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Angela Holcombe Walker
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STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING FEMALE NAVY OFFICER RETENTION:

DEPLOYING MOTHERS' PERSPECTIVES

by

Angela Holcombe Walker

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Science and Technology,
and the Department of Human Capital Development
at The University of Southern Mississippi
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August 2017

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING FEMALE NAVY OFFICER RETENTION:
DEPLOYING MOTHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING FEMALE NAVY OFFICER RETENTION: DEPLOYING MOTHERS' PERSPECTIVES

by Angela Holcombe Walker

August 2017

The complexity of the global environment, driven by rapid and profound change, requires a globally dominant fighting force. To adequately protect and defend the security of the United States, the Department of Defense must maintain warfighting superiority through innovation and diversity of thought (SECNAV, 2016; Scoppio, 2012). More than five years have passed since the 2011 Military Leadership Diversity Commission reported to President Obama and members of Congress that “top military leaders are representative neither of the population they serve nor of the forces they lead” (p. xvi). Females are underrepresented among senior military leadership. Increasing the number of female service members adds new competencies and improves the effectiveness of military operations (Egnell, 2013, 2016).

Though women constitute more than half of the U.S. population, women represent only 17.3% of the U.S. military officer corps and a mere 6.7% of the upper most leadership flag ranks of admiral and general (DMDC, 2016a, 2016b; Howden & Meyer, 2011). Research reveals the moral and business case for gender diversity and the advantages of female leadership traits. Barriers to retention include actual and anticipated maternal separation anxiety linked to

children and the general stresses linked to separation from children, family, and household.

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe effective strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces and thereby increasing female officer retention. Human capital theory (Becker, 1962, 1993), diversity management theory (Thomas, 1991), and social role theory (Eagly, 1987) form the theoretical framework explaining the importance of investing in people, effectively managing diversity and inclusion, and exploring gender roles and associated stresses respectively. This study utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis to reveal mothers' experience of leaving a child due to a military deployment. Appreciative inquiry formed the basis of assembling positive perspectives and strategies. Analysis identified themes and strategies to be shared with Navy leadership in an effort to improve female officer retention. Findings revealed role issues for deploying military mothers, the importance of the child's age in creating deployment success, and the criticality of support networks.

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DEDICATION

This journey has been harder than any arduous sea duty I've ever engaged. To my parents who love me unconditionally and always allow me to just be me; you have been the steady backbone my entire life. Thank you for being the primary support network for me and my family. "My cup runneth over" (Psalm 23:5). To my daughter, Sydney, and son, Griffin; you are my greatest joy in life. To my loving husband, Rick, who served his country and the Navy faithfully and honorably for more than twenty-three years; we have spent many days, nights, and months apart over the years of our military service, but I cannot imagine making this journey without you at my side. You are the love of my life. Finally, to my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; I thank Him for the many blessings He has bestowed upon me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CJCS</i>	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
<i>CNO</i>	Chief of Naval Operations
<i>DACOWITS</i>	Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
<i>DoD</i>	Department of Defense
<i>DON</i>	Department of the Navy
<i>DMDC</i>	Defense Military Data Center
<i>DMDCRS</i>	Defense Military Data Center Reporting System
<i>IPA</i>	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
<i>IRB</i>	Institutional Review Board
<i>MLDC</i>	Military Leadership Diversity Commission
<i>ODMEO</i>	Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity
<i>RO</i>	Research Objective
<i>SECNAV</i>	Secretary of the Navy
<i>SSLA</i>	Sea Service Leadership Association
<i>UNSCR</i>	United Nations Security Council Resolution

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

General Martin E. Dempsey, the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the highest-ranking military officer in the United States armed forces, states the following regarding the inclusion of women in the Department of Defense’s “Implementation Guide for the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security”:

When we undercut the contributions of one gender we do so at our own peril ... denying ourselves half the talent, half the resources, half the potential of the population. And as we approach future challenges we must think rather than fight our way through, we need to be able to leverage all of the best thinking out there. (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 2013, p. 1)

This chapter presents an introduction to the research and the importance of increasing female representation in the senior officer ranks of the U.S. armed forces. The chapter includes a presentation of the background, the problem, and the purpose of the research. Sections detailing the significance of the study, research objectives, conceptual framework, limitations, and delimitations follow. The chapter concludes with a summary of the remaining four chapters and segments of the study.

