-degree feedback outside the military may be attributed to Esso Research and Engineering Group, later known as ExxonMobil, in the 1950s (Bracken et. al., 1997). Jack Welsh, Chief Executive Officer of General Electric, would use 360-degree feedback for appraisals, and the results would be his justification for firing the bottom performers each cycle (ODRL, 2019). As the concept became increasingly popular over time, the aforementioned companies have continued to utilize it and numerous others like Goldman Sachs (2016) continue to adopt it into its leadership development strategy. An estimated 90% of Fortune 500 companies use a form of 360-degree feedback to develop their leaders (Morgan, 2020).

Civilian counseling processes differ depending on the specific industry and company, but most are based upon individual development. 360-degree feedback compiles the appraisals of supervisors, subordinates, customers, peers, and other stakeholders to identify and evaluate an employee’s strengths, weaknesses, and specific skills (Heathfield, 2020). Feedback is collected via anonymous surveys solicited by human resource representatives for later analysis. Built into the foundation of an effective 360-degree feedback program is mutual trust between employer and employee, as well as transparency in purpose and appropriate usage (Heathfield, 2020).

Once the feedback is given, it is integrated and organized around themes. A counselor is brought in to facilitate the development of the respective employee (Heathfield, 2020; Zenger, 2016). Developmental sessions can be conducted at different times throughout the year, and throughout different stages of an individual’s career,



depending on the situation and the specific timing (Caruso, 2018; Miles, 2019; Thomas International Ltd, 2020).

The 360-degree feedback process is largely removed from the promotion process. In cases where 360-degree feedback has been incorporated into promotion decisions, it has met disastrous results (“Viewpoint” 2015). This article references an episode of “Undercover Boss,” where Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bezos goes undercover and experiences the second and thirdhand impacts of a 360-degree feedback process directly tied to promotion, pay, and employment. As described, the employees view their job as secondary to their comparative worth with peers, supervisors, and subordinates; anonymous feedback did not necessarily result in objectivity; and the environment became toxic (“Viewpoint” 2015).

Parveen’s (2020) study covers the use of 360-degree feedback in the education system, highlighting the advantages of this approach. In this study, Parveen argues that additional information provided in the 360-degree feedback questionnaire assisted in the development of students. This sentiment also applies to the Marine Corps; with more information from 360-degree feedback, there should be better opportunity to identify and develop weak areas of leadership and job performance. Just as teachers gain information from 360-degree feedback about their students, leaders within the USMC can gain a more holistic perspective on developing subordinates. This information may especially be useful in headquarters-level decision making to include progression and future assignments. 360-degree feedback is a concept that is active in the business world and provides new methods for leadership development within the Marine Corps.

F. CIVILIAN PROMOTION PROCESS

Similar to the counseling process, promotion processes also vary by industry and organization; however, they can be summarized as two different reward systems: hierarchy-based or performance-based. The hierarchy-based model is typically used by firms focused on steady state growth over time, while the performance-based model is typically employed by evolutionary growth and revolutionary technology firms (Kerr & Slocum, 2005). According to Kerr and Slocum (2005), “evolutionary firms grow primarily



through acquisitive diversification. They actively pursue new markets and industries and are receptive to mergers and joint ventures” (p. 135). There are advantages to both reward systems, and their applicable environment determines whether they will be successful.

Under a hierarchy-based model,

superiors defined and evaluated the performance of subordinates. Performance was defined qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Nonquantifiable aspects of the subordinate’s role were sometimes considered to be more important than quantifiable ones. Superiors were free to define those aspects of a manager’s role that would be considered important. Thus, performance criteria could vary according to who one was working for. Managers’ jobs were broadly and subtly defined. Managers were accountable for how they conducted their interpersonal relationships, as well as the consequences of their actions. Numbers (for example, return on investment) did not tell the whole story, and more subtle aspects of performance were sometimes viewed as more important. Superiors played a critical role in career mobility and success with the firm. They were the source of training, socialization, feedback, and rewards and were to be studied, emulated, and satisfied if subordinates expected to succeed. (Kerr & Slocum, 2005, p. 131).

Hierarchy-based reward systems establish and focus on the role of the organization’s leader or manager, who attempts to provide a holistic assessment of individuals. Additionally, managers or leaders serve as the focal point for the management, training, and performance of their personnel. In contrast, under the performance-based model,

the performance-based system objectively defined and measured performance and explicitly linked rewards to performance—which was almost completely defined quantitatively. Qualitative aspects of performance were generally ignored. Specific rewards or proportions of rewards were directly related to specific performance criteria (for example, bonus based partly on return on assets, and partly on pretax profits, and so forth). In this way, managers exerted influence by objectively weighting the various components of the subordinate’s job. This reward system sent the message that the manager’s job was specifically defined. Performance in divergent roles was assessed by a few basic financial outcomes. Accountability was primarily for results and not for the methods by which results were achieved. (Kerr & Slocum, 2005, p. 133).

In a performance-based reward system, performance is entirely quantitative, and managers or leaders influence subordinates by focusing on certain aspects of their respective duties.



For example, recruiters within Marine Corps Recruiting Command receive monthly quotas which they must meet.

The key factor in measuring success is ensuring that the chosen reward system reinforces the firm's cultural values and accepted norms (Kerr & Slocum, 2005). Using comparable methodology, the USMC would be a logical fit for the hierarchy-based model, where leaders are responsible for ensuring their personnel are trained.

G. MARINE CORPS WANTS TO IMPLEMENT 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

In November 2021, noting the need for a redesign of the Marine Corps' personnel system, the CMC released guidance to the force in the form of Talent Management (TM) 2030. This report notes numerous outdated policies, and the new course on which they will be set. Of note, the CMC discusses integrating 360-degree feedback into the promotion process. Citing civilian corporations' success in weeding out toxic management environments in an otherwise hierarchical organization, one of the Marine Corps' goals is to reduce toxic leaders from advancing to senior levels (Berger, 2021).

Many of the topics discussed within TM 2030 were underdeveloped and had no delineation as to how these concepts would be implemented. The message provided a broad scope of direction that the CMC wanted to take the Marine Corps, enabling subordinate leaders the latitude to determine the scope and implementation of the concepts. One of the smaller sections within the document was the discussion on 360-degree feedback, much of it still in development within HQMC.

H. SHOULD 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK BE USED FOR MILITARY PROMOTIONS?

A 2016 RAND Corporation study addresses the applicability and appropriateness of 360-degree feedback utilization in military promotions. It concludes that 360-degree feedback should not be used for assessments or promotions for several reasons, including the potential to tarnish their use as a development tool, to create confusion for raters as to which process is more important, to increase survey burdens on the force, and to sow distrust within the organization (Hardison et al., 2015). In addition, the feedback would be



anonymous and absent of context, meaning the influence it carries could inaccurately skew results on a promotion board (Hardison et al., 2015).

The same study finds that an appropriate use of 360-degree feedback in a military context might be to aid in developing personnel of higher grades and those in leadership positions, and to aid in identifying individual and service strengths or weaknesses (Hardison et al., 2015). Specifically referencing personnel of higher grades and responsibilities, gaining insight from a more rounded population would provide additional feedback that does not currently exist within the Marine Corps' established development tools. Regarding the strengths and weaknesses, the implementation of 360-degree feedback would provide additional layers to the existing RS/MRO relationship to help identify individual or service-wide areas for improvement.

I. WHEN SHOULD 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK BE CONDUCTED?

There are several recommendations for when 360-degree feedback should be conducted in the civilian sectors, with some transferability to military settings. Some articles recommend the third quarter of a fiscal year as there has been enough accomplished at that point to have a meaningful discussion, but enough time to improve before the fiscal year is completed (Caruso, 2012; Caruso, 2018; Miles, 2019). In military settings, this would be about half-way through a reporting period, somewhere in the range of three to six months depending on the rank of the recipient to ensure adequate observation time.

Other articles point to the importance of an initial counseling session for establishing responsibilities and setting the tone for the future, then conducting 360-degree feedback sessions quarterly (Caruso, 2012; Caruso, 2018; Hanisko & Mulanax, 2021; Miles, 2019). In a military environment, quarterly would likely be too frequent, but in practice would look something like an initial counseling, followed by semi-annual or annual counselings.

Incorporating 360-degree feedback into compensation decisions would not fit cleanly within a military framework as it is rigidly hierarchical and financial compensation is not determined by supervisors, or by promotion board members, instead it is approved by Congress. However, the timing aspect could fit cleanly into a military structure, with



360-degree feedback being conducted when an officer's "time in grade" is approximately three years. This window of time is roughly the halfway point, depending on the rank and promotion rate, to promotion eligibility.

J. WHO SHOULD RECEIVE 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK AND WHEN?

There are few resources stating who should receive 360-degree feedback. Some articles recommend this process for everyone, some articles recommend it for average performers only, and some sources recommend it for above average employees only (Caruso, 2012; Hardison et al., 2015; Miles, 2019; Thomas International Ltd, 2020). Our research indicates that each organization should carefully consider the appropriate scaling and sustainability of any proposed program.

Our research indicates one group should not receive 360-degree feedback: bottom performers (Caruso, 2012). The reason for excluding bottom performers from 360-degree feedback is that it can create a toxic environment where an employee feels singled out for subpar performance that is observable to seniors, peers, and subordinates alike (Caruso, 2012). In these cases, a more personalized approach is recommended. The session should remain private and much more personal to ensure the weak performer understands both the issue and possible solutions (Caruso, 2012).

The U.S. Navy's surface warfare officer (SWO) community has conducted several studies of the 360-degree feedback topic and has determined that each SWO shall receive an evaluation, but timing depends on items such as career path, key billets required, and rank (Hanisko & Mulanax, 2021). For this community, 360-degree feedback is not tailored to individual performance. Instead, each SWO receives feedback in accordance with their individual career milestones. Neither this study, nor any referenced in it, specifies performance as a determining factor in scheduling 360-degree feedback.

Two commonly discussed considerations when making the determination of scalability are survey fatigue and information overload. Survey fatigue refers to when participants are asked too often and by too many people to provide meaningful feedback. In the military there are additional occasions where surveys are required, for example the Command Climate Survey, so the service should be sensitive to the time required to



provide thoughtful insight. The other consideration is information overload, in which too much data has been collected and cannot be reasonably or economically deciphered. In certain scenarios, an outside organization would need to be contracted to facilitate the analysis and presentation of the raw data into digestible and actionable feedback.

K. POSSIBLE SCALING SOLUTIONS

Despite extensive research, there is no definitive source that prescribes scaling solutions in commercial or military contexts; therefore, they will be inferred from situations previously discussed in the civilian sector and military circumstances. Individuals who perform below average should not receive 360-degree feedback (Caruso, 2012). In this regard, a way to scale the quantity of 360-degree feedback conducted is to omit the bottom performers, replacing that with a more intensive and personalized mentorship regimen. Another potential for scaling is based on military experience and timing; career timing, progression timing, key billet timing, among numerous other options (Hanisko & Mulanax, 2021). These will be expanded upon in later chapters.

L. SUMMARY

The Marine Corps has an established counseling program that is not explicitly linked to the promotion process via fitness reports for the unrestricted officers. The civilian sectors also have counseling systems and promotion systems, structured similarly, but tailored to industry requirements and context specific criteria. To develop a stronger Marine Corps, the inclusion of the 360-degree feedback has begun and is currently in experimentation with select population groups. The end state is to scale the 360-degree feedback survey so both feedback recipients and providers do not experience survey fatigue and continue to provide valuable input, however, no model currently exists to support such substantial scaling at a service level. Since the CMC intends to implement 360-degree feedback, research has been conducted by HQMC for appropriate implementation and this thesis supplements their efforts.



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III. METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY DESIGN

In this chapter we discuss our methodology, survey design, and survey process.

A. METHODOLOGY

We conduct a survey of Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Marine Officers to assess individual perspectives on the 360-degree feedback concept and its implementation in the Marine Corps. We analyze data collected from this survey to form a conclusion and make recommendations. This survey is designed to collect primarily quantitative data. Our goal is to capture each individual's agreement or disagreement with the use of 360-degree feedback, together with recommendations on occasions or timings in a Marine's career where 360-degree feedback might be most appropriate. Our survey includes three qualitative short response questions aimed at identifying unique end-user insights on the topic of 360-degree feedback. We believe that the survey process is the most effective method to create a feedback loop between the future end users of the 360-degree feedback process and the HQMC Talent Management Strategy Group (TMX). Our results and analysis aim to inform TMX in refining 360-degree feedback development during phases of implementation and scaling.

B. SURVEY DESIGN

Our survey is designed to explore the primary research question: What does a scalable and effective 360-degree feedback program for the Marine Corps look like? Our research sub-questions are: What is the effective timing and frequency for development in the Marine officer career path?, Who should receive 360-degree feedback?, and Should certain populations be excluded from 360-degree feedback? We focus our survey design efforts on improving the implementation of the USMC 360-degree feedback program. This survey has been conducted concurrently with the Marine Corps' initial implementation of the 360-degree feedback process and concentrates on end-user feedback to specifically determine timing and which groups should receive feedback. The end users are Marine Officers who will eventually both receive and provide 360-degree feedback.



As the Marine Corps continues through the initial phases of implementation, our survey aims to provide end-user feedback analysis to supplement process design and improvement before being scaled as a service-wide program. The survey uses a two-pronged approach, seeking respondents’ opinions about 360-degree feedback: 1) as a leadership development tool, and 2) as a performance evaluation tool. The survey also gathers respondents’ perspectives on whether a 360-degree feedback program is better suited for a recurring or cyclical basis, or whether it should be based upon key events (i.e., promotion, change of assignment, etc.) which are essential to meet developmental milestones. Figure 1 shows the survey map we developed and use as the basic structure in our survey design and questionnaire formatting.

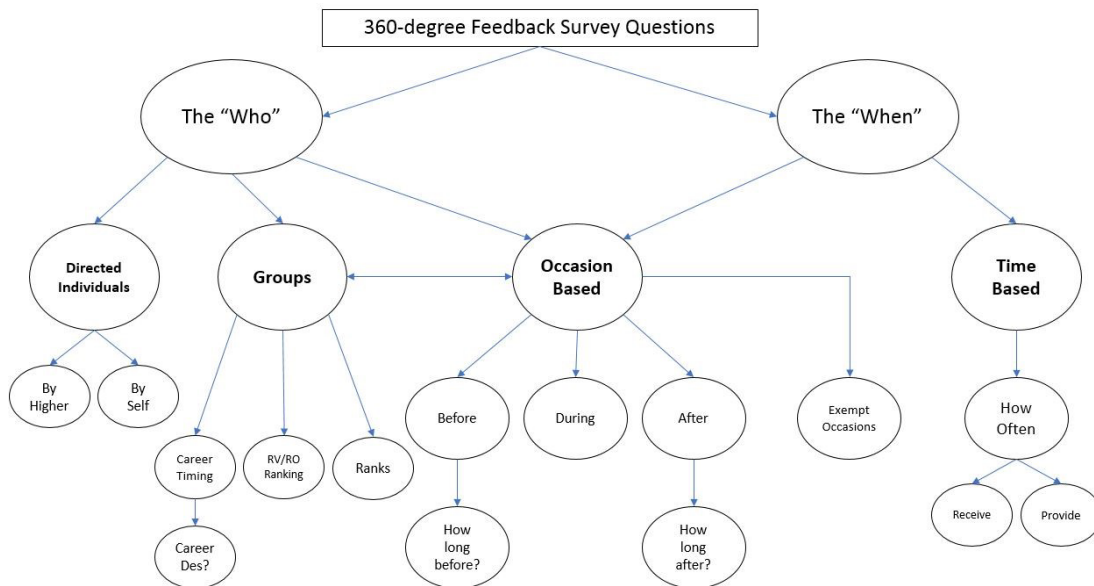


Figure 1. Survey Map

Our survey consists of 43 total questions, separated into three parts, and designed to be completed within 15 minutes. Most questions were developed using Likert scale response options, with one rank-order style question and three free-form responses aimed at obtaining more descriptive answers from respondents. Before reaching Part I of our survey, respondents receive an ‘Instructions and Consent’ text (shown in Appendix A) that

describes the survey topic, approximate duration, voluntary and anonymous nature, and an advisory that omitting an answer to a survey question is non-punitive.

Part I of our survey includes 11 questions, eight of which assess standard demographics and military specific demographics, and three of which explore the psychological theory of “growth mindset.” Standard demographic questions identify each respondent’s age, race/ethnicity, gender, and individual familiarity with the concept of 360-degree feedback. Military-specific demographic questions identify each respondent’s rank, time in service, most recent board selection, and primary military occupational specialty (MOS).

The final three questions in Part I use a simplified version of the ‘Kind of Person’ Implicit Scale Theory (Dweck, 1999). This scale evaluates one’s growth mindset as to whether they believe individuals are capable of growth and development beyond their innate characteristics (Dweck, 1999). These questions provide a 6-point scale, from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*), to assess each survey respondent’s tendency toward a growth mindset or a fixed mindset (Dweck, 1999). Respondents that possess a growth mindset tend to believe that conscious effort leads to development or improvement, while those scoring lower believe that efforts to change are futile and that individuals are born with hard-coded characteristics (Dweck, 1999). This line of questioning is meant to analyze respondents’ beliefs about the degree to which individuals are capable of change and development. If a respondent lacks a growth mindset, one could question if he or she would believe that any developmental tool would be effective in producing better Marine Officers, not just 360-degree feedback.

Part II of our survey is titled, “360-degree Feedback as a Developmental Tool.” Part II comprises the majority of questions within the survey and is the primary focus for answering our research question and sub-questions. We focus on the use of 360-degree feedback as a leadership development tool or as a counseling tool. In our study, survey participants were told that the intended purpose of 360-degree feedback would be strictly for developing better officers and that results would not have a direct impact on performance evaluations (FITREPs) or the promotion system. Questions within this section can be viewed in detail in Appendix A. All questions are derived from the Survey Map



(Figure 1) and focus on identifying when 360-degree feedback should occur and which specific individuals should receive it. These questions center on the proposal that 360-degree feedback might be either occasion-based or frequency-based, or perhaps a combination of these two approaches. An occasion-based feedback schedule focuses more on identifying when Marines should receive 360-degree feedback, based upon significant career events (i.e., promotion, key billet selection, etc.). A frequency-based feedback schedule focuses on recurring 360-degree feedback based upon the passage of time rather than specific occasions (i.e., bi-annually, annually, etc.). Additionally, we ask questions to assess each respondent's beliefs about the usefulness of 360-degree feedback for this specific purpose, about which target groups would benefit most, and about which groups should be exempt.

Part III is the final section of our survey and is titled, "360-degree Assessments as an Evaluation Tool." The focus of this section is to explore end users' opinions on using 360-degree feedback as an evaluative tool. The instructions for this section explain that using 360-degree feedback in this scenario would directly impact the performance evaluation process by being utilized either as an aid to the FITREP process or as a supplement within the actual promotion system (i.e., input in each Marine's Official Military Personnel File or visible to the convening board). This line of questioning explores each respondent's experiences with the current FITREP evaluation process and their beliefs about whether 360-degree feedback may be a better alternative. Questions in this portion of the survey are more simplistic, are intended to probe each respondent's thoughts on the evaluative concept and are designed to identify areas that warrant further research.

C. SURVEY PROCESS

As part of the survey approval process, the NPS Institutional Review Board reviewed our survey and methodology to determine that the work qualifies as program evaluation. Our survey study therefore does not meet the federal definition of "research" as defined under Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (S. Ramos, email to author, April 27, 2022). Our survey results will be consolidated in the form of process improvement recommendations for the 360-degree feedback program.



Our team used the Qualtrics XM software platform to create a user-friendly survey for online distribution. The survey was distributed by email containing a published Qualtrics survey link. The email distribution list maintained by the NPS Senior Marine Office (SMO), titled ‘NPS Marines,’ contained the most accurate and up-to-date aggregated list of Marine Officer graduate students enrolled at NPS. Using this list, we sent our survey to a sample population of 211 Marine Officers across multiple fields of study. The survey was first released on 10 May 2022 and remained open for 22 days, closing on 31 May 2022. Of the 211 Marine Officers who received the survey link, 95 responded, or a response rate of 45 percent. However, 17 respondents did not submit answers beyond the demographics section and are therefore excluded from our analysis. Further, we believe that one respondent submitted erroneous survey answers based on an unrealistic combination of demographic selections (i.e., age and time in service associated with the rank of Colonel). Therefore, a total of 18 responses were removed due to incompleteness, leaving 77 responses available for our analysis. We initially hoped to obtain a minimum of 106 responses to achieve a response rate of no less than 50 percent. However, with the response count exceeding a minimum sample size of 30 ($n=30$) we assume that we can effectively analyze the data using a normal probability model. The central limit theorem asserts that if a substantial sample (typically $n \geq 30$) is taken from a given population, then the sample means should reflect a normal distribution (LaMorte, 2016).

Our survey data is not derived from a random sample, but rather a self-selected sample of NPS Marine Officers who volunteered to complete the survey (Olsen, 2008). This self-selection aspect could result in data that is not necessarily representative of the views across the service or within the officer corps (Olsen, 2008). Additionally, our survey respondents represent a unique population of officers within the Marine Corps, a group comprised of top-tier performers selected for graduate education programs.



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IV. RESULTS

In this chapter we discuss the results of our survey in four subsections, three of which correspond to the parts of the survey and the fourth providing an integrative analysis across parts of the survey to examine comparisons and correlations between variables. First, we discuss the demographic makeup of our survey respondents. Next, we analyze the respondents' attitudes regarding 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool and as an evaluation tool. Finally, we conduct an integrative analysis to compile findings across all parts of the survey. Overall, we find that most respondents have a growth mindset and are very supportive of 360-degree feedback in a developmental capacity. On average, respondents feel that 360-degree feedback would be slightly more appropriate if centered around occasions than if instituted on a recurring basis. The occasions that received the highest approvals from respondents were supervisory positions, with concurrence that 360-degree feedback should occur before a Marine Officer advances to such a position. The typical respondent believes that junior officers (based on rank and time in service) would benefit more than senior officers.

A. SURVEY PART I: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

In this section, we analyze the demographic composition of the survey respondents. We provide an analysis of the questions within Part I of the survey, which includes standard and military-specific demographics and a mini-analysis on growth mindset.

1. Question Analysis

a. *Standard and Military-Specific Demographic Questions*

Question 1. What is your rank?

The 77 respondents in our survey consist of: 3% Lieutenants (2 respondents), 54% Captains (42 respondents), 38% Majors (29 respondents), and 5% Lieutenant Colonels (4 respondents). Figure 2 depicts the rank distribution of survey respondents.



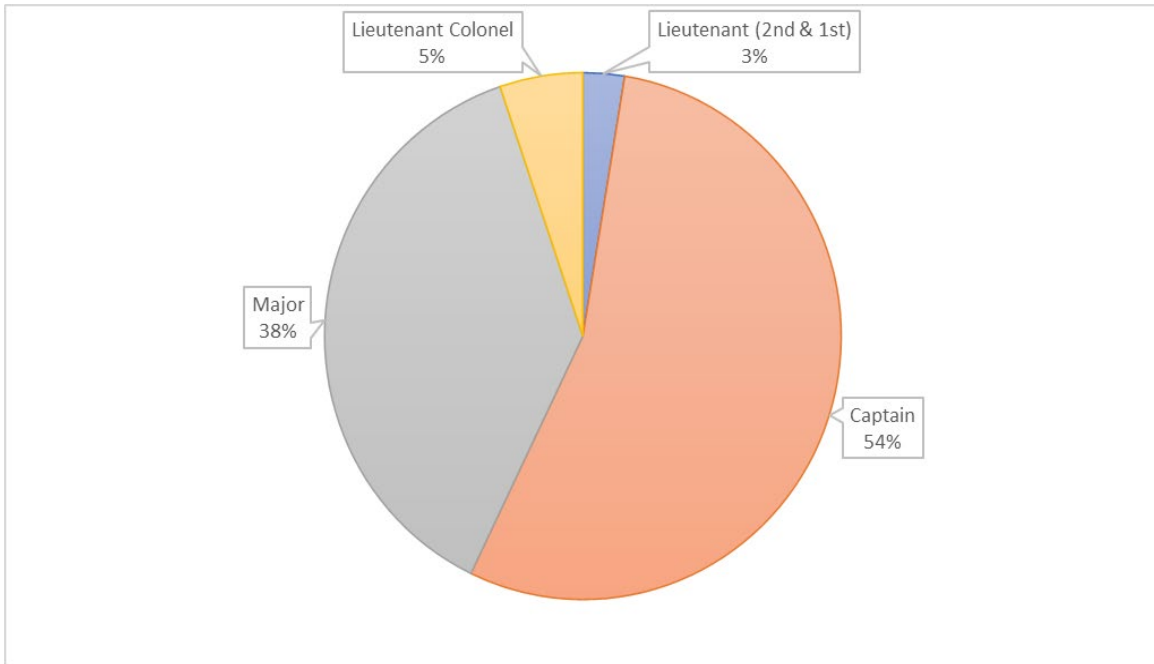


Figure 2. Rank Distribution of Survey Respondents

Question 2. What is your race/ethnicity?

Of the 77 responses we analyze, the approximate race/ethnicity distribution is as follows: 74% Caucasian (57 respondents), 8% Hispanic (6 respondents), 7% Asian American (5 respondents), 1% African American (1 respondent), 1% Pacific Islander (1 respondent), and 1% Other (1 respondent). Another 7% identify as Multiracial (5 respondents, including 3 Caucasian and Hispanic, 1 Caucasian, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander, and 1 Caucasian and Asian American). Additionally, 1% (1 respondent) did not answer this question. Figure 3 depicts race/ethnicity responses.

The proportional representation of race/ethnicity in our survey data differs from active-duty Marine Corps Officer percentages listed in the 2020 Department of Defense (DOD) Demographics Report. This means that our survey sample, when compared to the active-duty Marine Officer Corps, substantially under-represents African Americans and over-represents Asian American and Multiracial groups. Additionally, when compared to the entire active-duty Marine Corps, Hispanics or Latinos are also significantly under-represented in our sample. According to the 2020 DOD report, within the active-duty



Marine Officer Corps (n=21,450), 79.5% were Caucasians (n=17,056), 5.7% were African Americans (n=1,229), 3.8% were Asian Americans (n=806), 0.6% were Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiians (n=139), and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Natives (n=204) (Department of Defense [DOD], 2020, p.23). Additionally, the report reflects 7.5% as Other/Unknown (n=1,609) and 1.9% as Multiracial (n=407) (DOD, 2020, p.23). For Hispanic ethnicity, DOD demographics only reported percentages of active-duty members by service branch, without distinguishing between officer and enlisted. The Marine Corps is reported to be 23.5% Hispanic or Latino, which is more than any other service branch (DOD, 2020, p. 26).

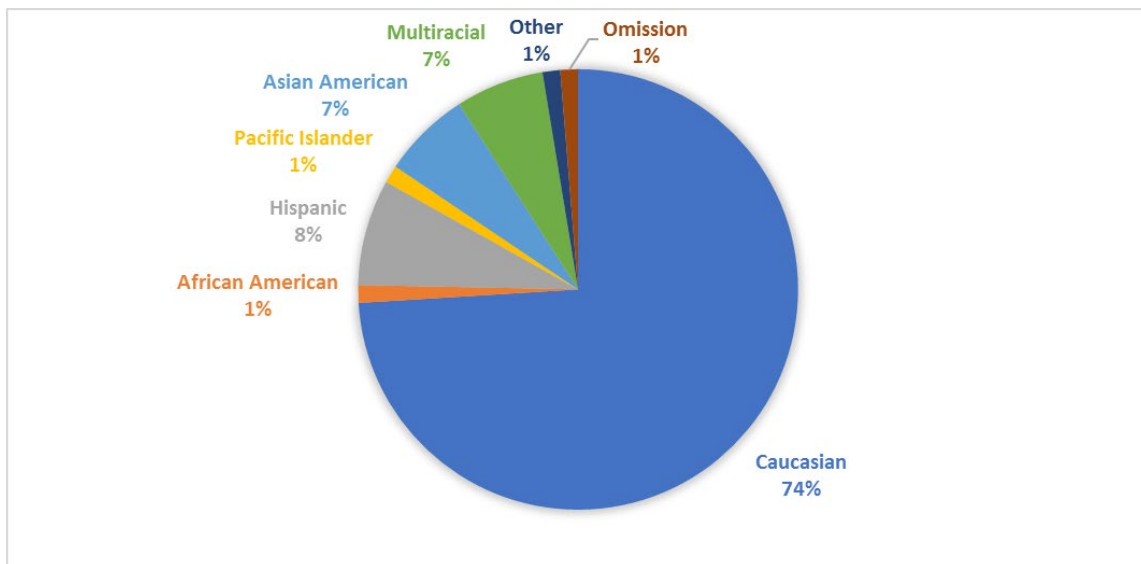


Figure 3. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Survey Respondents

Question 3. What is your gender?

The gender distribution of respondents is as follows: 82% Male (63 respondents) and 18% Female (14 respondents). This high percentage of female respondents is more than twice their proportional representation in the active-duty Marine Officer Corps (DOD, 2020, p.17). According to the 2020 DOD Demographics Report, women made up only 8.6% (1,847 out of 21,450) of the active-duty officers in the Marine Corps (2020, p. 17). However, the percentage in our survey data is proportional to active-duty female officers



within the total DOD military force, which was published as 18.9% (44,235 out of 234,634) in the same demographics report (DOD, 2020, pg. 17). Figure 4 depicts the gender of survey respondents and Figure 5 shows gender distribution within the Marine Officer Corps and the total DOD military force.

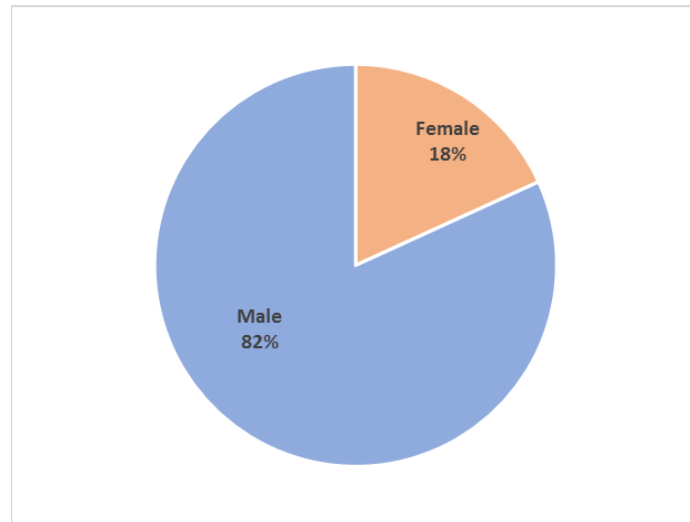


Figure 4. Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

The Air Force has the largest percentage of female Active Duty members (21.1%), while the Marine Corps has the smallest percentage of female Active Duty members (8.9%).

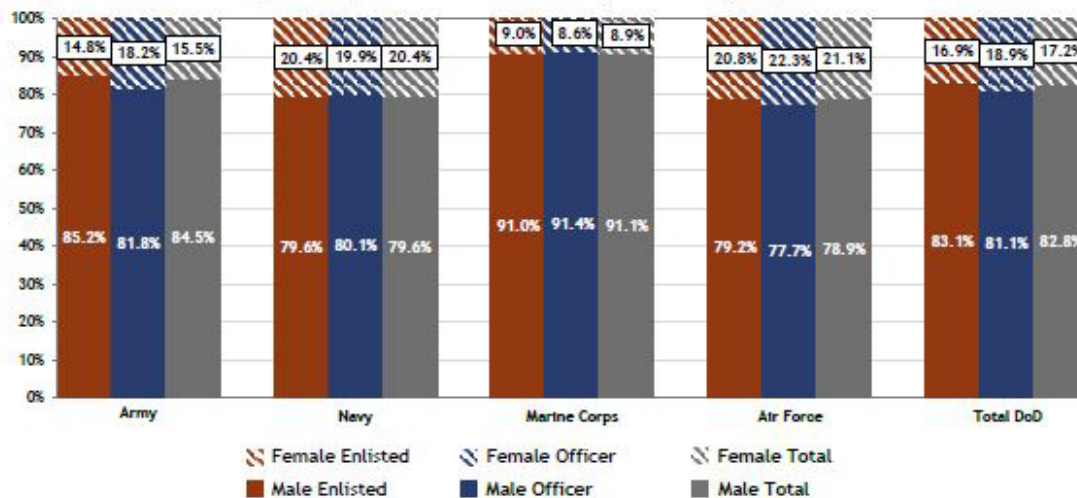


Figure 5. Percentage of Active Duty Enlisted Members and Officers by Service Branch and Gender. Source: DOD (2020)

Question 4. What is your age?

The approximate age distribution of survey respondents is as follows: 40% (31 respondents) between the ages of 26 and 30, 31% (24 respondents) between 31 and 35, 25% (19 respondents) between 36 and 40, and 4% (3 respondents) over the age of 40. Figure 6 depicts the age distribution of survey respondents.

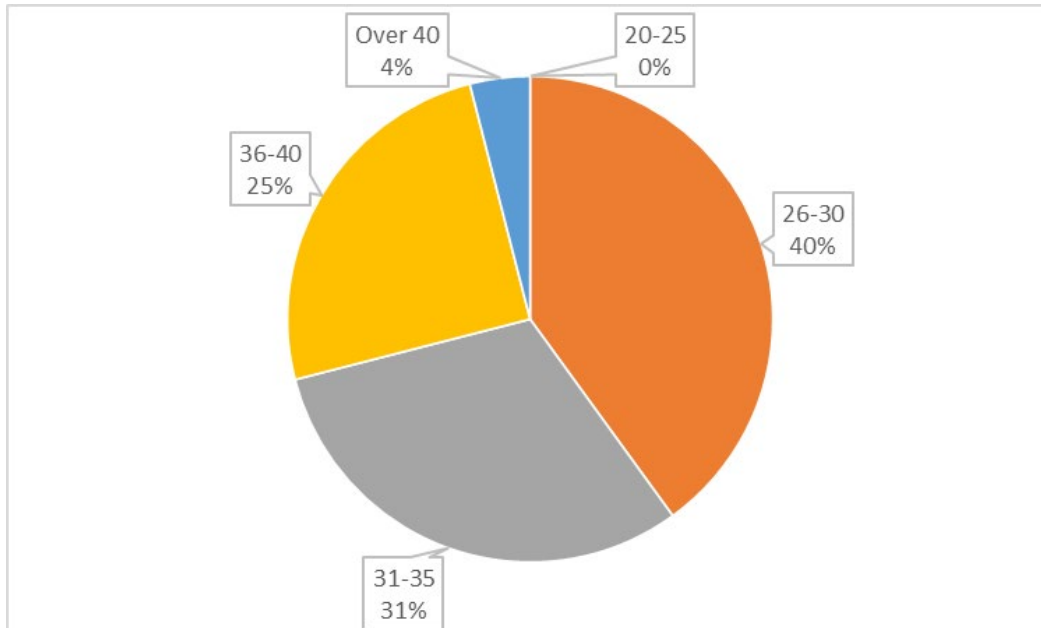


Figure 6. Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Question 5. How many years have you been on active duty (time in service)?

Aggregated survey responses show a time in service (TIS) distribution as follows: 23% (18 respondents) have served between 1 and 5 years, 30% (23 respondents) have served between 6 and 10 years, 30% (23 respondents) have served between 11 and 15 years, 12% (9 respondents) have served between 16 and 20 years, and 5% (4 respondents) have served more than 20 years. Figure 7 depicts the TIS distribution of survey respondents.

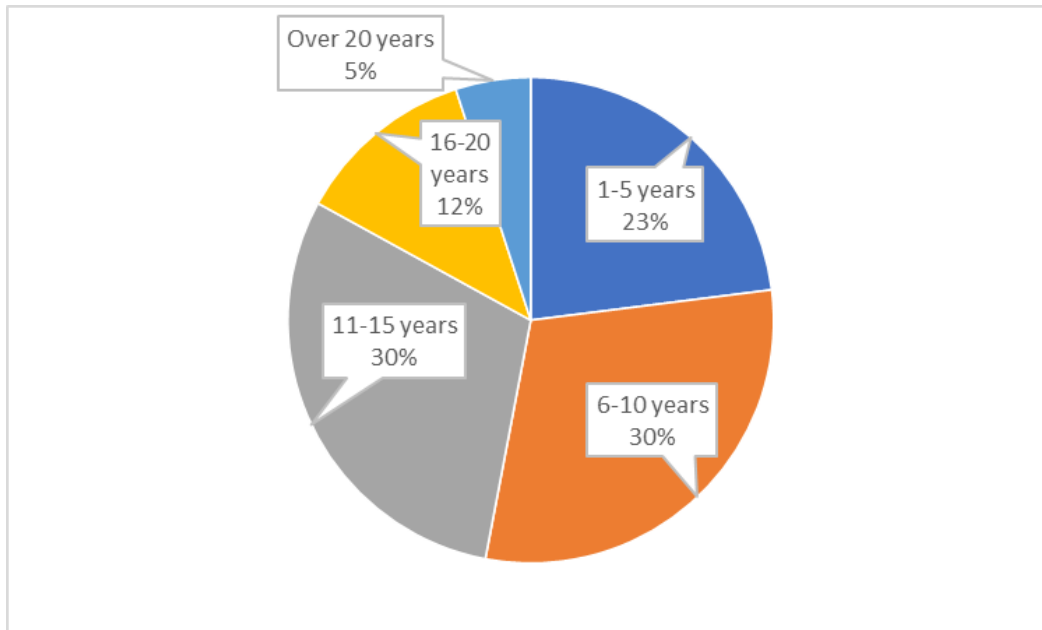


Figure 7. TIS Distribution of Survey Respondents

Question 6. On which of the following boards were you most recently selected?

The intent of this question is to collect data to identify on which selection boards survey respondents were most recently selected. These boards factor in level of career progression and seniority and are typically associated with top-tier performers. Therefore, selectees may represent a special group with differing opinions from the average Marine Corps population. Data from this question may be useful for a cross-sectional analysis of future surveys containing a larger sample. Additionally, we hope to expand or develop this question in further surveys to collect data beyond primarily educational boards. The data, displayed in Figure 8, shows the following distribution: 59% Commandant’s Career-Level Education Board (CCLEB) (45 respondents), 34% Commandant’s Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board (CPIB) (26 respondents), 5% Commandant’s Doctor of Philosophy Program – Technical/Strategist (PHDP-T/S) (4 respondents), 1% Command Selection Board (CSB) (1 respondent), and 1% Other (1 respondent).

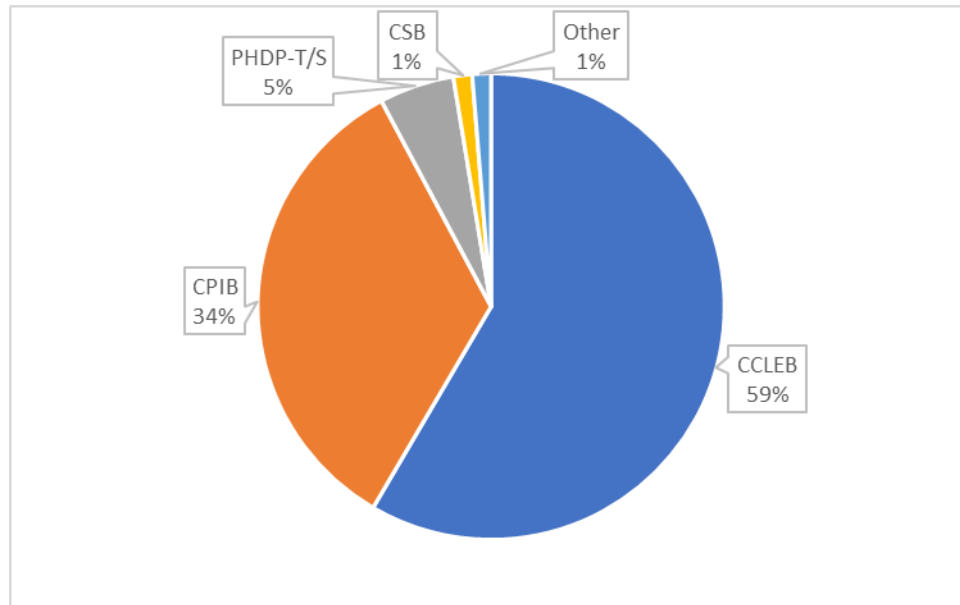


Figure 8. Selection Board Distribution for Survey Respondents

Question 7. What is your primary military occupational specialty (MOS)? (Please select your occupational field based on the first two digits listed below; ex. for 0402 select '04')

The distribution of primary MOSs among survey respondents is as follows: 15.6% Infantry Officers (12 respondents), 15.6% Logistics Officers (12 respondents), 14.3% Communication Officers (11 respondents), 9.1% Combat Engineer Officers (7 respondents), 7.8% Aviation Command and Control Officers (6 respondents), 6.5% Financial Management Officers (5 respondents), 5.2% Manpower Officers (4 respondents), 5.2% Aviation Supply Officers (4 respondents), 3.9% Intelligence Officers (3 respondents), 3.9% Field Artillery Officers (3 respondents), 3.9% Ground Supply Officers (3 respondents), 3.9% Pilots and Naval Flight Officers (3 respondents), 2.6% Aviation Maintenance Officers (2 respondents), 1.3% Communications Strategy and Operations Officer (1 respondent), and 1.3% Military Police (1 respondent). Despite a relatively small sample size, the data draws from all but these three occupational fields: Cyberspace, Amphibious Assault Vehicle, and Judge Advocate. Table 1 shows the primary MOS distribution in descending order.

Table 1. Primary MOS Distribution of Survey Respondents

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)	Designator	% of Respondents
Infantry	03xx	15.6%
Logistics	04xx	15.6%
Communication	06xx	14.3%
Combat Engineer	13xx	9.1%
Aviation Command and Control	72xx	7.8%
Financial Management	34xx	6.5%
Manpower	01xx	5.2%
Aviation Supply	66xx	5.2%
Intelligence	02xx	3.9%
Field Artillery	08xx	3.9%
Ground Supply	30xx	3.9%
Pilots/Naval Flight Officers	75xx	3.9%
Aviation Maintenance	60xx	2.6%
Communication Strategy and Operations	45xx	1.3%
Military Police	58xx	1.3%
Cyberspace	17xx	0.0%
Amphibious Assault Vehicle	18xx	0.0%
Judge Advocate	44xx	0.0%

Question 8. Which of the following describes your familiarity with 360-degree feedback (select all that apply)?

This question is designed to measure respondents’ degree of familiarity with the concept of 360-degree feedback. We find this question to be important for analysis since responses to survey questions could vary significantly between groups of respondents who do not fully understand 360-degree feedback versus those who have previously received/provided 360-degree feedback or have learned about the concept.