Background

The complexity of the global environment, driven by rapid and profound change, requires a globally dominant fighting force. To adequately protect and defend the security of the United States, the Department of Defense must

maintain warfighting superiority through innovation and diversity of thought (U.S. Secretary of the Navy [SECNAV], 2016; Scoppio, 2012). Dharmapuri (2011) assesses “Gender equality is recognized as a force multiplier in operational planning and execution strategies” (p. 56). Increasing female military opportunity maximizes “the effectiveness of military organizations in the contemporary strategic context” (Egnell, 2013, p. 27). Thus a workforce, both diverse and inclusive, has never been more important to the country than it is today (Greenert, 2012; SECNAV, 2016). To this extent, the military services can no longer afford to exclude women who embody more than half of the American population and therefore more than half the nation’s talents and skills (Carter, 2015). Although women have served in the armed forces indirectly and directly since the founding of the United States, women were limited in promotion opportunities due to various laws. Though laws no longer directly bind opportunity, numerous barriers and challenges for women seeking a military career and eventually senior leadership positions still remain (Military Leadership Diversity Commission [MLDC], 2011). To fill this female leadership gap, the military services must actively recruit, develop, and retain a diversified and innovative force capable of meeting the challenges and solving the problems of the future (Greenert, 2012).

Studies conducted over the last 15 years identify barriers to female officer retention in the military. Though the percentage of female representation within the Navy may not be the least across the four branches of service, the Navy ranks third in the category overall (Defense Military Data Center [DMDC], 2016b;

MLDC, 2011). Studies of enlisted female sailors indicate the anticipation of a sea duty rotation creates uncertainty in reenlistment decisions (Anderson, Halecki, Berndt, & Kelley, 1995; Kelley et al., 2001). Reasons women cite to choose to leave the Navy include inability to achieve work-life balance, competing family obligations, issues, and concerns, and the stress of deploying while leaving children behind (Clifton, 2003; Graham, 2006; S. D. Hosek et al., 2001; Pecenco, 2005). Since 43.7% of women service members are also mothers, reducing potential maternal separation anxiety in anticipation of required military career deployments may prove to increase their decision to remain on active duty (Defense Military Data Center Reporting System [DMDCRS], 2016a; Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, & Harris, 1994; Ritchie, 2001).

Problem Statement

Given the importance for the military to stay relevant in the global world and maintain a strategic, operational, and tactical edge, the U.S. military must ensure their Total Force, to include senior leadership, is innovative and diverse of thought (SECNAV, 2016; Scoppio, 2012). More than five years have passed since the March 2011 Military Leadership Diversity Commission's final report to President Obama and members of Congress found that "top military leaders are representative neither of the population they serve nor of the forces they lead" (p. xvi). Low female representation among senior military officers was listed as one of the underrepresented populations.

In 2001, the total U.S. active duty military personnel incorporating the four services (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force) included an officer corps of

217,011 (DMDC, n.d.b). Women officers comprised only 14.7% and a mere 32 or 3.7% of the total officer corps encompassed the upper most leadership flag ranks of admiral and general (DMDC, n.d.a, n.d.b). A decade later from the time of the initial MLDC report, the officer corps totaled 237,401 which included 16.0% women where 69 or 7.1% were female flag officers (DMDC, n.d.a, n.d.b). In 2016, the officer corps stands at 230,700 and includes 17.3% women officers of which 61 or 6.7% represents the female flag ranks, down from a half decade ago (DMDC, 2016a, 2016b).

Since the military is a closed personnel system where promotions are limited to the current ranks among and within each of the services, it is not only important for the services to first recruit a representative population during accession programs, but the services must also strive to retain officers to ensure a more diversified force at the junior, mid-grade, and senior ranks (Lim, Cho, & Curry, 2008; MLDC, 2011). Retention identifies as a critical component in maintaining the right diversity; however, an average of 83% of military personnel chooses to leave the armed forces before they are fully vested at 20 years (Defense Business Board, 2011; Sherrer, 2012). Accordingly, the Department of Defense benefits greatly by improving retention efforts.