For this survey question, we classify the participants’ responses into two bins – Familiar and Not Familiar – to distinguish those who have some level of education about or experience with 360-degree feedback from those who do not. Figure 9 shows that only 33.7% (26 respondents) were familiar with 360-degree feedback in that they had previously learned about the concept or were involved in a 360-degree feedback process as a recipient or provider. The remaining 66.3% (51 respondents) were not familiar with the concept. Of



those that were not familiar, 52% (40 respondents) had only heard the term “360-degree feedback” and 14.3% (11 respondents) had never heard the term.

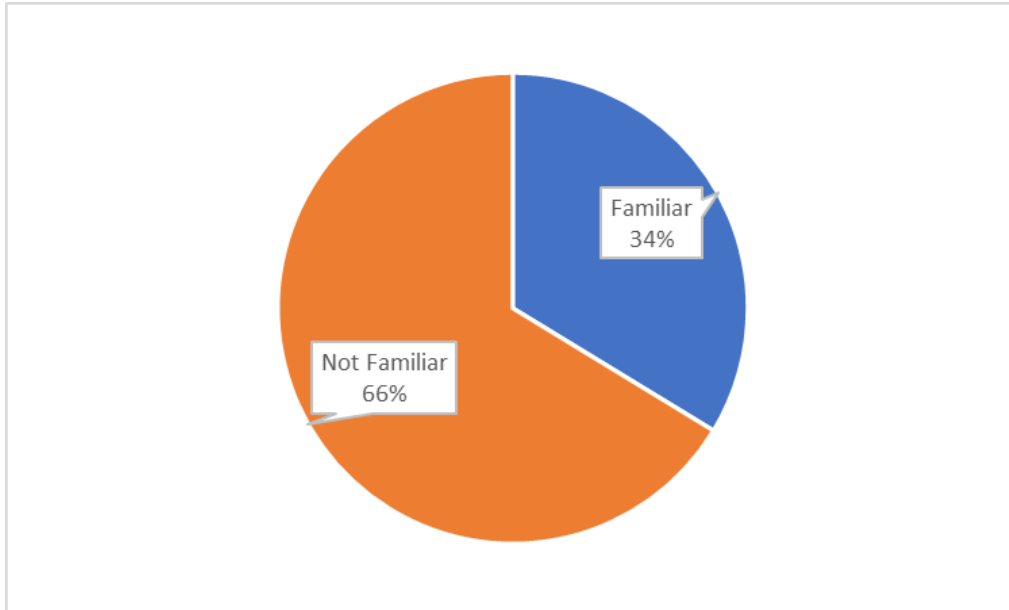


Figure 9. Familiarity with 360-degree Feedback Among Survey Respondents

b. “Kind of Person” Implicit Scale Theory Questions

The following three statements were answered on a 6-point scale (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Mostly disagree, 4-Mostly agree, 5-Agree, 6-Strongly agree):

Question 9. People can always substantially change the kind of person they are.

Question 10. All people can change even their most basic qualities.

Question 11. Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.

Questions 9 through 11 are designed to measure respondents’ growth mindset. As mentioned in Chapter IV, these three questions are a simplified version of the “Kind of Person” Implicit Scale Theory questionnaire. For Questions 9 and 10, the higher numbers (i.e., 5-Agree or 6-Strongly agree) indicate a stronger association with growth mindset. Question 11 is reverse scored, such that the lower numbers are associated with a growth

mindset. To establish consistency across all three questions, we reverse-score responses to Question 11 to reflect the same scale as Questions 9 and 10. We then calculate the mean score for Questions 9 through 11 to identify the average growth mindset score among respondents. Therefore, for each of the following calculated mean scores, higher numbers suggest alignment with a growth mindset.

The percent frequency distribution for growth mindset mean scores are displayed in Figure 10. The mean score for Question 9 is 3.94. The mean score of Question 10 is 3.65. The mean score for Question 11 is 4.13. Over 55% of respondents averaged a score between 4 and 6, suggesting large presence of growth mindset amongst survey participants.

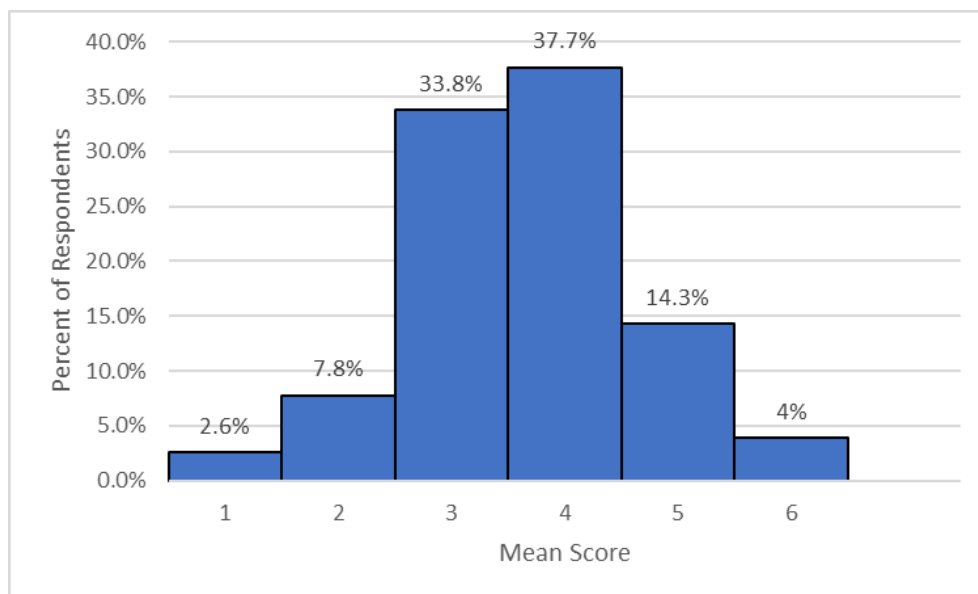


Figure 10. Percent Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Growth Mindset Mean Score

2. Summary

Our survey respondents consist of mainly Captains and Majors (92%) between the ages of 26 and 35 (71%). The average respondent has approximately 6 to 15 years TIS (60%) and were most recently selected on the CCLEB or CPIB (92%). The sample is proportionally over-representative of women and proportionally under-representative of both African Americans and Hispanics. Survey respondents represent most MOSs, with

more than half of the respondents (55%) from high-density occupational fields, such as infantry, logistics, communications, and combat engineers. More than two-thirds of the respondents were not familiar with the concept of 360-degree feedback. Additionally, more respondents tend to align with a growth mindset than do not.

B. SURVEY PART II: 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK AS A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOL

In this section we analyze survey respondents' attitudes regarding 360-degree feedback as a leadership development tool. We provide an analysis of the questions within Part II of the survey, which includes questions to assess support for using this tool in a developmental capacity, inquiries about proper timing and groups that should receive 360-degree feedback, and other potential contributors in determining the issuance of 360-degree feedback.

1. Question Analysis

Question 12. I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a leadership development tool, like counseling or coaching, with no direct impact to the promotion system.

Approximately 85% of survey respondents agree that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate if implemented as a leadership development tool, while only 13% disagree; very few respondents have a neutral opinion. Figure 11 provides a summary of respondents' opinions regarding this statement.



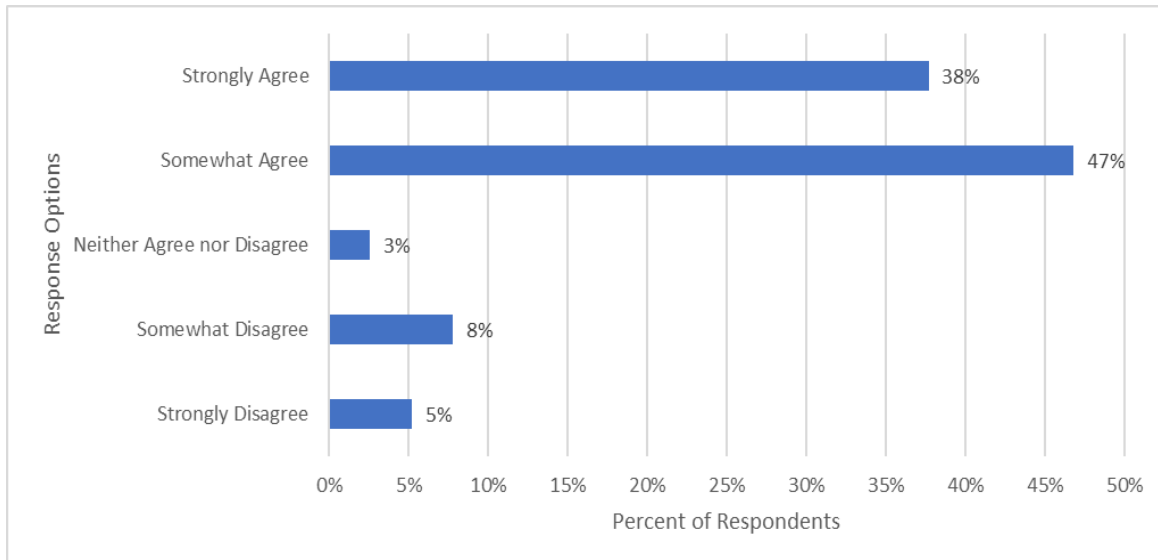


Figure 11. Respondents' Agreement with 360-degree Feedback's Appropriateness as a Development Tool

Question 13. I think 360-degree feedback would provide better overall developmental feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

Approximately 89% of survey respondents agree that 360-degree feedback would provide better overall developmental feedback than the FITREP. Only 6% disagreed with the statement, none of whom expressed strong disagreement, while 4% expressed a neutral opinion. This survey data aligns with the common understanding that FITREPs are not intended for counseling or developmental purposes but rather are designed as the primary evaluative component for one's performance (Clemens et al., 2012). The standard practice within the Marine Corps is to use counseling as a precursor to an evaluation (Clemens et al., 2012). Therefore, the data suggests that 360-degree feedback implemented in a developmental capacity is expected to surpass evaluative markings as constructive input for growth. Figure 12 shows a more detailed breakdown of the percentages.

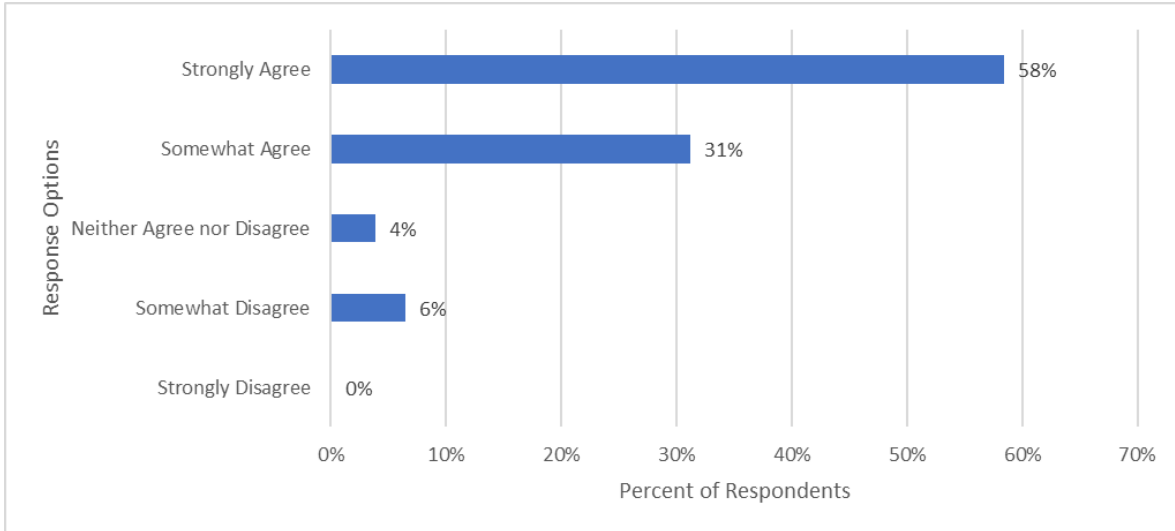


Figure 12. Respondents' Agreement with 360-degree Feedback Providing Better Developmental Feedback than a FITREP

Question 14. Rate how useful you feel 360-degree feedback would be as a leadership development tool at each of the following stages in a Marine Officer's career.

For Question 14, survey respondents rate the usefulness of 360-degree feedback for each rank group. The 5-point scale ranges from 'Not at all useful' (1) to 'Extremely useful' (5). The mean score for each rank group is depicted in Figure 13 on a continuum rather than as discrete states (the x-axis represents how respondents feel the usefulness of 360-degree feedback changes over an officer's career). The higher the mean score, the more useful the respondents feel 360-degree feedback would be to a group. There is minimal variance between the mean scores, all of which average between 'Moderately useful' and 'Very useful.' The mean scores indicate that respondents feel 360-degree feedback would be more useful within the company grade (O1-O3) ranks than the field grade (O4-O6) population.

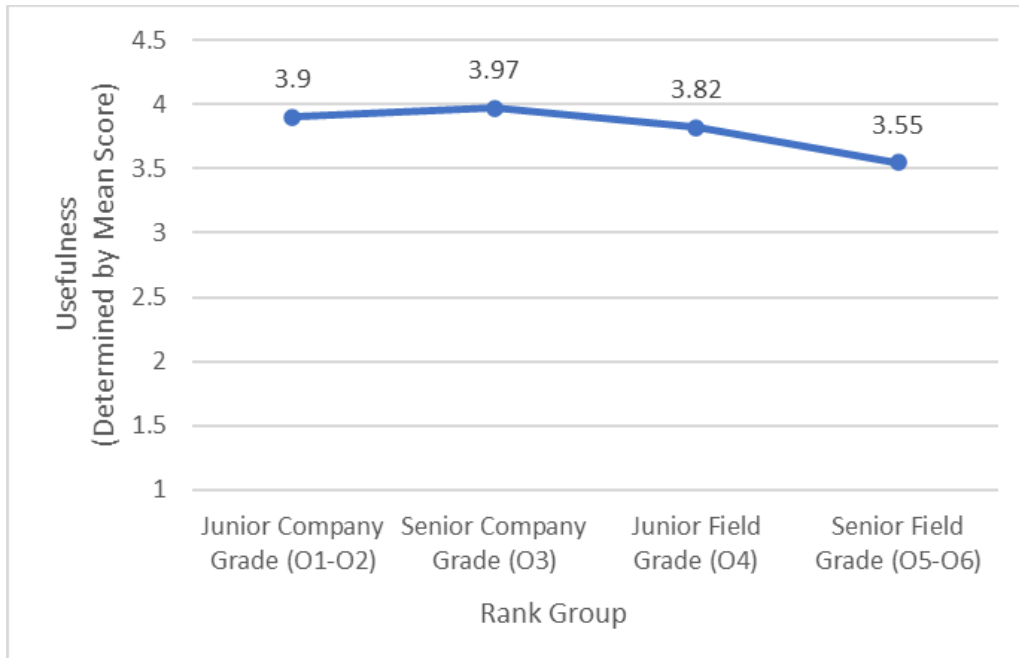


Figure 13. Average Usefulness (Based on Mean Score) by Rank Group

Question 15. Rank the following occasions in a Marine Officer's career according to the amount of impact you feel 360-degree feedback would have on their leadership development. (Drag answers to order from 1-greatest impact to 7-least impact)

For Question 15, we classify the survey respondents' choices into three categories: 1) 'Greatest Impact' for responses ranked first or second, 2) 'Medium Impact' for responses ranked third through fifth, and 3) 'Least Impact' for responses ranked sixth or seventh. This method represents the data most clearly due to the bimodal distribution of the responses for certain occasions; a mean score would not accurately communicate the rankings. For example, accession training appears to have the third largest percentage of responses in favor of greatest impact. However, nearly half of respondents felt that it would have the least impact compared to other occasions. Table 2 displays the percentages of ranking responses for each occasion. We note two occasions respondents believe would have the greatest impact: senior billet assignment and command selection.

Table 2. Impact of 360-degree Feedback by occasion

Occasion	Greatest Impact (Ranked 1-2)	Medium Impact (Ranked 3-5)	Least Impact (Ranked 6-7)	Total
Senior billet assignment	45%	46%	9%	100%
Command selection	43%	45%	12%	100%
Accession training	34%	17%	49%	100%
Promotion	33%	57%	11%	100%
Transferring units	22%	45%	33%	100%
High visibility billet	17%	63%	20%	100%
Resident PME or formal school	5%	28%	67%	100%

Question 16. If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate during the following occasions: Accession training, Resident PME or formal school, Promotion, Senior billet assignment, Unit transfer, Command selection, High visibility billet

For Question 16, the response choices were on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1-Strongly disagree to 5-Strongly agree. We took the mean score of responses for each occasion and depicted them as discrete variables in Figure 14. The higher mean scores indicate that respondents felt that 360-degree feedback was more appropriate for the occasion. Once again, participants responded most favorably towards senior billet assignment and command selection, meaning they felt that 360-degree feedback would be most appropriate during these two occasions. The only occasion with a mean score below 3 was resident professional military education (PME) or formal school, which means that the average respondent did not feel it was an appropriate occasion for 360-degree feedback as a leadership development tool.



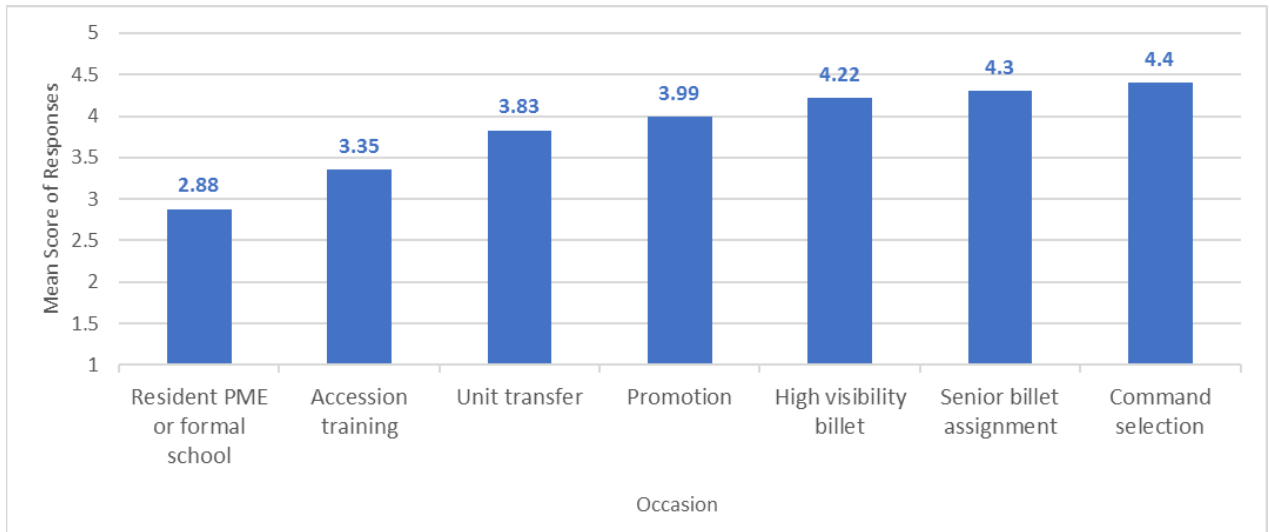


Figure 14. Mean Scores Determining Appropriateness by Occasion

Question 17. If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [during/after] accession training.

Response options for Question 17 were limited to ‘during’ and ‘after.’ We omit the response option of ‘before’ on the basis that pre-accession training would be prior to commissioning of the Marine Officer and would therefore not be realistic for development. Figure 15 depicts the percent distribution of responses. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents would prefer 360-degree feedback after accession training.

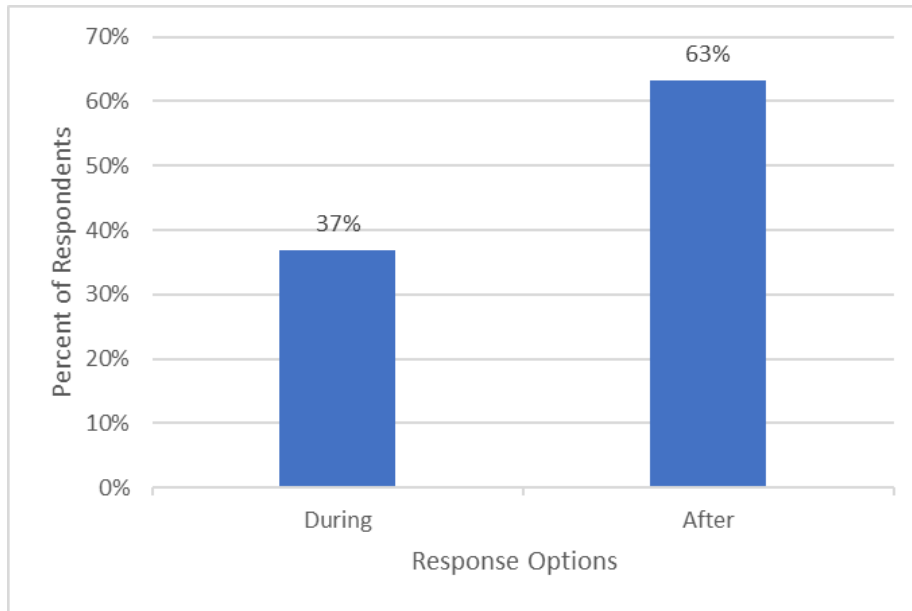


Figure 15. Responses for Appropriate Timing Associated with Accession Training

Question 18. If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [before/during/after] resident PME or formal schooling.