According to the MLDC (2011), women, and in particular women officers, have lower retention rates across all services when compared to men. Though male and female officers display similar retention rates during the first three years of service, the rates diverge over time with separation rates for women officers increasing. By the tenth year of service, the average cumulative

continuation rates percentage point difference between men and women for the four services was 16.25. Consequently increasing the retention of qualified women who remain competitive at promotion boards is critical to establishing and maintaining a more diversified cadre of senior leaders who will one day lead the military into the future.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe effective strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces. As the population of female service members increases, the need to better understand the dynamics of work-life-family balances and stressors increases (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). With the potential of more women entering military service and the desire to retain them, an increased focus on female specific challenges and needs exists (Kelley, Doane, & Pearson, 2011). Research shows women tend to be more communal, motivated as mentors, and inspired by learning how others have succeeded in the challenging work-life domain (Bensahel, Barno, Kidder, & Sayler, 2015; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli (2003); Kraft, 2010; Parker & Kram, 1993; Phd in Parenting, 2012; Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). This study collected data from active duty Navy officer mothers who completed long-term deployments.

Significance of the Study

Current research, such as Government Accountability Office reports, Department of Defense Status of Forces Surveys, and RAND Corporation studies, represent generally quantitative results and therefore are limited in

context to explain why women officers decide to leave military service (Cambest, 2016; "Findings from the status of forces surveys," 2016; RAND Corporation, n.d.; U.S. Government Accountability Office, n.d.). A qualitative study explains and describes behavior and outlooks (Creswell, 2003). This qualitative study adds to the body of knowledge by examining an aspect of the challenging environmental context impacting female retention then determining strategies that may help women choose to remain in the military. This study seeks to improve female officer retention by encouraging women officers to overcome the fears of a long-term separation from the perspective of the family unit. Successful strategies and outcomes identified will be shared with Navy leadership in an effort to improve female officer retention.

Books, brochures, manuals, audio recordings, and guidebooks provide support to service member's spouse, parents, and children, both young in age and teenagers, of what to expect in preparation of and during the phases of a long separation (Kraft, 2010; Leyva, 2009; "Military deployment guide," 2012; "Preparing for deployment," n.d.). Generally, the deploying member is provided a recommended checklist in preparation for deployment. Items on this list typically consist of legal and financial recommendations such as updating one's last will and testament, verifying the spouse has access to adequate finances, ensuring direct deposits and bills process, updating insurance needs, and having a current family care plan (determines who will be responsible for taking care of dependent children) in place ("Documents for a deployed service member's designated family caregiver," 2016).

Research suggests that identifying successful strategies specifically focused on overcoming the challenges military mothers face in preparing for, getting through, and then returning from a long-term separation can benefit the service mother, family, and the military by reducing the stress of the unknown, recommending communication pathways, and potentially increasing retention (Kelley, et al., 2002; Kraft, 2010; Meadows et al., 2016).

Research Objectives

This study will address the following research objectives (RO):

- RO1: Describe the demographic characteristics of the sample in terms of age, rank, total time in service, total number of deployments, type and location of deployment(s), length of deployment(s), time since last deployment, marital status, number and age of children at time of deployment(s), and relationship of guardian during last deployment.
- RO2: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully prepare for a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.
- RO3: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully endure a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.
- RO4: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully reintegrate with children, family, and home upkeep following a long-term deployment.

RO5: Identify positive outcomes resulting from Navy officer mothers' long-term deployments relating to children, family, and home upkeep.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe a set of effective strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces. The conceptual framework of the study graphically illustrates theoretical foundations and connections and flow process of the participants (Navy female officer mothers). Barriers mothers must face in overcoming future challenges of sea duty and deployment obligations in order to make decisions to remain in the service are also depicted (see Figure 1). Barriers to retention include actual and anticipated maternal separation anxiety linked to children and the general stresses associated with separation from children, family, and household (Bensahel et al., 2015; Godwin, 1996; Hewlett, 2007; Hock, McBride, & Gnezda, 1989; Kelley et al., 2011; Kelley et al., 1994; Kelley et al., 2002).

The research engages female Navy officers who have completed a long-term deployment as a mother. The study brings together successful strategies that mothers use to prepare for the deployment, endure the separation, and reintegrate with children, family, and household. Additionally, participants identify positive outcomes and benefits resulting from a long-term separation of the mother from the family unit. The assembled strategies can be used towards improving female officer retention in the Navy.

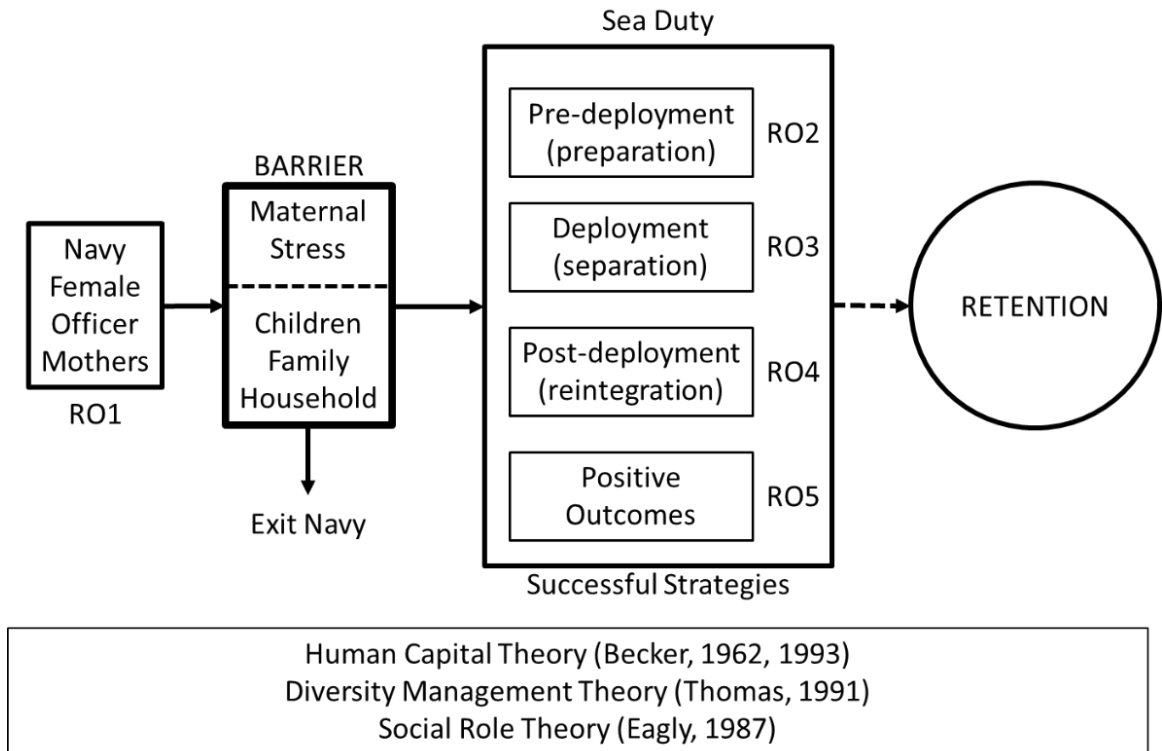


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis for this study’s conceptual framework is portrayed in the graphical depiction in Figure 1. The foundational theories of this study include: human capital theory, diversity management theory, and social role theory. Human capital theory supports investment in people particularly in technologically advanced economies (Becker, 1962, 1993). Diversity management theory suggests success results from embracing diversity holistically and empowering the entire workforce (Thomas, 1991). Social role theory distinguishes gender roles in defining acceptable social behavior and stresses that individuals often act in manners and behaviors that align with expectations of the different gender roles (Eagly, 1987). Each of the theories supports and justifies the flow process represented in the framework.

Limitations

The need to increase women officers at senior military ranks in the U.S. armed forces warrants the necessity to increase female retention at the junior and mid-grade ranks. Consequently, a need for exploratory research to identify successful strategies that results in increased retention exists. A number of notable limitations impact this study. First, since the study examines only successful strategies, social response bias associated with self-reported data may have caused respondents to overestimate the positive aspects (Meadows et al., 2016). In contrast, if participants experienced a particularly challenging deployment or difficult separation, contributors may be biased towards the negative and thus not able to recognize or offer positive aspects of the event. Participants may not have deployed to a combat zone or been exposed to combat trauma, accordingly the stress associated with the deployment may not reflect exposure to bodily harm on a periodic or routine basis. Additionally, the time that transpires between the mother's referenced deployment and the data collection may cloud the respondents' memory and ability to recall pertinent information thereby affecting the results (Applewhite & Mays, 1996).