The response option ‘before’ was determined to be appropriate for this occasion since 360-degree feedback could occur prior to reporting for school and was therefore included in Question 18. The data showed a minimal variance between respondents that thought 360-degree feedback should occur while attending resident PME or another formal school compared to those that it should occur after. Resident PME or formal schooling was the only occasion for which respondents did not overwhelmingly feel that ‘before’ was most optimal. Figure 16 depicts the percent distribution of responses.

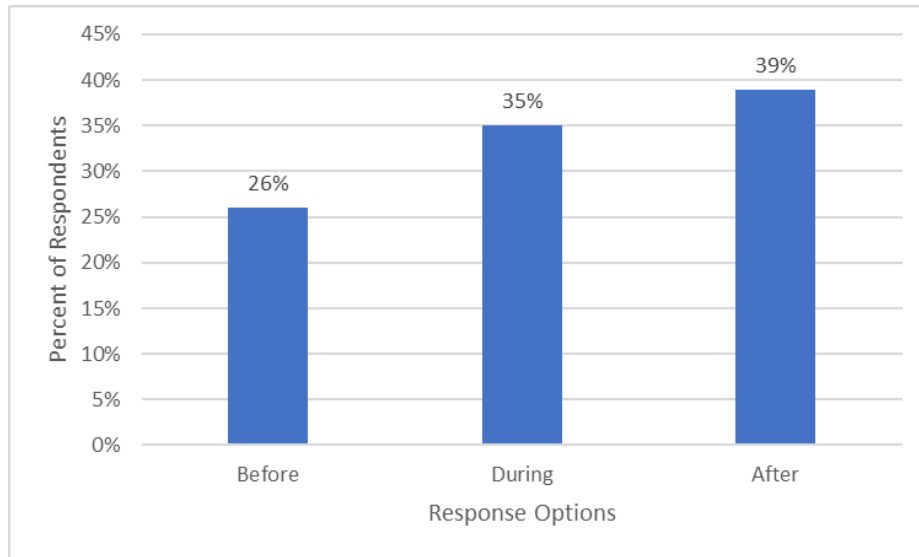


Figure 16. Responses for Appropriate Timing Associated with Residents PME or Formal School

Question 19. If given the option, I would recommend the following training occasions be exempt from 360-degree feedback: Accession training, Resident PME or formal school, Promotion, Senior billet assignment, Unit transfer, Command selection, High visibility billet

Based on the data for Question 19, only one occasion received the majority of responses in favor of exemption. Most respondents recommended that resident PME and other formal schools be exempt from 360-degree feedback. Additionally, for ‘accession training,’ there was only a marginal difference between the percentage of respondents who thought that it should and should not be exempt. The two occasions that received the most opposition to exemption (88% of respondents each) were command selection and senior billet assignment. The percentage of responses recommending exemption for each occasion are depicted in Figure 17.

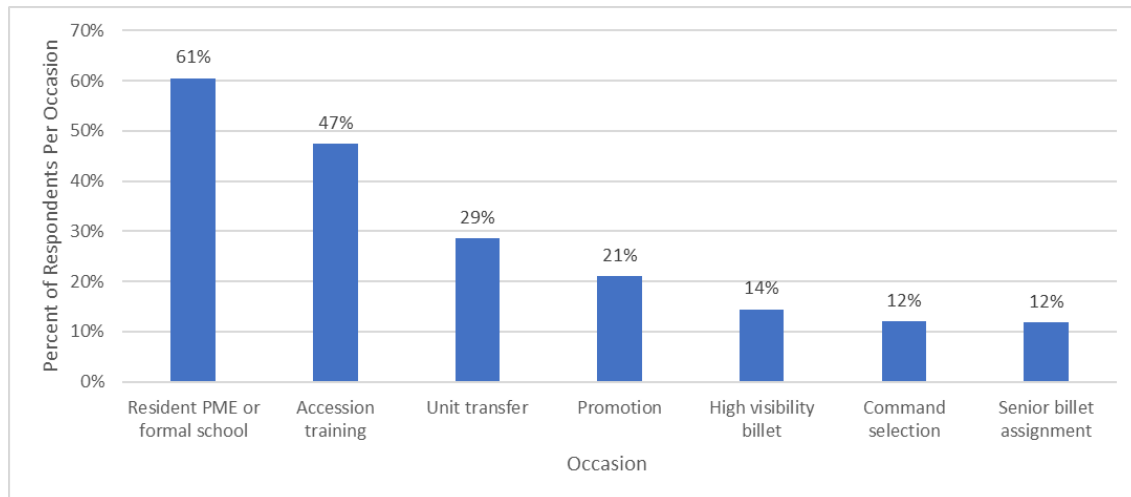


Figure 17. Respondents' Recommendations for Exempt Occasions

Question 20. If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [before/after] the following occasions: Accession training, Resident PME or formal school, Promotion, Senior billet assignment, Unit transfer, Command selection, High visibility billet

For Question 20, the response options were limited to 'before' and 'after' only. For these five occasions, we omitted 'during' as a response option since these occasions take place at a definitive point in time, unlike accession training and resident PME, which take place over the course of weeks or months. Figure 18 shows the overwhelming consensus that 360-degree feedback should occur before each of these occasions.

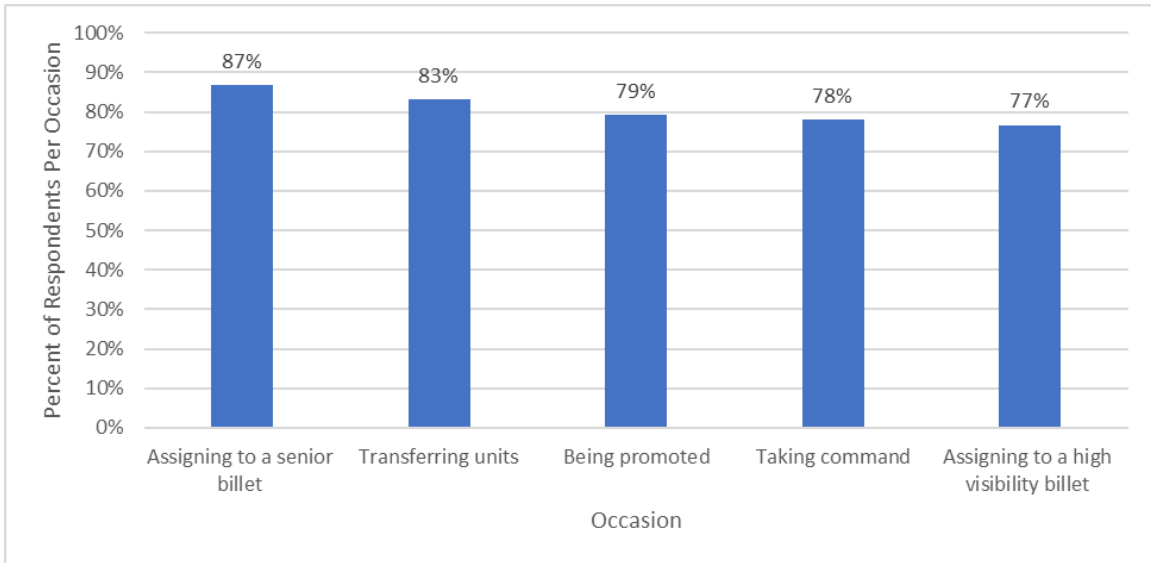


Figure 18. Percentage of Respondents Recommending Timing of 360-degree Feedback Before Occasions

Question 21. When do you feel that 360-degree feedback should be used? (Select all that apply)

The most significant finding from Question 21 was that only 3% of respondents felt that 360-degree feedback should never be used. The other 97% of respondents indicated that 360-degree feedback would be useful. The data showed a large amount of support for occasion-specific feedback, at the individual Marine's request (self-directed), and on a recurring basis. Almost half of the respondents felt that certain superiors (Commanding Officer, RS, RO) should have the ability to direct a Marine to receive 360-degree feedback. One noteworthy comment from the free-form response portion of the question suggested that 360-degree feedback should not be directed by a superior, as it may appear punitive or retaliatory. Figure 19 displays the percentages for when respondents felt 360-degree feedback should be used.

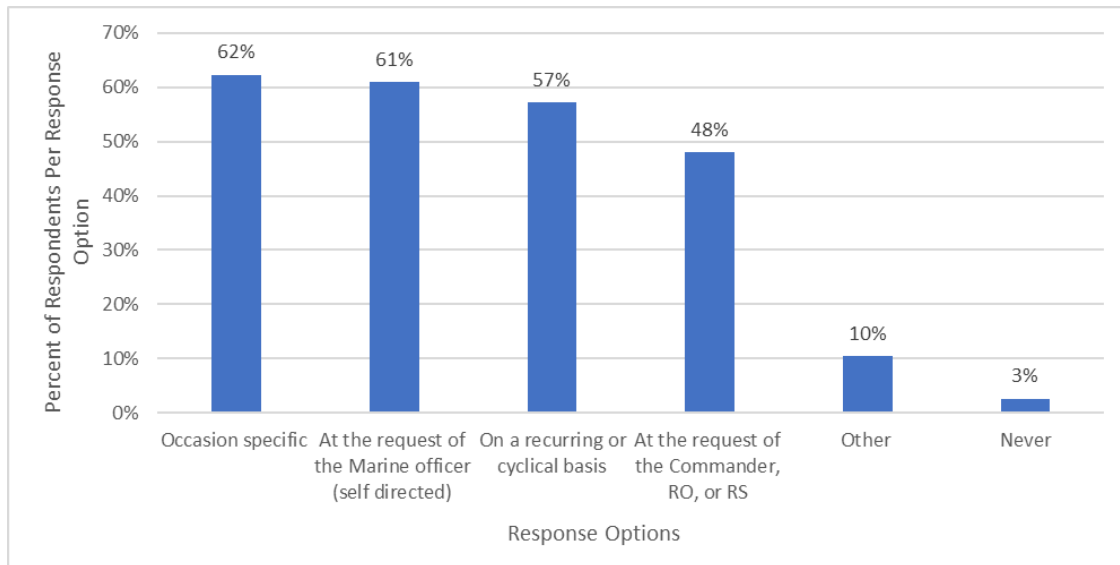


Figure 19. Respondents' Opinions on When 360-degree Feedback Should be Used

Based on participants' responses to the open-ended portion of the question, other additional recommendations for Question 21 included the following:

- In the event of an Inspector General complaint against a Marine or Command
- Six months prior to any billet change or normal reporting occasions
- At the discretion of O5/O6 commanders – allow them to establish local policies for their respective units (no service-wide policy)
- At the request of the Senior Enlisted Marine
- Stagger 360-degree feedback with normal FITREP occasions (e.g., semi-annual FITREP in April, 360-degree feedback in October)

Question 22. Regardless of your answer on the previous question, please answer the following: If occasion specific, when do you feel that 360-degree feedback should be used as a development tool? For each occasion (e.g., 'being promoted'), please indicate a response in both the BEFORE and AFTER columns.

The intent behind Question 22 was to add depth to the Question 20 analysis regarding ideal timing of before or after occasions. Question 22 inquired about what respondents felt would be the ideal length of time before and after for each occasion, regardless of any previous answers. The timing of before and after are mutually exclusive for each occasion and respondents were asked to choose one preferred timeframe for each. Although respondents agreed that before was more optimal timing than after, this survey data allows TMX to remain informed if they decide to implement 360-degree feedback after a specific occasion. The responses are indicated in Table 3 with the highest percentages for each mutually exclusive occasion bolded.

Table 3. Percentage of Respondents Preferring a Given Timeframe Before and After Occasions

Occasion	Before			After		
	1-3 Months	3-6 Months	> 6 months	1-3 Months	3-6 Months	> 6 months
Being promoted	56%	26%	18%	32%	42%	26%
Assigning to a senior billet	45%	42%	13%	32%	43%	26%
Transferring units	69%	26%	4%	31%	42%	27%
Taking command	37%	40%	22%	27%	51%	22%
Assigning to a high visibility billet	46%	37%	16%	35%	49%	16%

The selection responses ‘1-3 months’ and ‘3-6 months’ overlap at the 3-month mark and should be consolidated for analysis. Under this framing, respondents generally felt that 1–6 months before or 1–6 months after each occasion was most appropriate. It is worth noting that when respondents were asked to provide the ideal timing after occasions, we saw a noticeable shift towards the ‘3-6 months’ and ‘more than 6 months’ selections for all occasions. The most significant shifts were observed for unit transfer, promotion, and senior billet assignment. Overall, respondents felt that 360-degree feedback should occur closer to the approaching occasion if used before, but further from the occasion if used after. This shift indicates the need for more observation time after certain occasions have occurred.

Question 23. If 360-degree feedback was used on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often do you feel it should occur?



Responses for Question 23 favor 360-degree feedback on an annual basis, with semi-annual receiving the second highest percentage of selection. This survey data aligns with the current FITREP construct of annual and semi-annual reports. A summary of responses is depicted in Figure 20.

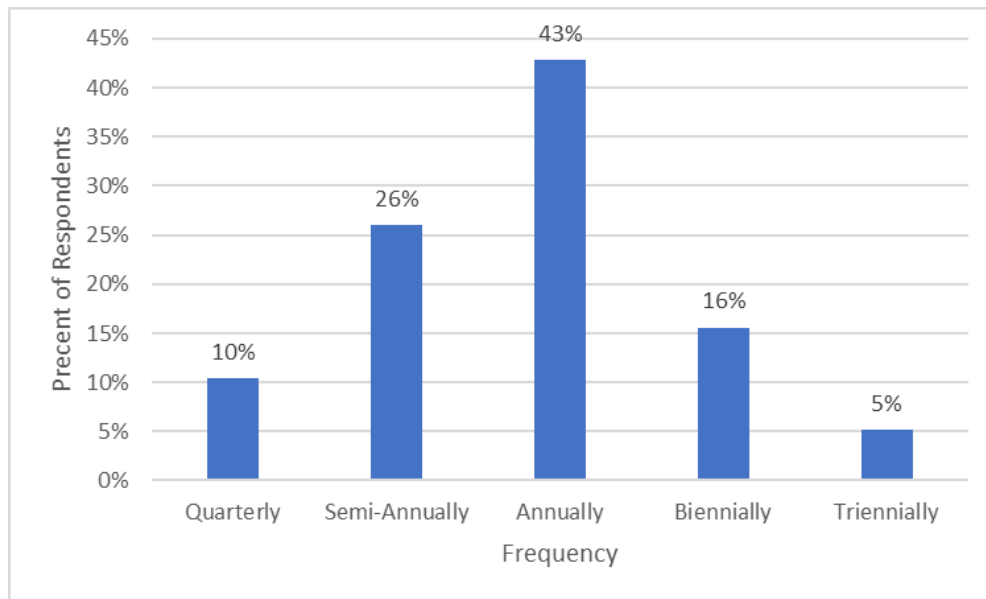


Figure 20. Frequency for Time-Based Feedback

Question 24. If you were receiving 360-degree feedback on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often would you want to receive it?

Question 25. If you were providing 360-degree feedback for a Marine on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often would be willing to provide it?

For Questions 24 and 25, we rephrase Question 23 in terms of frequency of either receiving or providing 360-degree feedback. After doing so, we observe a shift of 4–6% (quarterly) and 9–13% (semi-annually) in favor of increased frequency for both receiving and providing feedback. As shown in Figure 21, there are slight differences between the data for Questions 24 and 25.

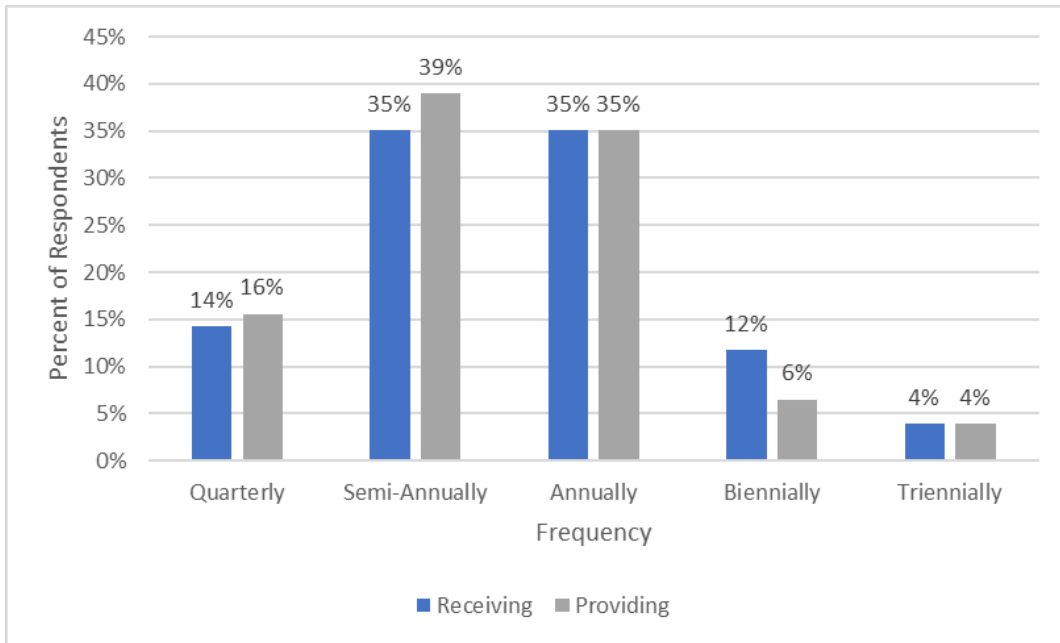


Figure 21. Frequency of Receiving or Providing Feedback

Question 26. Do you feel that the Marine Corps should use 360-degree feedback on Marine Officers that have not yet achieved Career Designation?

For Question 26, the data showed overwhelming agreement (78% of respondents) that all Marine Officers should be eligible for 360-degree feedback regardless of career designation status. See Figure 22 for summary of responses.

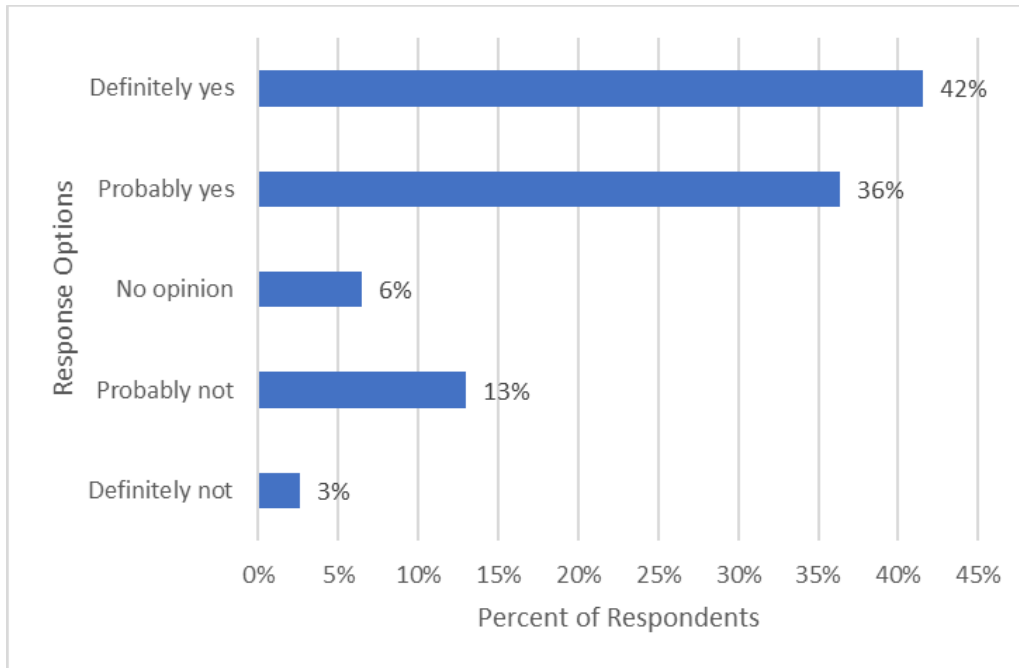


Figure 22. Respondents Recommending 360-degree Feedback for Non-Career Designated Officers

Question 27. Which of the following groups do you believe would benefit most from 360-degree feedback for developmental purposes?

Figure 23 depicts the responses for Question 27. Respondents believed that junior and mid-career officers would benefit more than senior officers who have more than 15 years of service.