Despite detailed information provided to participants concerning confidentiality and privacy, interviewees may demonstrate reluctance in providing honest and sincere responses. Although the sampling method enhances the internal validity of the study, the small size of the sample may compromise the external validity. Due to the researcher's active duty military status and rank, participants may provide biased responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell,

2003). Additionally, the inexperience of the researcher with designing probing questions and with the selected methodology may limit the results (Godwin, 1996; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Delimitations

The population identified for the study delimits the research in that the number of women interviewed was small, thus results should be considered exploratory. Since this study only explored the strategies of active duty Navy women officers, results should not be generalized to the reserve component, enlisted Navy women, nor to other branches of the armed forces and National Guard. Other indicators in research identified as having the potential to increase female officer retention was not explored.

The study focuses only on positive aspects of deployments and strategies to overcome a military mother's stress associated with the long-term separation from children, family, and household. Data used in the analysis does not discuss the negative effects of deployment which military mothers should be aware of when making an informed decision regarding a future military career. Since all participants are mothers who deployed and were still on active duty, findings may be considered more biased towards maintaining a military career. A potential exists that participants shared only the most successful deployment strategies to encourage other women to remain in the Navy. Sensitivity enabled the researcher to "grasp meaning and respond intellectually (and emotionally) to what is being said in the data in order to arrive at concepts that are grounded in data" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 41).

Definitions of Key Terms

1. *Cycle of a deployment* – commonly viewed in three phases: pre-deployment preparation, deployment separation, and post-deployment reintegration (Meadows et al., 2016; “Military deployment guide,” 2012).
2. *Deployment* – operational assignment or mobilization of military personnel to serve in various locations away from their duty station typically lasting between six to eight months, but can be as long as a year (Godwin, 1996; Harris & Gortney, 2014; Kelley et al., 2011; Tucker & Kelley, 2009).
3. *Diversity* – “all the different characteristics and attributes of the DoD’s Total Force, which are consistent with our core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve (Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity [ODMEO], 2012, p. 3).
4. *Family readiness* – “the state of being prepared to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service” (Meadows et al., 2016, p. v).
5. *Gender balancing* – “increasing female recruitment and representation” (Egnell, 2016, p. 83).
6. *Gender mainstreaming* – “achieving gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programs in all area and at all levels” (Egnell, 2016, p. 83).

7. *Human capital* – “refers to the knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals.” (Becker, 2002, p. 3).
8. *Human resource development* – “process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development and personal training and development for the purpose of improving performance” (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 4).
9. *Inclusion* – “valuing integrating each individual’s differences into the way an organization functions and makes decisions” (ODMEO, 2012, p. 12).
10. *Maternal separation anxiety* - “an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience: it may be evidenced by expressions of worry, sadness, or guilt” (Hock et al., 1989, p. 794).
11. *Military integration* – a service member’s or family member’s “perceived connectedness to the institution of the military” (Meadows et al., 2016, p. 263).
12. *Military readiness* – “The ability of U.S. military forces to fight and meet the demands of the [National Military Strategy]” (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [CJCS], 2010, p. 3).
13. *Sea duty* – arduous tour of duty performed by sailors assigned to a deployable unit such as a ship, aircraft squadron, or submarine with typical assignments lasting between two to four years (U.S. Department of the Navy [DON], 2007).
14. *Total Force* – “refers to the organizations, units, and individuals that comprise the DoD resources for implementing the National Security Strategy. It

includes DoD Active and Reserve Component military personnel and DoD civilian personnel” (ODMEO, 2012, p. 3); “Active and Reserve Sailors, Marines, Government Civilians, and Contractors” (SECNAV, 2010, para. 2).

Summary

The United States faces new challenges and threats in an increasingly complex and global world. To stay relevant and innovative and meet the needs of the future, the U.S. armed forces must recruit, develop, and retain a workforce skilled, capable, and ready to meet the challenges. Expansion of the talent pool to include women proves critical to developing a diversified and inclusive defense force. A review of the literature supports the requirement for increased talent and human resources to meet the needs of military readiness through diversification and inclusion. Literature expands on the benefits of gender diversity and the role women play as leaders. Challenges and recommended strategies associated with retaining women in the service and thus increasing female military population are reviewed.

The remainder of the study is presented in five chapters, a list of references, and appendixes. Chapter II offers a review and synthesis of the literature and key supportive theories. Chapter III explains the research methodology and study design construct. It includes sections on the study population, sample, pilot study, data collection, confidentiality, and role of the researcher. Chapter IV comprises the results and an analysis of the data. Chapter V contains findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as

suggestions for further research. Finally, the study concludes with a list of references and appendixes.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a review of the literature related to the necessity to increase female officer retention in the U.S. Navy. The first topic presented describes the requirement for a talented military workforce. The literature examines the importance and relevance of military readiness in relation to national security, human capital theory as a construct for investing in people as a resource, and the gender gap as an obstacle to confront to develop and maintain a talented military workforce.

The second topic in the literature review includes the benefits and necessity of a diversified and inclusive military workforce. Definitions of diversity and inclusion build a foundation for the significance of the concepts in work group environments. Effective management of diversity and inclusion reveals diversity management theory towards empowering the total workforce. Moral and strategic arguments for improving diversity in the military and in the Navy attest critical to mission accomplishment. Lastly, gender diversity reviews the integration of women across the force as a critical component towards enhancing innovation.

The third and final topic in the review of the literature presents support for increasing female officer retention in the U.S. military and Navy. Barriers such as sea duty, deployments, military service balanced with motherhood, and spouses' stress provide insights to challenges. Finally, strategies to increase female officer retention include a review of family support services, application of the

Family Military Integration Model, and the impact effective mentoring can have towards helping women decide to remain in the armed forces.

Talented Military Workforce

The President of the United States provides a vision and strategy for addressing the United States' national security concerns and advancing the nation's interests through the National Security Strategy. In the 2015 National Security Strategy, President Obama articulates the need for innovation in protecting U.S. interests in an ever changing and complex world and calls for strengthening the foundation by encouraging talent and diversity in the workforce that protects national security (The White House, 2015). In staffing the all volunteer force of today, the Department of Defense aggressively competes with universities and the private sector in recruiting and retaining quality talent from an ever shrinking pool (Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2006; Stevens; 2012). Modern warfare is both complex and continually evolving and requires a workforce with the right skills and talents to maintain America as having the most advanced and elite fighting force on the globe well into the 21st century (ODMEO, 2012).

The demographics of the American workforce changed dramatically over the last half century as a result of immigration, global competition, the increase of women and minorities entering higher education, and the labor force (Cox, 1994; Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991; Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2006; Thomas, 1991). This demographic shift requires the need to appeal to a wider talent pool particularly in the wake of a projected skills gap aggravated by the aging baby-

boom generation (Becker, 2002; Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2006; Thomas, 1991). “Competitiveness is affected by the need (because of national and cross-national workforce demographic trends) to hire more women, minorities, and foreign nationals” (Cox & Blake, 1991, p. 45-46).

As the world becomes increasingly complex and more globally interconnected, an imperative exists requiring the U.S. armed forces remain ever ready and vigilant in protecting current and future national security challenges (SECNAV, 2016; Scoppio, 2012). The men and women serving and protecting America’s interests must have access to the best technology available, be properly equipped and trained, and possess the right knowledge and skills for effectiveness in assigned roles and responsibilities. But in order for the U.S. armed forces to succeed and overcome future challenges, the military must first represent the best talent the Nation has to offer (ODMEO, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest employer in the world with over 3.2 million employees (Stevens, 2012; Taylor, 2015). Therefore, the importance of taking care of its personnel cannot be understated. With the modernization and recent down-sizing of the U.S. armed forces, the military must recruit and retain the best people with respect to talent and continue to develop effective leaders in order to remain small yet dominant in a complex global security environment (The White House, 2015). The military workforce must continually adapt to new threats in a technically challenging environment while protecting and advancing the Nation’s interests in a persistently evolving battlefield (CJCS, 2015). Thus, the services must focus recruitment efforts on

bringing in quality people to meet the needed skills, qualities, and talents (Sherrer, 2012).

In his 2009 speech at the United States Naval Academy to the graduates and newly commissioned Ensigns and Second Lieutenants in the Navy and Marine Corps respectively, President Barack Obama states:

It's not the strength of our arms or the power of our technology that gives the United States our military dominance. It's our people. It's our Sailors and Marines, Soldiers and Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who perform brilliantly in every mission we give them. (as cited in Stevens, 2012, p. 33)

To win what is often described as a “war for talent,” the U.S. military, like the corporate world, strategically focuses on leveraging the opportunities afforded from diversity (Chief of Naval Operations [CNO], 2012; Hewlett, 2007; McDonnell, 2011; SECNAV, 2016). Retention of top talent which is adaptable and responsive is vital to sustaining mission force readiness (ODMEO, 2012).