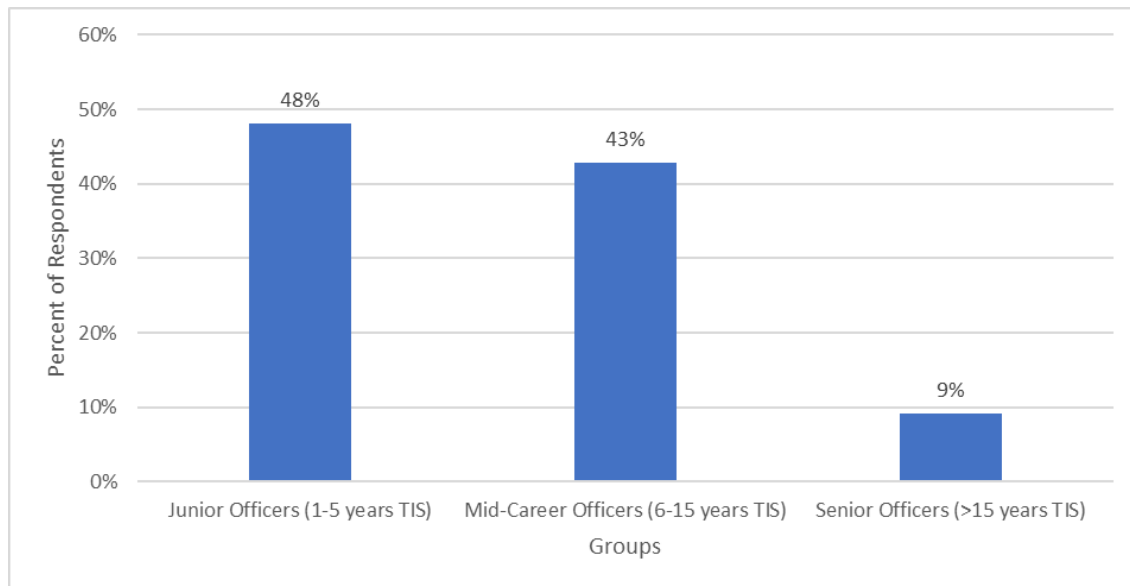


Figure 23. TIS Groups that Would Benefit Most from 360-degree Feedback

Question 28. Do you feel that a Marine Officer’s relative value (RV) should play a role in determining their need to receive 360-degree feedback when used as leadership development tool?

Question 29. Do you feel that a Marine Officer’s placement on the RO’s comparative assessment (“Christmas tree” scale) should play a role in determining their need to receive 360-degree feedback when used as leadership development tool?

As shown in Figures 24 and 25, respondents felt similarly about both Questions 28 and 29, suggesting that neither the RV nor RO comparative assessment should be a factor that determines which Marine Officers receive 360-degree feedback. This survey data indicates belief that the evaluative and developmental mechanisms should remain independent of one another.



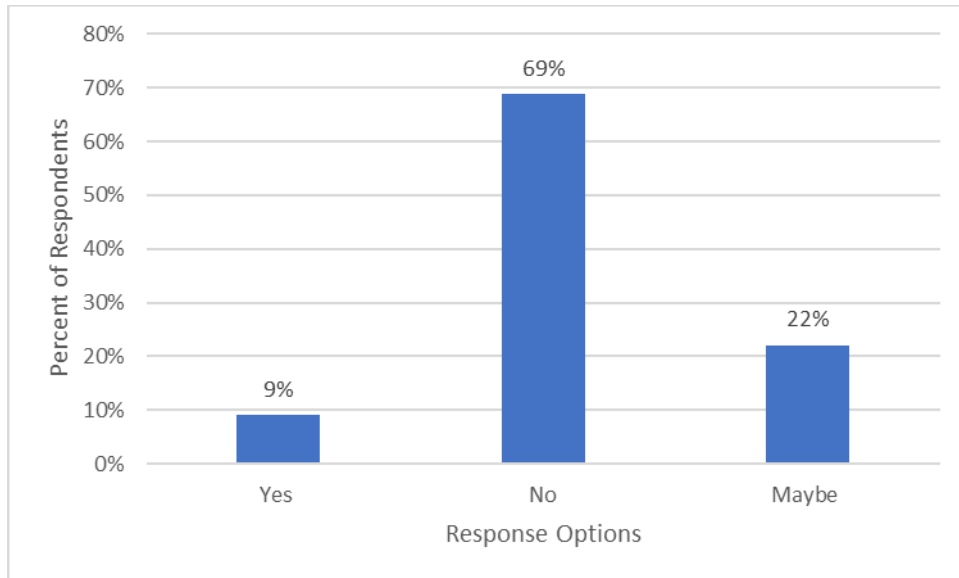


Figure 24. Support for Using RV as a Determining Factor for Issuing 360-degree Feedback

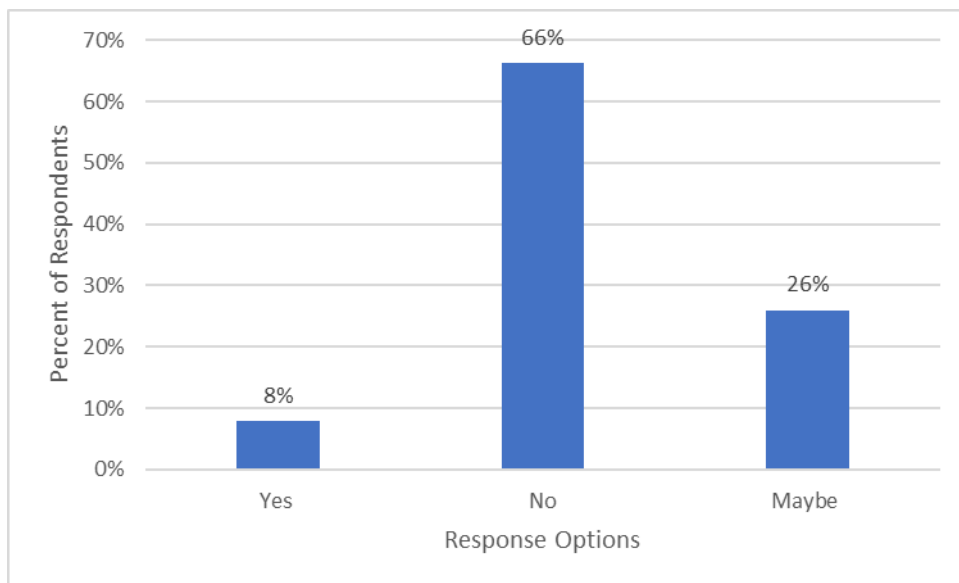


Figure 25. Support for Using RO Comparative Assessment as a Determining Factor for Issuing 360-degree Feedback

Question 30. If the RO comparative assessment was a determining factor for 360-degree feedback as leadership development tool, which would be an appropriate RO comparative assessment group? (Select all that apply)



The preponderance of respondents in Question 29 responded negatively to the idea of the RO comparative assessment playing a determining factor for Marines receiving 360-degree feedback. However, if TMX decided that the RO ranking should influence the process, most survey respondents thought that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate for the average or bottom performers. We also found it noteworthy that 45% and 41% of respondents nonetheless felt that even the above-average and elite performers should still receive 360-degree feedback. Figure 26 shows the breakdown of responses to Question 30.

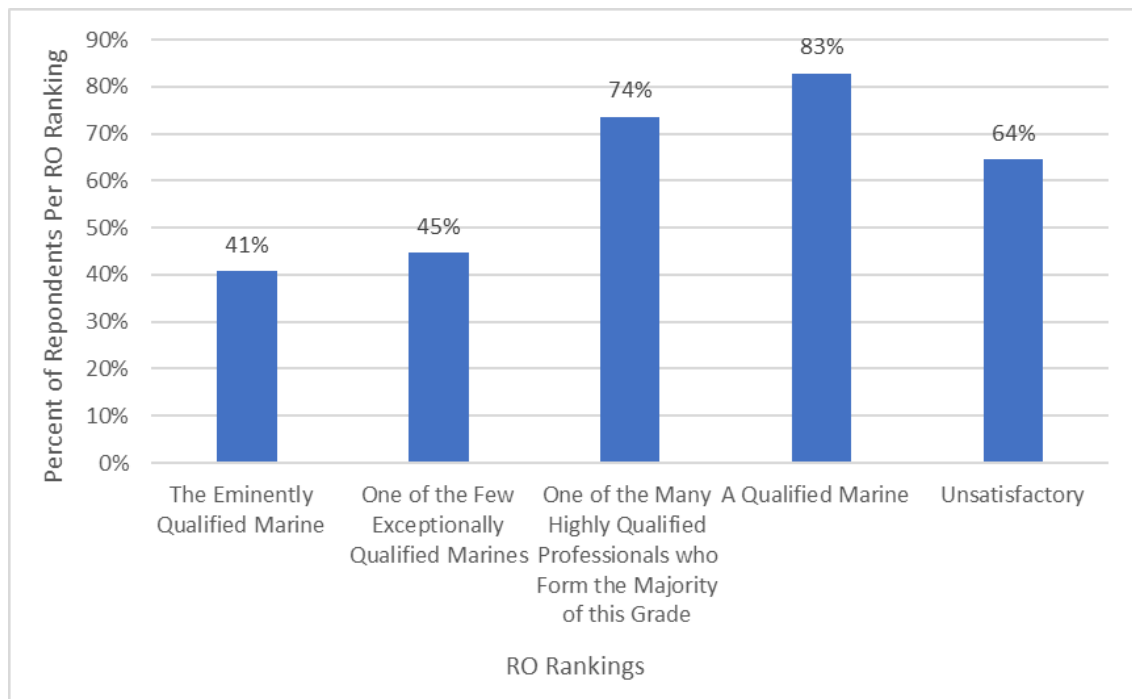


Figure 26. Respondents’ Opinions on Which RO Comparative Assessment Rankings that Should Receive 360-degree Feedback

Question 31. Are there any additional occasions (not previously listed) that would be appropriate for a 360-degree assessment?

Question 31 is one of a few free-form response questions within the survey. This question enables deeper thought by participants and places no restrictions on responses. The following suggested occasions are those from a single or select respondents and do not



represent the views of the entire sample. These additional occasions that could be explored are as follows:

- When the Marine Reported On (MRO) is not closely working with an RS/RO (independent or separate operations)
- Before, during, or after significant unit events (e.g., deployment)
- When departing a command billet
- When a Marine receives a commendatory or derogatory FITREP
- During or after command climate surveys are conducted
- When a Marine is subject to a separation board
- When the Marine is a change of RS/RO
- Before transitioning out of the Service (if not recently assessed)
- After a change or turnover of subordinates (majority, or the most senior subordinate billets)
- Before known FITREP occasions
- Any adverse occasion that still results in retention (e.g., judicial proceedings)
- Commandant Directed Fitness report occasions
- When passed over for career designation or promotion

Question 32. Do you have any thoughts on how the relative value (RV) could play a factor in determining who receives 360-degree feedback?

Many dissenting opinions were revealed when analyzing the comments provided in Question 32. As previously expressed, most respondents did not believe that RV should be a determining factor for 360-degree feedback. Many respondents felt that RVs triggering



360-degree feedback would create a negative stigma and would appear punitive. Additionally, many respondents felt that RVs were too subjective to use as a metric and that all officers – stronger and weaker performers – would benefit from 360-degree feedback. Regardless, some respondents still provided valuable thoughts on how RV could be used. The following summary of suggestions are those from a single or select respondents and do not represent the views of the entire sample.

Suggestions:

- If there are major variances in the MRO's RV (significant upward or downward shifts indicate a change in the MRO's performance)
- If a MRO's RV is mismatched with their ranking in the RO's comparative assessment (i.e., RV of 100 but low RO ranking)
- Marines filling Command billets that receive an RV of 80 (identify poor Commanders)
- Marines that receive lower RVs (score threshold not determined)

2. Summary

In Part II, we found that there was an overwhelming consensus (85%) among survey participants that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a leadership development tool. Additionally, a similar percentage of respondents (89%) felt that the overall developmental benefit received from 360-degree feedback would outweigh any feedback or constructive criticism that could be drawn from a FITREP. This finding is noteworthy, because though the FITREP may not be intended for counseling purposes, Marines can reflect on their markings across the 14 attributes in hopes of achieving growth and improving performance based on their current deficiencies.

Nearly all respondents (97%) felt that 360-degree feedback should be either: 1) occasion specific, 2) at the request of the individual Marine (self-directed), or 3) time-based (recurring or cyclical). Additionally, 90% of respondents thought that 360-degree feedback should be either occasion specific or time-based. The survey participants also agreed that



RV and the ROs' comparative assessment should not be factors that determine the issuance of 360-degree feedback. If the Marine Corps decided to implement 360-degree feedback on a cyclical basis, respondents felt that it should align with the FITREP frequency of annual or semi-annual.

We also explored the applicability to specific groups of Marine Officers (i.e., rank groups, TIS, career designated). We found that respondents felt that 360-degree feedback would be useful for all ranks polled (Second Lieutenant through Colonel). However, the company-grade ranks, Second Lieutenant through Captain, were deemed most useful by the survey respondents. Additionally, respondents felt that officers with 15 years or less TIS would benefit the most. Respondents agreed that all Marine Officers should be eligible to receive 360-degree feedback regardless of their career designation status.

With respect to the applicability to specific occasions (i.e., promotion, command selection, etc.), we found that senior billet assignments and command selection were believed by respondents to be occasions that would be most appropriate and would receive the greatest benefit from 360-degree feedback. The consensus showed that all occasions were appropriate, apart from resident PME or other formal schools, which received the most responses in favor of being exempt from 360-degree feedback. Most respondents believed that 360-degree feedback should occur before each occasion, except for resident PME/formal school and accession training, which received the highest percentage of responses favoring after. The data showed that respondents thought the ideal timing for 360-degree feedback would be one to three months before a specific occasion. If 360-degree feedback were to occur after an occasion, respondents believed that three to six months would be preferable.

C. SURVEY PART III: 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK AS A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TOOL

In this section we analyze the respondents' attitudes regarding 360-degree feedback as a performance evaluation tool. We provide an analysis of the questions within Part III of the survey, which includes questions assessing support for 360-degree feedback used in



an evaluative capacity, inquiries about experiences with FITREPs, and questions analyzing respondents' thoughts on 360-degree feedback as a viable evaluation alternative.

1. Question Analysis

Question 33. I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a performance evaluation tool, like a Fitness Report, with a direct impact to the promotion system.

Approximately 47% of respondents disagreed with using 360-degree feedback as a performance evaluation tool. However, we still observed that 38% of respondents were in favor of 360-degree feedback for evaluative purposes. There were 15% of respondents who remained neutral in their response choice. Figure 27 displays the percentages for each response option.

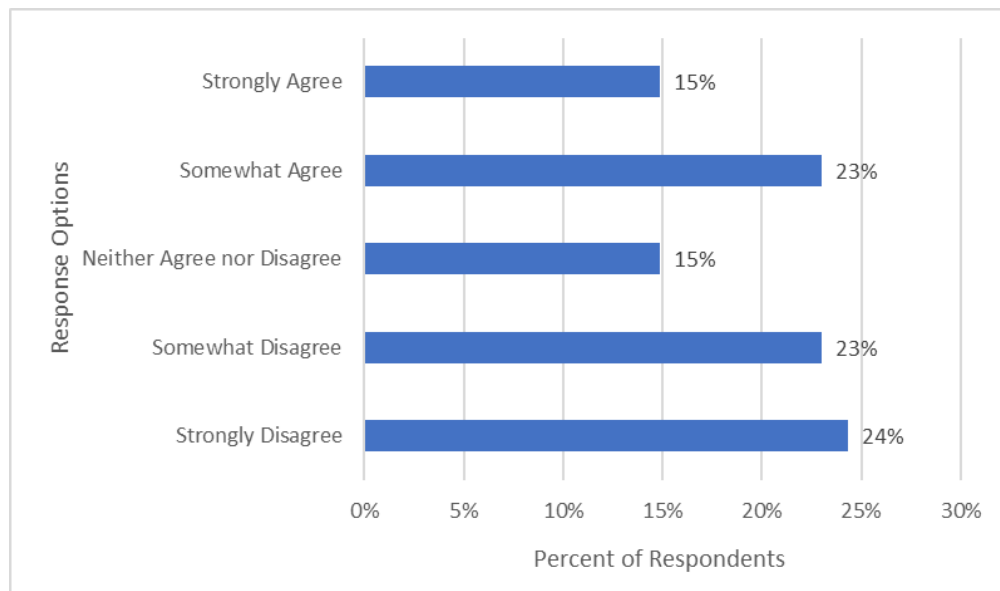


Figure 27. Respondents' Agreement with Using 360-degree Feedback as a Performance Evaluation Tool

Question 34. Have you ever experienced a time in your career that you felt your FITREP may have been skewed (positively or negatively) based on a lack of direct or meaningful observation by the Reporting Senior (RS)?

Question 35. Have you ever experienced a time in your career that you felt your FITREP may have been skewed (positively or negatively) based on a lack of direct or meaningful observation by the Reviewing Officer (RO)?

For Questions 34 and 35, the data is displayed as a side-by-side bar chart in Figure 28. The data showed that most respondents felt that they had received a skewed FITREP (positively or negatively) at some point in their career from their RS and/or RO due to a lack of direct or meaningful observation.

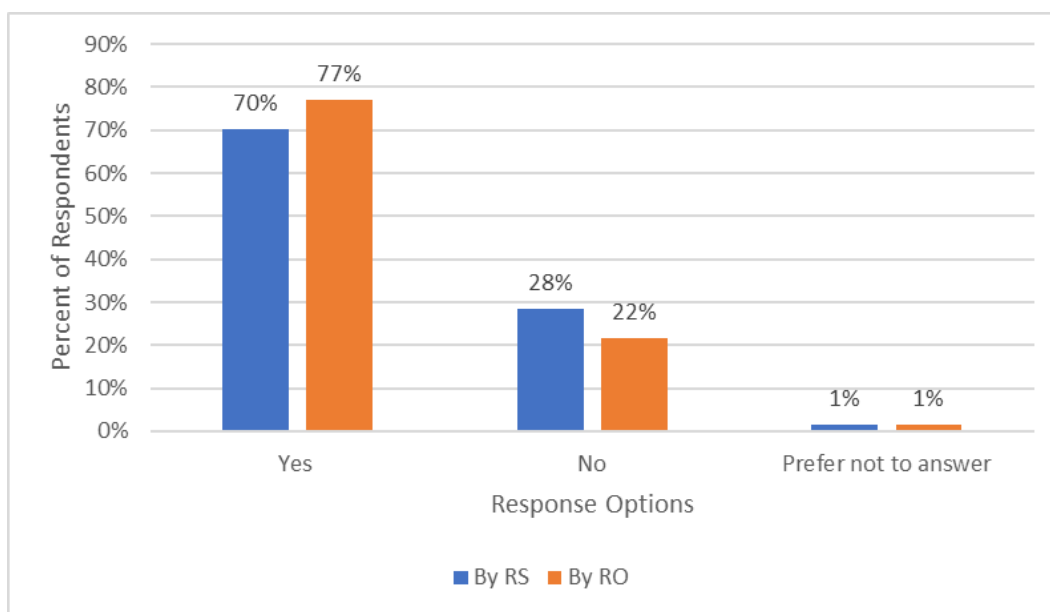


Figure 28. Comparison of Respondents Who Felt that they had Received Skewed FITREPs

Question 36. Follow-up to previous question: Do you feel that 360-degree feedback (feedback from superiors outside your FITREP reporting chain, peers, and subordinates) may have helped provide a more accurate reflection of your performance?

Question 36 asks whether those who felt that they had received a skewed report from their RS and/or RO believe that 360-degree feedback would have been better in those instances. However, the wording in the question prefaces it with “Follow-up to previous question” (Question 35) and therefore we assume that the responses are from those who



felt that they had received a skewed report from their RO. Figure 29 shows that 46% of respondents replied “yes.” However, we can analyze these responses more meaningfully by applying the 34 ‘yes’ responses from Question 36 as the numerator and the 57 ‘yes’ responses from Question 35 about receiving a skewed FITREP from their RO as the denominator. This calculation shows that nearly 60% of those respondents who felt that their RO provided a skewed FITREP believe that 360-degree feedback would have been more effective in evaluating their performance. If we assume that respondents were referencing Question 34 as well, then 65% of respondents who believed that their RS provided a skewed FITREP also believe 360-degree feedback would have been a better alternative.

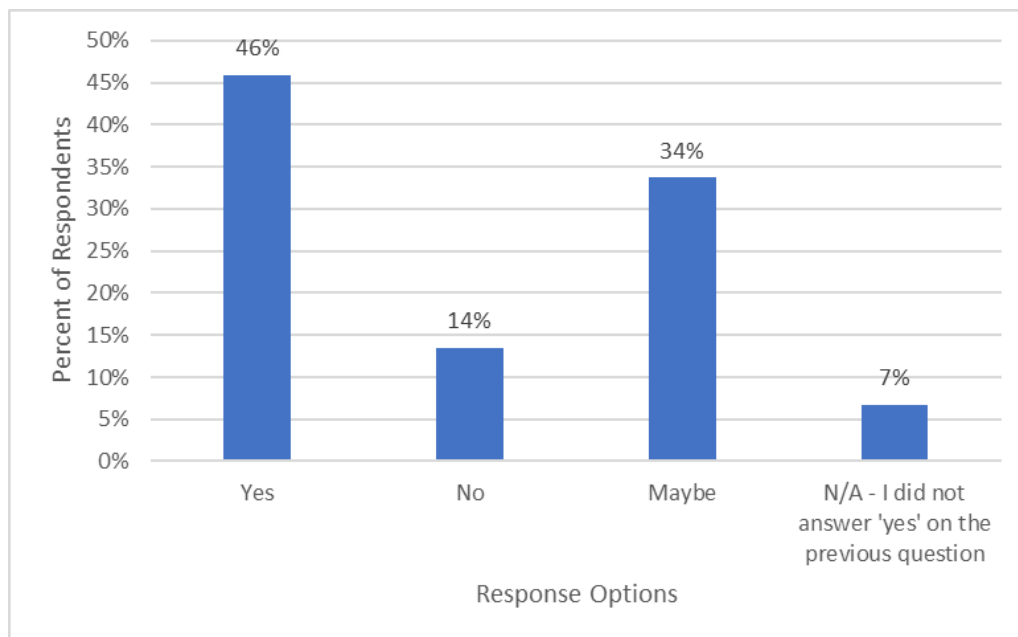


Figure 29. Respondents who Believe that 360-degree Feedback Would Provide a More Accurate Reflection of Performance

Question 37. Do you feel 360-degree feedback could provide more accurate performance metrics for a Marine Officer that was inaccurately rated by their RS or RO?

As shown in Figure 30, most respondents were unsure whether 360-degree feedback could provide more accurate performance metrics. This uncertainty could be a



result of participants' lack of familiarity with 360-degree feedback. However, 43% of respondents replied positively in contrast to the 5% who felt that it would not produce more accurate performance metrics.

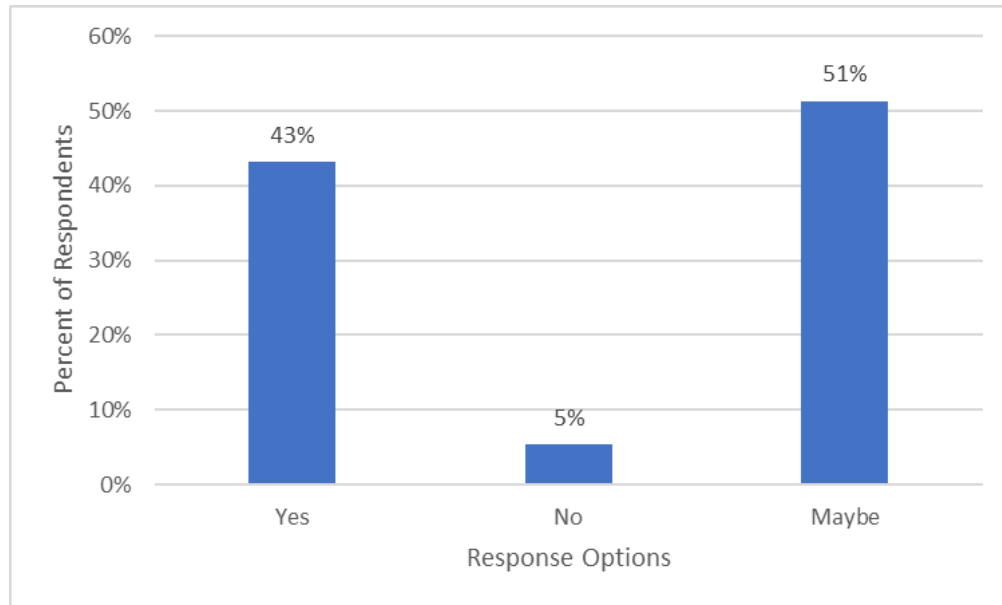


Figure 30. Respondents who Thought 360-degree Feedback Would Provide More Accurate Performance Metrics than a FITREP

Question 38. I feel that a more traditional assessment (like the FITREP) properly evaluates my ability to perform and lead in my assigned billet.

For Question 38, we observed an almost equal distribution of respondents who agreed and disagreed with the FITREP's ability to properly evaluate performance and leadership: the data showed that 41% disagreed compared to the 39% who agreed. Additionally, only 4% of those who agreed felt strongly about it, compared to the 18% of respondents who strongly disagreed. Figure 31 shows the distribution of responses.

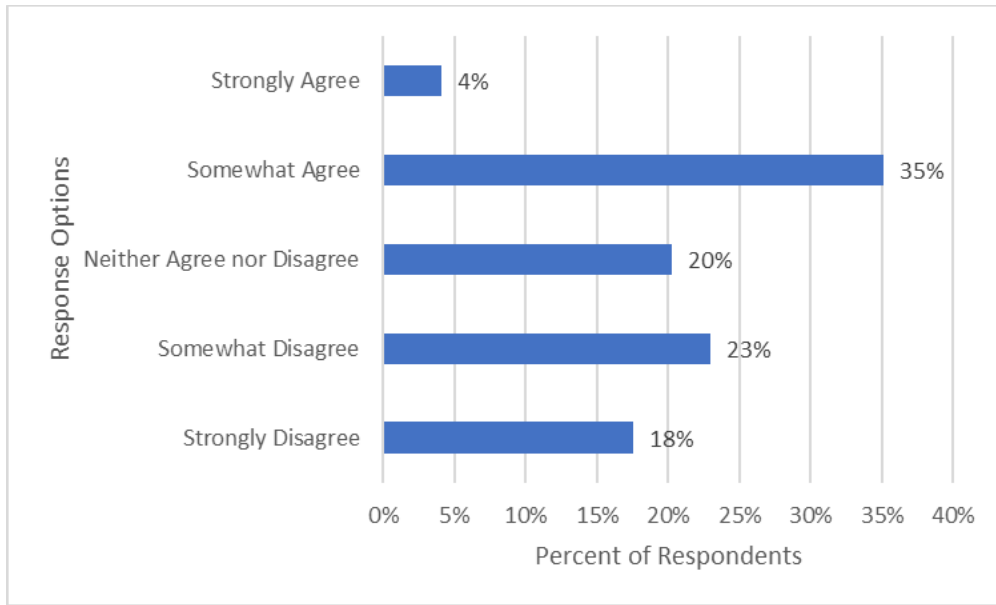


Figure 31. Respondents who Feel that the Traditional Assessment (FITREP) Properly Evaluates Performance and Leadership

Question 39. I feel that 360-degree feedback (multi-source feedback tool) would be more effective to properly evaluate my ability to perform and lead in my assigned billet.

More than half of the respondents (53%) felt that 360-degree feedback would be more effective than the current evaluation tool (FITREP) for evaluating performance and leadership. Additionally, more than a quarter of the respondents responded neutrally. See Figure 32 for the complete distribution of responses.

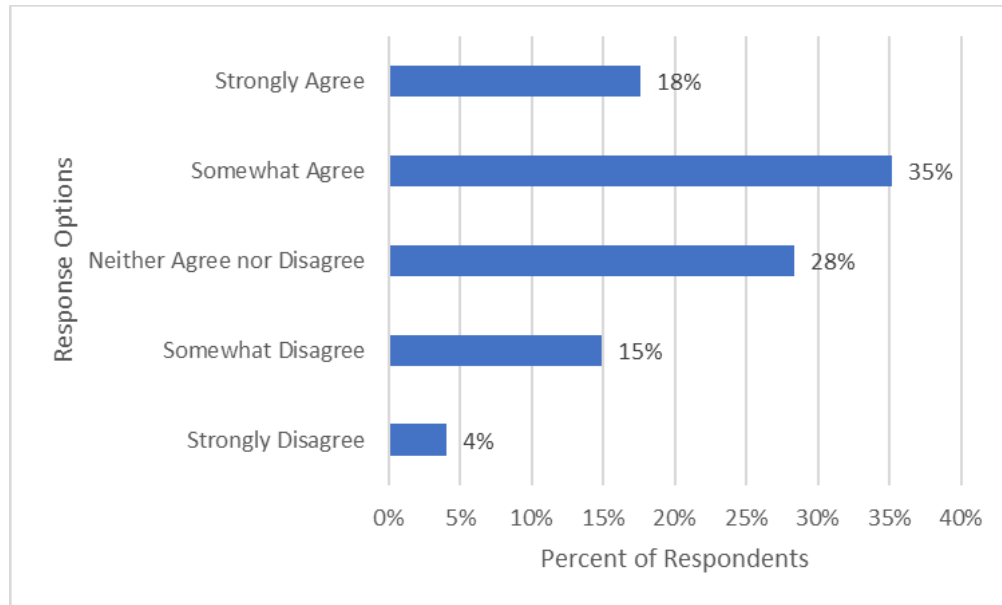


Figure 32. Respondents' Agreement with 360-degree Feedback Being More Effective for Evaluation than a FITREP

Question 40. I feel that the RS/RO combination (currently used in the FITREP process) would be less subjective than 360-degree feedback from multiple superiors, peers, and subordinates.

More respondents agreed that the current FITREP construct would provide less subjective feedback than that compiled from 360-degree feedback. Only 30% of respondents felt that the inclusion of more superiors, peers, and subordinates would potentially increase the objectivity of an evaluation. Figure 33 depicts the full distribution of responses.

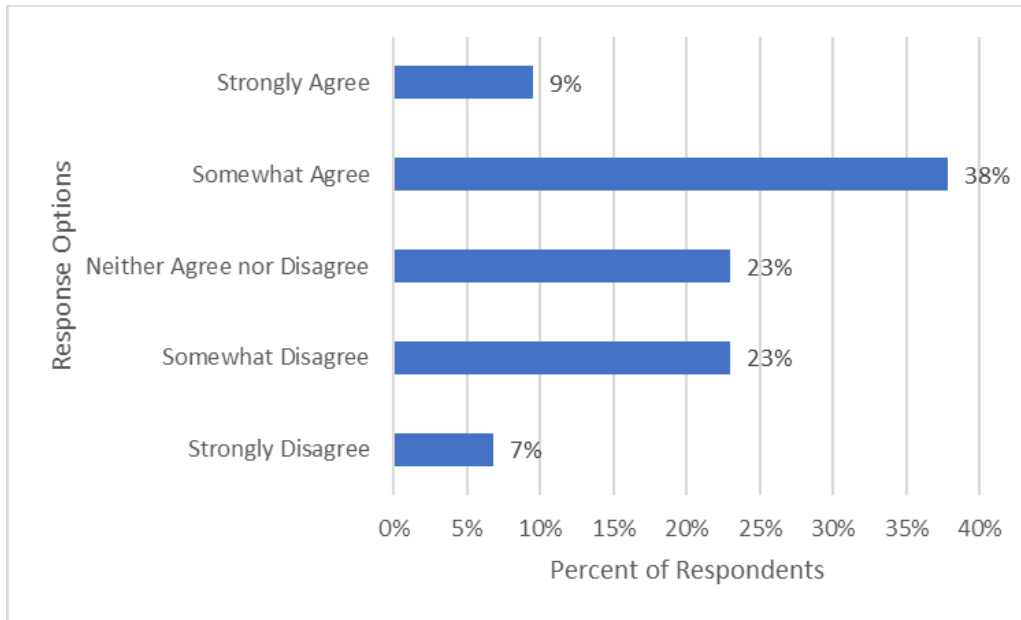


Figure 33. Respondents' Agreement with FITREPs Being Less Subjective than 360-degree Feedback

Question 41. If implemented correctly, do you feel that 360-degree feedback could provide better supplemental data within the performance evaluation system, allowing boards to select better officers?

Most respondents felt that 360-degree feedback, if properly implemented, could provide better supplemental data within the Performance Evaluation System. Approximately 36% could not definitively answer yes or no. See Figure 34 for the distribution of responses.

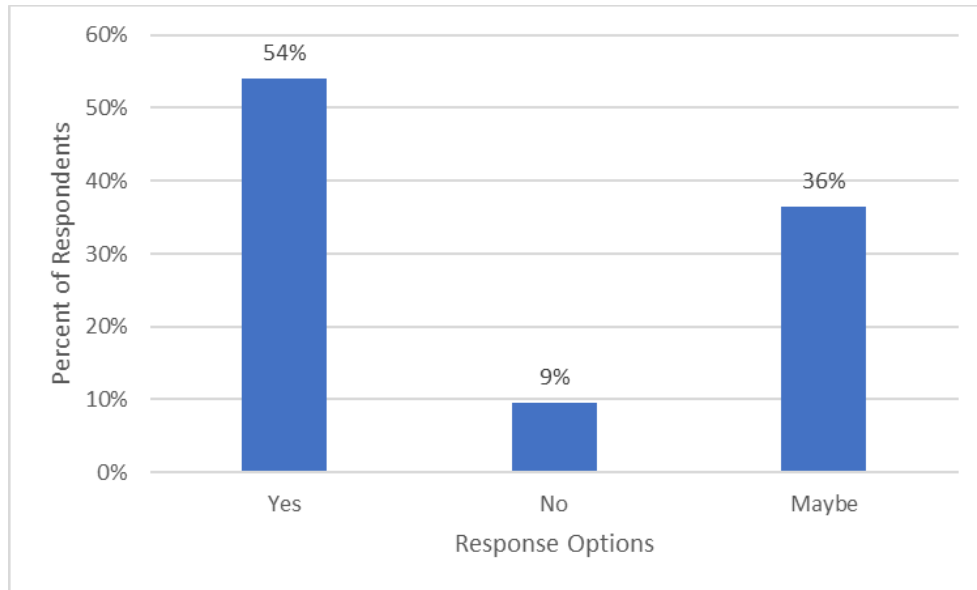


Figure 34. Responses Indicating Whether 360-degree Feedback Would Provide Better Supplemental Data within the Performance Evaluation System

Question 42. I believe 360-degree feedback would provide better overall evaluative feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

Despite the support for FITREPs shown in the previous questions, 56% of respondents still felt that 360-degree feedback would be better for evaluative feedback than a FITREP. The response distribution is shown in Figure 35.

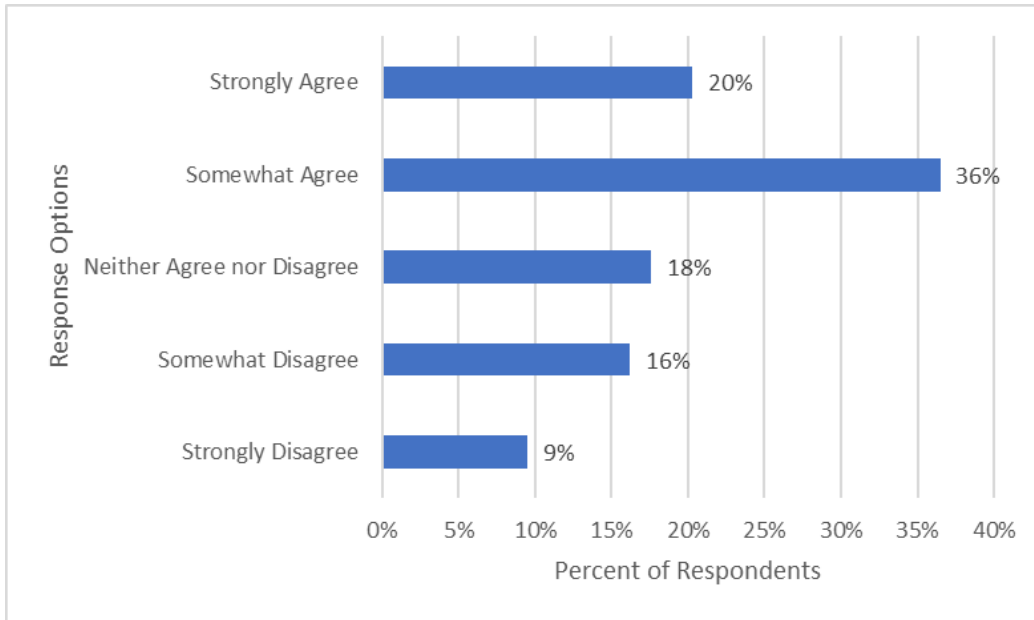


Figure 35. Respondents' Agreement with 360-degree Feedback Providing Better Overall Evaluative Feedback

Question 43. Free form response. Please include any comments or insights you believe would be beneficial during our analysis.

For Question 43, we consolidate and summarize the value-added responses and place them into three categories: thoughts, suggestions, and concerns. The following summary of responses capture those from a single or select respondents and do not represent the views of the entire sample. The responses included the following:

Thoughts:

- Evaluations of others are inherently subjective, but adding more observers will increase the clarity of the information
- 360-degree feedback would reduce instances of RS bias or favoritism
- 360-degree feedback would highlight overlooked leadership or behavioral qualities and deficits that are not always captured by a FITREP
- The measure in which 360-degree feedback is “better” depends on how well the Marine Corps can implement the process at scale

- 360-degree feedback would be a good way to include negative feedback. FITREPs typically include only positively framed comments unless the report is adverse
- There is value in actual leadership billets (not in schools or training) to receive unfiltered feedback from all levels, to identify strengths/weaknesses of an officer's leadership style
- 360-degree feedback would have less value as a performance evaluation tool
- Performance is relative and defined by superiors (i.e., mission, billet, expectations, standards, etc.). Peers and subordinates may not have the proper knowledge to evaluate specific billets and duties. Regardless, there should be an obvious correlation between the ability of an officer to effectively lead and their performance
- 360-degree feedback should only be used if it impacts chances of promotion or command
- 360-degree feedback would be a useful tool to highlight great leaders and identify toxic ones

Suggestions:

- Peers should not evaluate each other
- Subordinates should have a voice during evaluations
- 360-degree feedback should support the officer receiving the feedback by assisting them in understanding how they are perceived, rather than measuring performance
- 360-degree feedback should be used for performance, not just leadership development. It should include a weighted scale where direct supervisors'



feedback holds more weight. The breakout of feedback should be visible to the board (i.e., low rating from direct supervisor, middle rating from other leaders, high rating among peers and subordinates)

- Disclose the officer's billet description prior to soliciting feedback. RS/ROs assign billet descriptions, but those outside of the direct chain may be unaware of what is expected one's position
- Obtain input from the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the MRO
- Use 360-degree feedback as supplemental information to inform the RS and RO
- Subordinates in 360-degree feedback should be subordinate leaders (i.e., platoon sergeant, squad leader, etc.), not the lowest level junior Marines
- 360-degree feedback should be used in conjunction with the FITREP and provided prior to an evaluation to provide opportunity for improvement in advance of an official evaluation
- 360-degree feedback should have a section that requests feedback from the subject named officer (SNO) on the results. This could include: What did the SNO take away from the assessment? Are there things that need to be clarified? Context is important. An officer's response to the feedback would be the most valuable factor in determining future potential as a leader. Do they try to deny or minimize the feedback? Do they own it and provide an even more detailed critique of their own performance?
- The Marine Corps should compare FITREPs with 360-degree feedback – if the evaluations are aligned then the information can be trusted, if they are at odds then further investigation may be required
- 360-degree feedback should be used exclusively for those in command billets



Concerns:

- Feedback from peers may contain bias due to the hierarchical structure and competitive nature of the Marine Corps
- Not all individuals providing feedback will have the required maturity to provide useful critiques or cannot distinguish between personal and professional differences
- Feedback from subordinates could be skewed because of things outside one's control – officers often direct subordinates to carryout seemingly unpleasant tasks without divulging the rationale
- How will 360-degree feedback be communicated to the officer receiving it?
- How will anonymity of feedback be protected to prevent subordinates from fearing retribution?
- There is potential for influence within the command to cause 360-degree feedback to be skewed
- The MRO may be placed in a dilemma of either responding appropriately to RS guidance or appeasing subordinates and peers to receive good ratings
- There is potential for faults in the accession pipeline – if not effectively implemented and maintained could result in disgruntled opinions, like the current “Spear-evals” used
- Too much complexity involved in adding additional variables to the Performance Evaluation System, this would overcomplicate the promotion system
- How would the board weight the responses?



- What if subordinates are saying the opposite of supervisors?
- What controls are in place to prevent peers from turning on each other?
- How do you prevent the evaluation from becoming a popularity contest?
- 360-degree feedback could end up like a Command Climate Survey, where everyone voices their complaints because individuals can remain anonymous
- There is a high likelihood of survey fatigue if this were implemented to scale (even at annual intervals)

2. Summary

In Part III, we observed that 37% of respondents felt that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a performance evaluation tool. This percentage means that more respondents had reservations about its effectiveness for evaluating performance than did not. There were 15% of respondents who answered neutrally, which could result from lack of information on how 360-degree feedback would be implemented. Although respondents did not overwhelmingly agree that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate for evaluative purposes, only 41% of respondents felt as though the FITREP could properly evaluate their performance and leadership. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (53%) felt that 360-degree feedback would assess leadership and performance more effectively.

In this section, we also inquired about respondents' personal experiences with FITREPs. We found that more than 70% of respondents believe that they have received a skewed FITREP from either their RS or RO at some point in their military career. Additionally, of those respondents who felt this way, more than 60% felt that 360-degree feedback would have provided a more accurate picture of their performance. Surprisingly, the majority of respondents felt that the current FITREP RS/RO combination is more objective than the inclusion of multiple superiors, peers, and subordinates would be.



Despite the support for the FITREP, more respondents believed that proper implementation of 360-degree feedback would provide better overall evaluative feedback and would therefore provide better supplemental data within the Performance Evaluation System. This finding suggests that the respondents believe that selection boards would have improved information and could select higher-quality officers.

D. INTEGRATIVE ANALYSIS

In this section, we conduct an analysis across all parts of the survey to extract meaningful, aggregated findings from all survey responses.

1. Cross-Question Analysis

As part of our analysis, we compiled side-by-side data from Questions 12 and 33 to compare respondents' attitudes towards 360-degree feedback as a leadership development tool versus a performance evaluation tool. As shown in Figure 36, respondents concurred with the appropriateness of 360-degree feedback for developmental purposes. However, respondents displayed mixed opinions on whether such a tool would be appropriate for evaluative purposes, with only 38% agreeing.