Military Readiness

The office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff doctrinally defines *military readiness* as, “the ability of U.S. military forces to fight and meet the demands of the [National Military Strategy]” (CJCS, 2010, p. 3). People are the foundation of readiness and identified as a readiness priority. Future readiness of the armed forces is dependent on a dedicated focus towards recruitment, retention, and development of U.S. national security workforce (CJCS, 2010). “[The United States] must attract the best people ...in order to remain the finest fighting force the world has ever known.... Organizations that embrace myriad backgrounds

and perspectives will attract the best talent and remain ready” (SECNAV, 2016, para. 3). The military repeatedly demonstrates a proactive role in managing organizational transformations such as integrating troops (ex: racial, gender, and sexual orientation), equal pay, and ensuring minorities are in leadership roles, though the integration processes have associated challenges (Goodman et al., 2013, Stevens, 2012; The White House Project, 2009). To meet readiness requirements, a human capital transformation is reviewed (Ngin, 2005).

Human Capital Theory

Thomas Schultz first introduces the theory of *human capital* in the presidential address at the 73rd annual meeting of the American Economic Association in 1960 and later published the theory under the title “Investment in Human Capital” (Gilead, 2009; Schultz, 1961). In the introduction, Schultz (1961) states:

Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, that this capital is in substantial part a product of deliberate investment, that it has grown in Western societies at a much faster rate than conventional (nonhuman) capital, and that its growth may well be the most distinctive feature of the economic system. It has been widely observed that increases in national output have been large compared with the increases of land, man-hours, and physical reproducible capital. Investment in human capital is probably the major explanation for this difference. (p. 1)

Becker, an American economist, popularized the term *human capital* and developed a principal perspective while studying the value of education (Becker, 1993; Marvel, Davis, & Sproul, 2014). Becker (2002) refers to human capital as the “knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals” (p. 3). A half a century after Becker declares education and training as critical and foundational elements to human capital, the core competency reigns as more vital in today’s technologically advanced economies (Becker, 1962, 1992, 1993, 2002). Countries that invest in education and training realize technological advances and increased economic growth (Becker, 1992).

In the United States, investments towards the workforce represent over 70% of the country’s total capital and human capital represents three quarters of the wealth (Becker, 2002). In addition to the importance of physical capital such as resources (e.g., cash, factories, machinery, and inventory), Becker (1962, 1993, 2002) emphasizes the importance of the intangible resources of human capital and considers investment in human capital affording benefits to people, organizations, and societies. Becker (1993) specifically articulates a “strong dependence of modern military technology on education and skills” (p.12) as a concern with human capital investments. The establishment of a connection between human capital and economics consequently formulates the theory of investment in human capital (Becker, 1962). Empirical implications indisputably show why organizations should invest in human capital.

Management highly values the human capital principle because it offers justification under opportune return-on-investment to allocate funds towards

employee training, education, and development (Elkeles & Phillips, 2007; Phillips, Stone, & Phillips, 2001). At the strategic level, human capital improves overall organizational performance as a value-added business function (Nafukho, Hairston, & Brooks, 2004; Becker, 2002). At the individual and societal levels, human capital creates improved employee productivity and yields benefits for the society, respectively (Nafukho et al., 2004; Swanson & Holton, 2001). In competing in today's knowledge capital economy, human capital serves as a critical component since its value expects to exceed that of traditionally viewed financial capital (Becker, 2002; Swanson & Holton, 2001). Effective human resource development systems directly link to realized investments in human capital.

Swanson and Holton (2001) define human resource development as a "process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development and personal training and development for the purpose of improving performance" (p. 4). The researchers summarize four key relationships of the model of human capital theory: (a) investment in education and training increases learning outcome, (b) increased learning increases productivity, (c) increased productivity increases earning potential, and (d) linking the previous three relationships results in a greater return-on-investment for the organization.

Swanson and Holton (2001) express the linkage of human capital theory and human resource development.

Human capital theory provides a strong, bottom-line-oriented justification for [human resource development]. It breaks down the barriers that now exist between organizational development approaches that attempts to influence climate and quality of work life, employee assistance, and other employee health and safety areas, and the more conventional training and development arena of [human resource development]. Each area makes its contribution to the organization's long-term effectiveness. (pp. 82-83)

Human capital theory thus informs and cultivates human resource development (Nafukho et al., 2004).