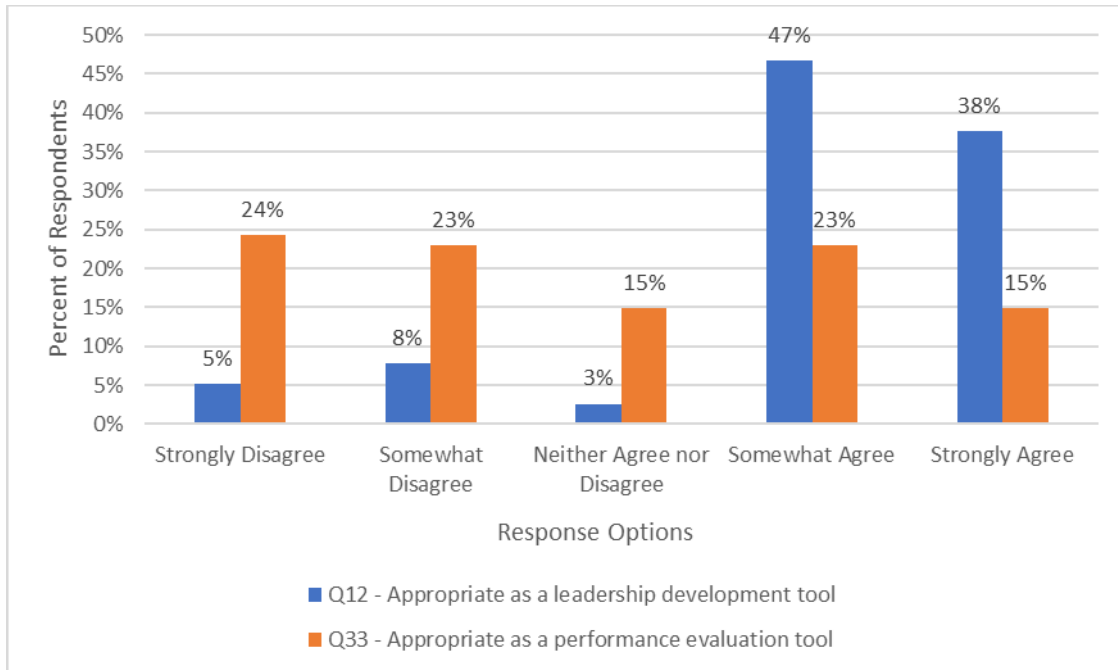


Figure 36. Respondents’ Support for 360-degree Feedback as a Developmental Tool versus Evaluative Tool

Next, we compare Questions 13 and 42 (Figure 37) regarding the quality of developmental and evaluative feedback produced from 360-degree feedback. Surprisingly, we observe a rightward shift for both questions, showing greater support for the use of 360-degree feedback in either capacity. A greater number of respondents strongly agreed with the potential for obtaining higher-quality developmental feedback from 360-degree feedback than from FITREPs. Furthermore, 56% of the respondents felt that 360-degree feedback would provide better overall evaluative feedback than the current evaluative tool (FITREP). These respondents represent an 18% shift in support toward using 360-degree feedback as an evaluative component when compared to the 38% of respondents who initially felt 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a performance evaluation tool (Question 33).

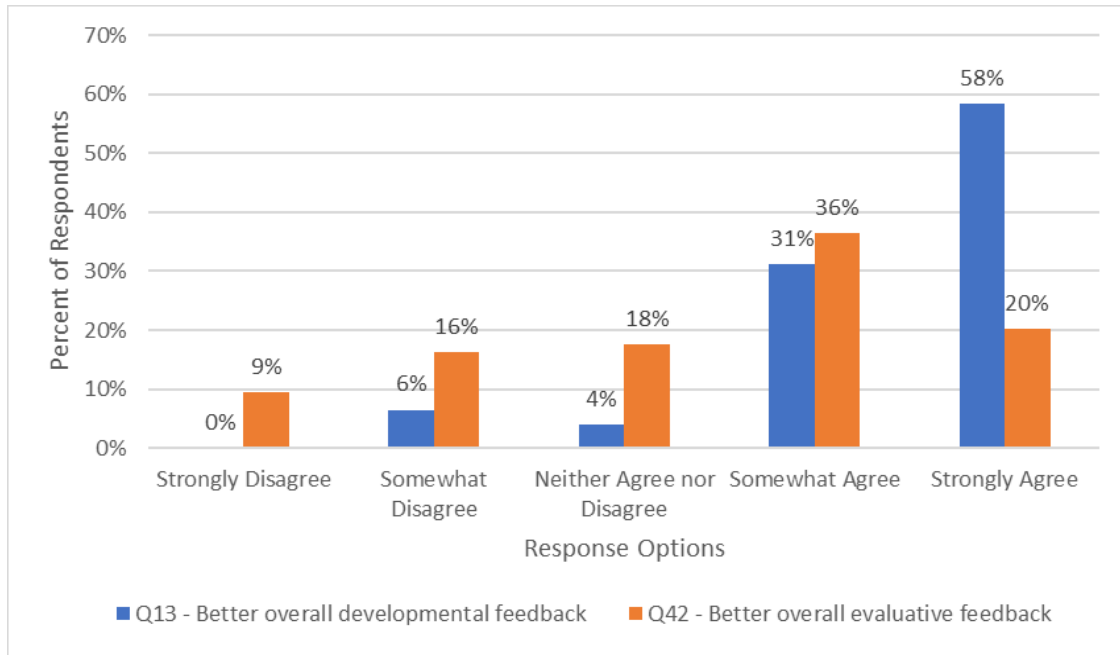


Figure 37. Respondents' Opinions on the Quality of Developmental versus Evaluative Feedback Produced from 360-degree Feedbacks

2. Multivariate Analysis

Before conducting our multivariate analysis, we tested if familiarity was a factor for support of 360-degree feedback. To test whether support for 360-degree feedback differed based on participants' prior knowledge of 360-degree feedback, we compared support variables between participants who indicated prior knowledge of 360-degree feedback with those that had no prior knowledge. Between-subjects *t*-testing for each support variable indicated no statistically significant differences based on prior knowledge. The questions used in the computation of the three support variables are as follows:

Q12. I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a leadership development tool, like counseling or coaching, with no direct impact to the promotion system.

Q13. I think 360-degree feedback would provide better overall developmental feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

Q33. I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a performance evaluation tool, like a Fitness Report, with a direct impact to the promotion system.

Q39. I feel that 360-degree feedback (multi-source feedback tool) would be more effective to properly evaluate my ability to perform and lead in my assigned billet.

Q42. I believe 360-degree feedback would provide better overall evaluative feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

To identify predictors of overall support for 360-degree feedback, we created three composite variables called Support for 360-Developmental, Support for 360-Evaluative, and Overall Support for 360s. Each of these variables was represented by averaged responses to questions from Part II and III of the survey that displayed support for 360-degree feedback. The first variable – Support for 360-Developmental – was computed by averaging the 5-point Likert responses for two questions from Part II (Questions 12 and 13) corresponding to support of 360-degree feedback when used in a developmental capacity. The second variable – Support for 360-Evaluative – was computed similarly by averaging three questions from Part III (Questions 33, 39, and 42) corresponding to support of 360-degree feedback when used in an evaluative capacity. The final variable – Overall Support for 360-degree feedback – was computed using an average of all five questions (Questions 12, 13, 33, 39, and 42) to gauge the respondents’ overall support for 360-degree feedback.

Once we computed the composite support variables, we then calculated the correlation coefficient (Pearson’s r) and statistical significance (p -value) between these support variables and two predictor variables: growth mindset and TIS. Both predictor variables were treated as continuous variables for this analysis. The growth mindset score was calculated as an average score from the three “Kind of Person” implicit scale questions in Part I of the survey, all of which used a 6-point Likert scale. TIS was treated as a continuous variable derived from the ascending numerical value assigned to each response option. The values of the TIS variable are restricted to a narrow range (1 to 20+ years of service) and therefore could result in a suppressed correlation.

Table 4 depicts the r and p -values for both predictors when analyzed against the three composite variables.



As shown in Table 4, growth mindset was significantly associated with support for developmental 360-degree feedback, $r = .30, p = .009$. However, TIS was not significantly associated with support for developmental 360-degree feedback, $r = -.09, p = .447$.

Furthermore, growth mindset was significantly associated with support for evaluative 360-degree feedback, $r = .31, p = .006$. However, TIS was not significantly associated with support for evaluative 360-degree feedback, $r = -.12, p = .313$. We observed a similar pattern between the predictors and support for 360-degree feedback in an evaluative capacity as we did with support in a developmental capacity.

Finally, growth mindset was significantly associated with overall support for 360-degree feedback, $r = .37, p = .001$. Once again, TIS was not significantly associated with overall support for 360-degree feedback, $r = -.14, p = .238$. When overall support was determined by an average of all five questions, we observed the strongest correlation and statistical significance between the indicators and support for 360-degree feedback.

Table 4. Correlation Between Predictors and Support Variables

Predictors	<i>Developmental Support</i>		<i>Evaluative Support</i>		<i>Overall Support</i>	
	Correlation Coefficient (<i>r</i>)	Statistical Significance (<i>p</i>)	Correlation Coefficient (<i>r</i>)	Statistical Significance (<i>p</i>)	Correlation Coefficient (<i>r</i>)	Statistical Significance (<i>p</i>)
Growth Mindset	0.30	0.009	0.31	0.006	0.37	0.001
Time in Service	-0.09	0.447	-0.12	0.313	-0.14	0.238

3. Summary

The popular opinion amongst the survey participants was that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate and effective if implemented within the Marine Corps. More respondents were in favor of the 360-degree feedback concept as a developmental tool. Although, the use of 360-degree feedback for performance evaluation received a substantial amount of support. Regardless, from an overall standpoint, respondents were largely supportive of 360-degree feedback. We found that the growth mindset of respondents was a significant indicator of their support for 360-degree feedback.



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V. DISCUSSION

Based on our literature review from a variety of sources—a combination of scholarly articles, human resources firms, sister-service articles, as well as private sector best practices—the clear conclusion regarding the use of 360-degree feedback is that context matters. Each industry, firm, sector, and even company section has its own standards, metrics, and best practices that facilitate day-to-day operations. The addition of 360-degree feedback would not disrupt the established Marine Corps FITREP evaluation system, rather it would supplement with a needed development tool.

This chapter synthesizes our literature review and results from the survey conducted by stakeholders currently enrolled at NPS. We focus our analysis on three specific elements for successful implementation of a 360-degree feedback model: a) occasions and target groups, b) performance, and c) scheduling.

A. IDEAL OCCASIONS AND TARGETED GROUPS

In this section, we establish a conceptual framework for using the survey responses to identify the ideal occasions to implement 360-degree feedback and the most appropriate groups to receive 360-degree feedback. Lastly, we overlay the results of these two conceptual frameworks to identify and discuss the combination of the occasions and groups. The intent of this analysis and discussion is to distinguish the end users' preferred occasions and target populations, allowing us to form recommendations for the implementation and scaling phases within the Marine Corps.

1. Ideal Occasions

We seek to understand which occasions receive the greatest support from the survey respondents. By analyzing aggregated support from all related questions, we are able to identify the occasions that the Marine Officer respondents indicated as critical for maximizing the benefit gained from the 360-degree feedback for the recipient, the Marines within their realm of influence, and the Marine Corps as a whole. After identifying these critical occasions, we create a conceptual framework as displayed in Figure 38. We



graphically depict occasion and timing components in three dimensions. Seven “occasions” included in our survey are shown as horizontal rows on the y-axis, three “specific timing” aspects (i.e., 1-to-3 months, 3-to-6 months, more than 6 months) are shown vertically as columns on the x-axis, and three “relative timing” aspects (i.e., before, during, after) are shown vertically on the z-axis.

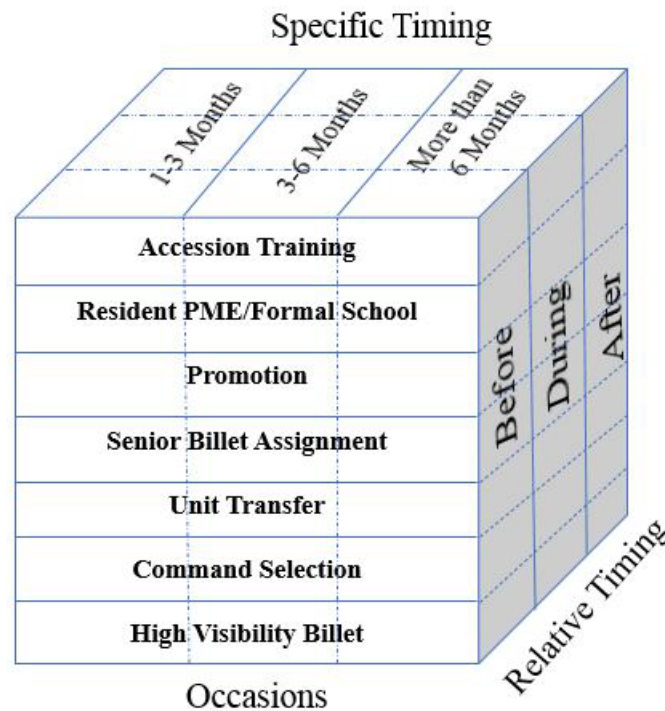


Figure 38. Occasion and Timing Matrix

The matrix in Figure 38 is a representation of survey data, through which we can identify specific occasions and apply a relative timing and a specific timing to each. For example, we could extract and aggregate the percentage of support from respondents for 360-degree feedback conducted 3-to-6 months after accession training and could compare it to the support for all other possible combinations. These percentages of support are displayed in Table 5. We calculate a measure of aggregate support by multiplying the percentages from Questions 15, 16, and 19. The percentages for Question 15 are taken from Table 2 and represent the number of respondents who ranked the specific occasion number

first or second in terms of overall impact. For Question 16 we use the percentage of respondents who agreed (both “Somewhat” and “Strongly”) that the occasion was appropriate. Finally, for Question 19, we use the percentages of those respondents who disagreed with the occasion exempt (inverse percentages of those in Figure 17). We find that “command selection,” “senior billet assignment,” and “promotion” have high aggregate support among survey respondents (Table 5). Additionally, we find that support for “high visibility billet” and “unit transfer” are weighted downward in aggregate support, due to low support on Question 15. Lastly, we find that “Accession training” and “Resident Professional Military Education/Formal School” are clearly the least-supported occasions.

Table 5. Aggregated Support of Respondents by Occasion

<i>RESPONDENT SUPPORT FOR OCCASIONS</i>				
Occasion	Greatest Impact (Q15)	Most Appropriate (Q16)	Opposition for Exemption (Q19)	Aggregated % of Support (Q15*Q16*Q19)
Command Selection	43%	90%	88%	34%
Senior Billet Assignment	45%	66%	88%	26%
Promotion	33%	74%	79%	19%
High Visibility Billet	17%	87%	86%	13%
Unit Transfer	22%	70%	71%	11%
Accession Training	34%	52%	53%	9%
Resident PME/Formal School	5%	32%	39%	1%

Next, we carry forward the aggregated percentages for the top five occasions. Although we have identified the top three, we also analyze the top five occasions for comparison. Once we calculate overall support for each occasion, we then analyze the respondents’ preferred relative timing. As shown in Table 6, most respondents felt that 360-degree feedback should occur before each occasion.



Table 6. Respondents' Preferences for Relative Timing

Occasion	Relative Timing	
	% for Before	% for After
Command Selection	78%	22%
Senior Billet Assignment	87%	13%
Promotion	79%	21%
High Visibility Billet	77%	23%
Unit Transfer	83%	17%

The final step in our process is incorporating the specific timing to fulfill the concept and represent the extraction of one or more sections from the matrix in Figure 38. For the final calculation we use the following equation (percentage displayed in Table 7):

$$(Aggregated \% of Support) \times (\% of Support for Relative Timing [Before]) \times (Specific Timing)$$

In doing so, we attempt to calculate the total percentage of support across all three aspects – Occasion, Relative Timing, and Specific Timing. These final percentages provide us with the top three ideal occasions with respective timing and are bolded in Table 7.

Table 7. Ideal Occasions for 360-degree Feedback with Respective Timing

Occasions	Before		
	1-3 Months	3-6 Months	>6 Months
Command Selection	9.9%	10.7%	5.9%
Senior Billet Assignment	10.2%	9.6%	2.9%
Promotion	8.5%	4.0%	2.7%
High Visibility Billet	4.5%	3.7%	1.6%
Unit Transfer	6.3%	2.4%	0.4%

By applying this framework to our survey responses, we aim to provide a recommendation on ideal occasion and timing. Based on the responses, the top three recommended occasions with respective timing are: a) 3–6 months before taking Command, b) 1–3 months before being assigned to a senior billet (supervisory, deputy, or primary), and c) 1–3 months before being promoted. These three occasions are critical



milestones in a Marine Officer’s career path and encompass those on a command career path and those filling senior staff billets. End-user responses indicate that higher-level supervisory billets or promotion to the next grade should be the primary area of focus.

2. Targeted Groups

For identifying ideal groups to receive 360-degree feedback, we employ a similar conceptual framework. For this example, rows consist of rank groups and columns consist of time in service (TIS) groups and career designation status. Figure 39 displays the components of the matrix design.

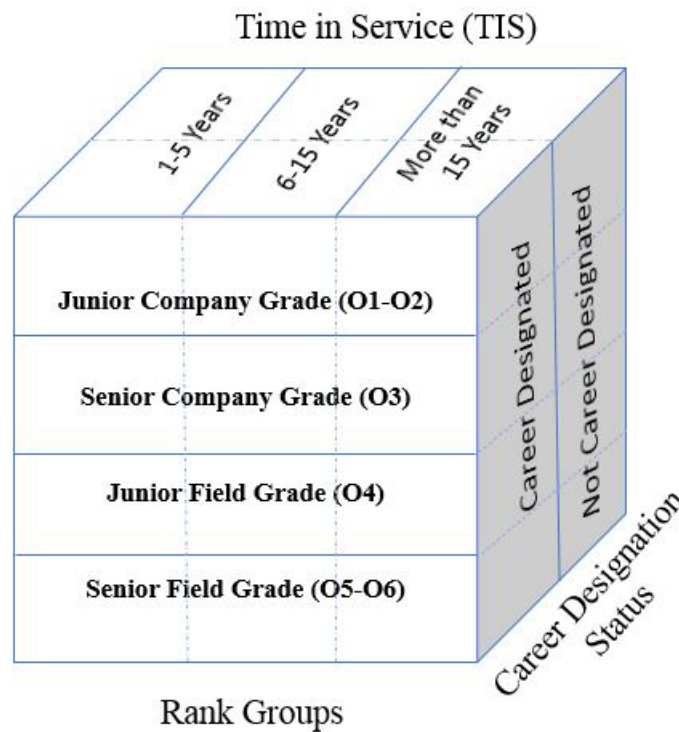


Figure 39. Matrix for Identifying Ideal Rank Groups to Receive 360-degree Feedback

To derive the top three groups that should receive 360-degree feedback, we use the percentages of responses as factors to calculate overall support. As shown in Table 8, we

classify the percentage of responses into three bins: respondents that felt 360-degree feedback would be not useful, respondents who felt it would be slightly to moderately useful, and respondents who felt it would be very to extremely useful. We note that the percentages generally increase as we moved down to the lower ranks, apart from the senior company grade (O3) rank group. Our survey results indicate that respondents feel that 360-degree feedback would be most useful for Captains, followed by Second Lieutenants and First Lieutenants.

Table 8. Respondents’ Perceived Usefulness per Rank Group

Rank Groups	Not Useful	Slightly to Moderately Useful	Very to Extremely Useful	Total
Junior Company Grade (O1-O2)	4%	27%	69%	100%
Senior Company Grade (O3)	0%	25%	75%	100%
Junior Field Grade (O4)	1%	38%	61%	100%
Senior Field Grade (O5-O6)	3%	49%	48%	100%

Next, we assess responses to identify which TIS group would benefit most (shown in Table 9). Once again, we observe a trend where support decreases with seniority. Respondents felt that the junior officers with no more than five years of service would benefit most and that mid-career officers with 6-to-15 years of service would also benefit.

Table 9. Respondents’ Opinions on TIS Group Benefiting Most

Time in Service (TIS)	% of Respondents
Junior Officers (1-5 years)	48%
Mid-Career Officers (6-15 years)	43%
Senior Officers (>15 years)	9%

Finally, we created Table 10, as a matrix table that multiplies the percentages from the “Very to Extremely Useful” column of Table 8 against those in Table 9. This multiplication provides a total percentage for each combination, with the higher percentages indicating the most preferred.



Table 10. Percentages Indicating Support for Rank Group/TIS Combination

Rank Groups	Time in Service (TIS)		
	1-5 years	6-15 years	>15 years
Junior Company Grade (O1-O2)	33%	29%	6%
Senior Company Grade (O3)	36%	32%	7%
Junior Field Grade (O4)	29%	26%	6%
Senior Field Grade (O5-O6)	23%	21%	4%

As mentioned in Chapter IV, 78% of respondents agreed that 360-degree feedback should be used regardless of career designation status. Therefore, for that section of the Matrix in Figure 39, both career-designated and non-career designated would be applicable based upon the consensus of respondents.

Upon completing this analysis, we can identify the top three groups that should receive 360-degree feedback based on the survey data. The data shows that survey respondents felt the three groups that should be prioritized (in order of precedence) are: 1) Captains with minimal TIS, 2) Second Lieutenants and First Lieutenants with minimal TIS, and 3) Captains with 6-to-15 years TIS. All groups are inclusive, regardless of an officer’s career designation status.

3. Overlaying Occasions and Groups

In Sections 1 and 2, we identify the top three occasions with the relative timing for each and we identify the top three groups that should receive priority for 360-degree feedback. We overlap these two analyses to discuss the combination of groups and occasions. Looking at the top three groups, we can generalize all company grade officers with five years or less TIS and senior Captains. Senior Captains can be viewed as Captains with extensive TIS due to prior-enlisted time served or Captains who are approaching the next promotion zone or are selected for Major. This finding coincides with the third ranked occasion – promotion – within our Section 1 analysis. Next, looking at the top two occasions in relation to the group analysis, we can infer that an appropriate group would be company grade officers with less than five years TIS that are being placed in a command or senior staff billet. This means that most Company Commanders would generally meet



these criteria and any junior staff officer advancing to fill a deputy or primary position within a section or directorate would also be a good candidate for 360-degree feedback. There are many combinations that exist within the overlapping analysis, all of which would be appropriate for discussion and prioritization. Our team has collectively decided on our recommendations for priority groups in the initial scaling phases and will present them in our conclusion and recommendations as part of Chapter VI.

B. PERFORMANCE

There are additional considerations when identifying the target population that should receive 360-degree feedback. Part II of the survey asked participants their opinions regarding 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool. Almost universally, participants believed that feedback would be beneficial as a developmental tool, regardless of performance. One of the noteworthy survey findings that deviates from the literature is that survey respondents believe average to below-average performers should receive feedback, or at least be part of the targeted audience.

Literature and best practices discourage the utilization of 360-degree feedback with sub-par performers, reserving it for average to above-average performers. As mentioned by Caruso (2012), using 360-degree feedback on subpar or poor performers has negative impacts on the work unit, whether it be a small or large company. When subpar performers receive 360-degree feedback, an atmosphere of animosity and cliques between the multiple performance groups forms (Caruso, 2012). As an alternative, specifically catered developmental counseling should be implemented in line with industry standards—in this case, the USMC FITREP—to address shortcomings and provide corrective action plans.

C. SCHEDULING

As an alternative course, implementing a successful 360-degree feedback model could follow a recurring or scheduled approach. Survey questions within Part II of the survey asked stakeholders about their preferences for giving and receiving feedback on a recurring or scheduled basis. The results show that stakeholders prefer feedback on a cyclical basis as opposed to timing. This finding is unanimously supported by all sources found in researching this project. Every example of a successful 360-degree feedback



program followed a set schedule that was consistently offset from the performance review schedule. The offset allows for improvement or adjustment between feedback counseling and formal evaluation.

In a military context, this finding means that for 360-degree feedback to be successfully integrated, it should generally follow the existing FITREP schedule for each rank eligible for the assessment. Additionally, offsetting the schedule to a few months prior to the FITREP due dates would facilitate a positive development environment in which participants feel as though there is time to make corrections before their formal evaluation is conducted. This result would also remove the 360-degree feedback process from formal evaluations and, subsequently, the promotion process.



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VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As discussed in Chapter V, three specific areas of focus while implementing 360-degree feedback include: a) occasions and targeted groups, b) scheduling, and c) performance. Within this chapter we provide scaling recommendations based upon our literature review, combined with survey results on viable courses of action. We recommend a single direction be taken for time-based versus occasion-based scaling models. Furthermore, we discuss additional factors that may bring greater granularity to the findings within this thesis.

A. IDEAL OCCASIONS AND TARGETED GROUPS

Regarding ideal occasions and targeted groups for conducting 360-degree feedback, we identify two different scaling recommendations. The first recommendation is occasion-based (i.e., coinciding with FITREPs and/or career milestones); the second recommendation is time-based (i.e., recurring or cyclical). Either scaling solution should be beneficial independently, however, we do not recommend implementing a combination. Part of the purpose of scaling is to reduce or control the amount of survey fatigue at the individual level, which both options do in isolation. Combining the two would directly eliminate that benefit and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of the program. Our research indicates that the ideal targeted group for 360-degree feedback would be Marines with a time in service between 5 years and 15 years.

An occasion-based scaling solution could apply to Marines prior to promotion in either rank or billet, specifically to an increased leadership role as a commander or a staff role. Based upon our survey results and literature review, we recommend 360-degree feedback be presented to a recipient 3-to-6 months prior to the occasion. For example, if a Marine Officer expects to become a Company Commander in December, then he or she should receive 360-degree feedback not later than September (three months prior). The largest impact to the force with this option is more relevant surveys, less frequent feedback with the potential for more beneficial responses, and a decrease in survey fatigue.



As an alternative recommendation, HQMC could publish a schedule and every eligible Marine Officer could receive 360-degree feedback at that time, comparable to the fitness report schedule. The schedule will be discussed in more detail in the following subsection.

B. SCHEDULING

Officers are evaluated on a cyclical basis, and it is beneficial to development for corresponding improvement feedback to occur on a scheduled basis as well. The majority of survey respondents agreed that it is beneficial to provide or receive feedback on a cyclical basis. Within our survey, we asked respondents to select from six options in which 360-degree feedback is appropriate. The top three responses garnered the greatest value with occasion-specific (i.e., promotion, change in billet, etc.) at 62%, self-directed at 61%, and on a recurring or cyclical basis at 57% of respondents.

Second Lieutenants and First Lieutenants receive FITREPs on a semi-annual basis, while Captains and above receive these evaluations annually. A potential 360-degree feedback implementation methodology would be a staggered schedule where officers receive feedback at the half-way point of their annual FITREP period. Though 360-degree feedback may not overlap directly with the 14 attributes of a FITREP, it would provide valuable information to the individual with significant time left in the reporting period to improve performance prior to formal evaluation. For Lieutenants, we recommend their 360-degree feedback be provided annually as well, vice semi-annually to correspond with FITREPs. It is also recommended to split these populations alphabetically, by lineal control number, or by other means as to not overwhelm the force with 360-degree feedback surveys. Reducing the population would lessen the number of surveys Marines would conduct each period, enabling better feedback to the individual. Additionally, the feedback would provide mentors the opportunity to better focus on coaching half of the population at a time. Table 11 depicts the FITREP reporting period end dates and recommended 360-degree feedback report date.



Table 11. Proposed FITREP and 360-degree Feedback Schedule

Rank	Fitness Report Reporting Period End:	Recommended 360-degree Feedback Period End:
Second Lieutenant	January/July	April/October
First Lieutenant	April/October	January/July
Captain	May	November
Major	May	November
Lieutenant Colonel	May	November
Colonel	May	November

C. PERFORMANCE

When tied to relevant criteria, 360-degree feedback with average to above-average performers improves individual and overall organizational performance. A below-average performer should also have the opportunity to request 360-degree feedback, however, a more intensive counseling program with their mentor should be conducted.

Additionally, the results of 360-degree feedback should be tracked over time. Implementing an electronic personal record file to track the results for the recipient over time will produce increasingly positive results or will reinforce the need for more comprehensive counseling and development tools. Such counseling would provide each Marine Officer a full view of their career progression and promote introspection of their own performance, strengths, and weaknesses.

A final recommendation regarding performance is to consider 360-degree feedback for Marine Officers who are passed over for promotion. 360-degree feedback for these individuals would provide valuable information on areas of improvement, prior to them being reconsidered for promotion while in the “above” zone.

D. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research was based upon the analysis of a pilot survey distributed solely to the unrestricted Marine Officer students attending NPS. To gain better insights of the



scalability and implementation of 360-degree feedback, we recommend that additional data be collected from more diverse sample populations across the Marine Corps. This sample population contains a degree of self-selection bias and may not represent the entire unrestricted Marine Officer Corps. The NPS population is unique in that each Marine Officer student is individually selected by one of the three convening education boards and are “proven performers with high career potential” (HQMC, 2019, p. 1-4). Therefore, the feelings and views expressed by this population may differ from other samples across the Marine Corps. This survey served as a beta test to analyze the beliefs and viewpoints of a select group of Marine Corps Officers through ‘end-user’ feedback. Additionally, our goal was determining the validity of the survey questions and the value-added nature of the responses.

Future research would benefit from surveying an individual unit (i.e., I Marine Expeditionary Force, 2d Marine Division, 3d Marine Logistics Group, etc.). This larger sample size would provide more representative data with less selection bias, because the Marine Expeditionary Force is an ideal cross-section of Marine Officers and contains every rank, MOS, ethnicity/race, and gender, all with varying degrees of experience and time in service.

E. CONCLUSION

As the Marine Corps implements a 360-degree feedback model, following the aforementioned best practices should help produce desired performance improvements over time. To ensure desired impacts and implementation strategy are fully understood, 360-degree feedback should be carefully implemented with close coordination between decision makers and end users. If properly executed, we believe the implementation of a 360-degree feedback program within the Marine Corps could significantly improve individual leaders, units, and the Corps of the future.



APPENDIX. SURVEY

360-degree assessment Survey

Start of Block: Instructions and Consent

Thank you for agreeing to complete our survey. We estimate your participation will last 10–15 minutes. The purpose of this project is to explore the Talent Management 2030 (TM2030) concept of 360-degree feedback (also referred to as multi-source feedback) and understand the ideal timing for implementation in a Marine Officer’s career to maximize potential impacts.

Please answer the questions in this questionnaire honestly and to the best of your ability. All responses are anonymous. Information you provide will be statistically summarized with the responses of others and will not be attributable to any single individual. Completion of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Failure to respond to any of the questions will not result in any penalties except possible lack of representation of your views in the results and outcomes.

End of Block: Instructions and Consent

Start of Block: PART I: Demographics

Q1: What is your rank?

- 2ndLt - 1stLt (1)
 - Capt (2)
 - Maj (3)
 - LtCol (4)
 - Col or above (5)
-



Q2: What is your race/ethnicity?

- Caucasian (1)
 - African American (2)
 - Hispanic (3)
 - Asian American (4)
 - Pacific Islander (5)
 - Other (please specify) (6)
-

Q3: What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
-

Q4: What is your age?

- 20 - 25 (1)
- 26 - 30 (2)
- 31 - 35 (3)
- 36 - 40 (4)
- Over 40 (5)



Q5: How many years have you been on active duty (Time in service)?

- 1 - 5 years (1)
 - 6 - 10 years (2)
 - 11 - 15 years (3)
 - 16 - 20 years (4)
 - Over 20 years (5)
-

Q6: On which of the following boards were you most recently selected?

- Command Selection Board (1)
 - Commandant's Career Level Education Board (CCLEB) (2)
 - Commandant's Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board (CPIB) (3)
 - Marine Corps Doctor of Philosophy Programs (PHDP-S/T) (4)
 - Other (please specify): (5) _____
-



Q7: What is your primary military occupational specialty (MOS)? (Please select your occupational field based on the first two digits listed below; ex. for 0402 select '04')

- 01 – Manpower Officer (1)
- 02 – Intelligence Officer (2)
- 03 – Infantry Officer (3)
- 04 – Logistics Officer (4)
- 06 – Communications Officer (5)
- 08 – Field Artillery Officer (6)
- 13 – Combat Engineer Officer (7)
- 17 – Cyberspace Officer (8)
- 18 – Amphibious Assault Vehicle Officer (9)
- 30 – Ground Supply Officer (10)
- 34 – Financial Management Officer (11)
- 44 – Judge Advocate (12)
- 45 – Communication Strategy and Operations Officer (13)
- 58 – Military Police (14)
- 60 – Aviation Maintenance Officer (15)
- 66 – Aviation Supply Officer (16)
- 72 – Aviation Command and Control Officer (17)
- 75 – Pilots and Naval Flight Officers (18)



Q8: Which of the following describes your familiarity with 360-degree feedback (select all that apply)? Note: A definition will be provided in Part II.

- I have received 360-degree feedback (1)
- I have provided feedback for a 360-degree review (2)
- I have learned about 360-degree feedback (3)
- I have heard the term 360-degree feedback (4)
- I have never heard of 360-degree feedback (5)

For the questions on this page, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. There are no right or wrong answers-- just answer according to your beliefs.

Q9: People can always substantially change the kind of person they are.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - disagree (2)
 - Mostly disagree (3)
 - Mostly agree (4)
 - Agree (5)
 - Strongly agree (6)
-



Q10: All people can change even their most basic qualities.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Mostly disagree (3)
 - Mostly agree (4)
 - Agree (5)
 - Strongly agree (6)
-

Q11: Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Mostly disagree (3)
- Mostly agree (4)
- Agree (5)
- Strongly agree (6)

End of Block: PART I: Demographics

Start of Block: PART II: 360-degree Feedback as a Developmental Tool

Concept background: 360-degree (multi-source) feedback is a tool that would allow a Marine Officer to receive feedback from multiple sources – supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Typically, this feedback is solicited by a third-party who summarizes key



themes and talking points and presents them to the feedback recipient without attribution. The goal is to provide a more holistic view of a person's strengths and growth areas -- hence the term 360-degree.

The 360 approach can be compared to a traditional assessment in which ratings or feedback are provided from a single source – typically one's immediate supervisor. The Fitness Report (FitRep) currently used by the U.S. Marine Corps follows a more traditional assessment format with a single rater (the Reporting Senior (RS)) and additional assessments provided the next senior official (Reviewing Officer (RO)). The Marine Corps is exploring the concept of 360-degree feedback as part of the TM2030 initiative.

For the purpose of the questions in this section, please note:

- The questions are only relevant to the Marine Corps' unrestricted Officer population.
- The questions focus on 360-degree feedback used as a leadership development tool, not for performance evaluation purposes.

Therefore, the intended purpose would be for developing better Officers and results from the 360-degree feedback would not have an impact on performance evaluations (Fitness Reports) or the promotion system.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions below; we are interested in your views and attitudes concerning the use of 360-degree feedback in the Marine Corps.

Q12: I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a leadership development tool, like counseling or coaching, with no direct impact to the promotion system.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Strongly agree (5)
-



Q13: I think 360-degree feedback would provide better overall developmental feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q14: Rate how useful you feel 360-degree feedback would be as a leadership development tool at each of the following stages in a Marine Officer's career.

	Not at all useful (1)	Slightly useful (2)	Moderately useful (3)	Very useful (4)	Extremely useful (5)
Junior Company Grade (O1-O2) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Company Grade (O3) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Junior Field Grade (O4) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Field Grade (O5-O6) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q15: Rank the following occasions in a Marine Officer’s career according to the amount of impact you feel 360-degree feedback would have on their leadership development. (Drag answers to order from 1-greatest impact to 7-least impact)

- _____ The accession-training pipeline (OCS, TBS, MOS producing school) (1)
- _____ Resident professional military education (PME) school or other formal school (2)
- _____ Promotion (3)
- _____ Senior billet assignment (Supervisory, Deputy, or Primary) (4)
- _____ Transferring units (PCS, PCA) (5)
- _____ Command selection (6)
- _____ High visibility billet (Recruiting, drill field, instructor duty, etc.) (7)

Q16: If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be appropriate during the following occasions:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Accession training (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resident PME or formal schooling (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promotion (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior billet assignment (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unit transfer (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Command selection (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High visibility billet (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q17: If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [during/after] accession training.

During (1)

After (2)

Q18: If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [before/during/after] resident PME or formal schooling.

Before (1)

During (2)

After (3)

Q19: If given the option, I would recommend the following training occasions be exempt from 360-degree feedback:

	Be exempt from 360-degree assessment?	
	Yes (1)	No (2)
Accession training (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resident PME or formal schooling (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promotion (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior billet assignment (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Unit transfer (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Command selection (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High visibility billet (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20: If used as a leadership development tool, I feel that 360-degree feedback would be more appropriate [before/after] the following occasions:

	Ideal Timing	
	Before (1)	After (2)
Being promoted (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assigning to a senior billet (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transferring units (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking Command (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assigning to a high visibility billet (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q21: When do you feel that 360-degree feedback should be used? (select all that apply)

- On a recurring or cyclical basis (i.e., annually, semi-annually, etc.) (1)
 - Occasion specific (i.e., promotion, change in billet, etc.) (2)
 - At the request of the Commander, RO, or RS (3)
 - At the request of the Marine officer (self directed) (4)
 - Never (5)
 - Other (please specify): (6)
-

Q22: Regardless of your answer on the previous question, please answer the following:

If occasion specific, when do you feel that 360-degree feedback should be used as a development tool? For each occasion (e.g., ‘being promoted’), please indicate a response in both the BEFORE and AFTER columns.

	Before			After		
	1-3 Months (1)	3-6 Months (2)	More than 6 months (3)	1-3 Months (1)	3-6 Months (2)	More than 6 Months (3)
Being Promoted (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assignment to a senior billet (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transferring units (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Taking
Command
(4)

Assignment
to a high
visibility
billet (5)

Q23: If 360-degree feedback was used on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often do you feel it should occur?

- Every three months (quarterly) (1)
- Every six months (semi-annually) (2)
- Every year (annually) (3)
- Every two years (Biennially) (4)
- Every three years (Triennially) (5)

Page Break



Q24: If you were receiving 360-degree feedback on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often would you want to receive it?

- Every three months (quarterly) (1)
 - Every six months (semi-annually) (2)
 - Every year (annually) (3)
 - Every two years (Biennially) (4)
 - Every three years (Triennially) (5)
-

Q25: If you were providing 360-degree feedback for a Marine on a recurring or cyclical basis, how often would be willing to provide it?

- Every three months (quarterly) (1)
 - Every six months (semi-annually) (2)
 - Every year (annually) (3)
 - Every two years (Biennially) (4)
 - Every three years (Triennially) (5)
-



Q26: Do you feel that the Marine Corps should use 360-degree feedback on Marine Officers that have not yet achieved Career Designation?

- Definitely not (1)
 - Probably not (2)
 - No opinion (Neutral) (3)
 - Probably yes (4)
 - Definitely yes (5)
-

Q27: Which of the following groups do you believe would benefit most from 360-degree feedback for developmental purposes?

- Junior officers (1 - 5 years time in service) (1)
 - Mid-Career officers (6 - 15 years time in service) (2)
 - Senior officers (over 15 years time in service) (3)
-

Q28: Do you feel that a Marine Officer's relative value (RV) should play a role in determining their need to receive 360-degree feedback when used as leadership development tool?

- Yes (1)
 - Maybe (2)
 - No (3)
-



Q29: Do you feel that a Marine Officer's placement on the RO's comparative assessment ("Christmas tree" scale) should play a role in determining their need to receive 360-degree feedback when used as leadership development tool?

- Yes (1)
 - Maybe (2)
 - No (3)
-

Q30: If the RO comparative assessment was a determining factor for 360-degree feedback as leadership development tool, which would be an appropriate RO comparative assessment group? (Select all the apply)

- The Eminently Qualified Marine (1)
 - One of the Few Exceptionally Qualified Marines (2)
 - One of the Many Highly Qualified Professionals who Form the Majority of this Grade (3)
 - A Qualified Marine (4)
 - Unsatisfactory (5)
-

Q31: Are there any additional occasions (not previously listed) that would be appropriate for a 360-degree assessment?

- Please enter your responses in the space provided (i.e., When an RO marks "Do Not Concur" on FitRep, etc.) (If none, please enter "None") (1)
-



Q32: Do you have any thoughts on how the relative value (RV) could play a factor in determining who receives 360-degree feedback?

- Please enter your responses in the space provided (If none, please enter "None") (1)
-

End of Block: PART II: 360-degree Feedback as a Developmental Tool

Start of Block: PART III: 360-degree Assessments as an Evaluation Tool

Now, we would like you to consider the potential value of 360-degree feedback as a **performance evaluation tool**, rather than a tool for leadership development.

For the purpose of the questions in this section, please note:

- The questions are only relevant to the Marine Corps' unrestricted Officer population.
- The questions focus on 360-degree feedback used as a performance evaluation tool, not for leadership development purposes.

Therefore, the intended purpose would be supplementing the performance evaluation process and results from the 360-degree feedback would have an impact on performance evaluations (Fitness Reports) or the promotion system.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions below; we are interested in your views and attitudes concerning the use of 360-degree feedback in the Marine Corps.

Q33: I think 360-degree feedback would be appropriate as a performance evaluation tool, like a Fitness Report, with a direct impact to the promotion system.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)
-



Q34: Have you ever experienced a time in your career that you felt your FitRep may have been skewed (positively or negatively) based on a lack of direct or meaningful observation by the Reporting Senior (RS)?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Prefer not to answer (3)
-

Q35: Have you ever experienced a time in your career that you felt your FitRep may have been skewed (positively or negatively) based on a lack of direct or meaningful observation by the Reviewing Officer (RO)?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Prefer not to answer (3)
-

Q36: Follow-up to previous question: Do you feel that 360-degree feedback (feedback from superiors outside your FitRep reporting chain, peers, and subordinates) may have helped provide a more accurate reflection of your performance?

- Yes (1)
 - Maybe (2)
 - No (3)
 - N/A - I did not answer 'Yes' on the previous question (4)
-



Q37: Do you feel 360-degree feedback could provide more accurate performance metrics for a Marine Officer that was inaccurately rated by their RS or RO?

- Yes (1)
 - Maybe (2)
 - No (3)
-

Q38: I feel that a more traditional assessment (like the FitRep) properly evaluates my ability to perform and lead in my assigned billet.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Strongly agree (5)
-



Q39: I feel that 360-degree feedback (multi-source feedback tool) would be more effective to properly evaluate my ability to perform and lead in my assigned billet.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Strongly agree (5)
-

Q40: I feel that the RS/RO combination (currently used in the FitRep process) would be less subjective than 360-degree feedback from multiple superiors, peers, and subordinates.

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Strongly agree (5)
-



Q41: If implemented correctly, do you feel that 360-degree feedback could provide better supplemental data within the performance evaluation system, allowing boards to select better officers?

- Yes (1)
 - Maybe (2)
 - No (3)
-

Q42: I believe 360-degree feedback would provide better overall evaluative feedback than a single source evaluation (Fitness Report).

- Strongly disagree (1)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Strongly agree (5)
-

Q43: Free form response. Please include any comments or insights you believe would be beneficial during our analysis.

- Please enter your responses in the space provided (If none, please enter "None") (1)
-

End of Block: PART III: 360-degree Assessments as an Evaluation Tool



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