Dychtwald, Erickson, and Morison (2006) present three dimensions of human capital: (a) intellectual capital or the intangible value of people, (b) social capital refers to relationships among people, and (c) emotional capital which represents the feelings and beliefs employees willingly invest towards an organization. Challenging the previous human capital literature and offering a broader and more comprehensive construct of a multidisciplinary and unifying framework, *human capital resources* is proposed and divided into three elements: structure, function, and level of existence (Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, & Maltarich, 2014). Marvel et al. (2014) extends Becker's theory of human capital to business methods of judgment, decision making, and vision.

Breul, Gardner, and Abramson (2004) maintain the top challenge to human capital is developing a workplace that stimulates high performance. Dychtwald, Erickson, and Morison (2006) view human capital that is skilled and committed as a crucial business asset. Organizations tout people as the greatest

resource, thus investments in increasing human capital stand paramount to success and tapping into an underutilized half of the world's population—women (Becker, 1993; The White House Project, 2009). Full gender integration at all levels within the U.S. military, particularly at the executive level, provides enhanced and increased decision-making towards national security (Haring, 2013).

Gender Gap

American women represent the majority of the U.S. population at 50.8% and have outnumbered male student enrollment across colleges and universities for almost three decades earning just under 60% of all undergraduate degrees and 60% of all master's degrees (Bensahel et al., 2015; Warner, 2015). Women embody 47% of the labor force in the United States and hold nearly 52% of all professional-level jobs, yet female representation in private sector top leadership positions such as corporate board members and C-suite positions, law firm partners, and venture capital firm upper positions remains stagnant over the past decade at only 2-20% (Bensahel et al., 2015; Warner, 2015). U.S. studies demonstrate corporate fiscal and decision making advantages when female leadership is leveraged (Eagly, 2007; Haring, 2013; The White House Project, 2009). "In today's military, winning or losing on the battlefield may well depend upon the presence of women" (Harris, 2009, p. 73). Just as corporate America proactively hires women, opportunity exists for the military to tap into the vast underused pool of female talent (Harding, 2013). To unleash existing talent,

Miller and Katz (2002) contend organizations must leverage diversity and create a culture of inclusion to demonstrate high performance.

Diversity and Inclusion

The scope and complexity of globalization increases the need for greater understanding across cultures, religions, beliefs, and experiences. Sherrer (2012) proposes diversity not as a program in itself, but rather a *multi-dimensional process* essentially connected to organizational and individual practices and inherently dependent on acceptance of change. Diversity is not a barrier to be sidestepped but a *fundamental enhancement* and serves as a trait of inclusivity for organizations (Miller & Katz, 2007). A truly inclusive organization embraces diversity as a requisite vice a luxury (Miller & Katz, 2007). Diversity conveys people, recognizing each one's intrinsic potential and maximizing talents to benefit the individual as well as the organization (Sherrer, 2012).

Defining Diversity

An abundance of literature discusses the meaning, benefits, challenges, and management of diversity in both broad and narrow terms (Davidson, 2012; Janssens & Steyaert, 2003; Sherrer, 2012). Example definitions of diversity are listed in Table 1. Sherrer (2012) summarizes various narrow and broad definitions of diversity offered in the literature but argues the proper characterization of diversity derives from each organization's strategic needs thus remains uniquely contingent.

Table 1

Definitions of Diversity

Definition of Diversity	Reference
“Employees differ not just on the basis of race, gender, and ethnicity, but also on a variety of other dimensions such as age, functional and educational backgrounds, tenure with the organization, lifestyles, and geographic origins—just to name a few”	Thomas, 1991, p. xv
“differences in [a group’s] demographic characteristics, cultural identities and ethnicity, and training and expertise”	Hong, Page, & Baumol, 2004, p. 16389
“a greater range of backgrounds, perspectives and approaches to decision making, problem solving, and creativity”	Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2006, p. 30
“the collective, all encompassing mix of human differences and similarities along any given dimension”	Mazur, 2010, p. 7
“all the different characteristics and attributes of the [Department of Defense’s] Total Force, which are consistent with our core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve”	ODMEO, 2012, p. 3
“can include culture, ethnicity, language, religion, ability and disability, education, socioeconomics background, and sexual orientation”	Scoppio, 2012, p. 110

Note. Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO)

Historical and Legal Constructs of Diversity. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 started a diversity revolution (Cross, 2000; Kaplan & Donovan, 2013; McDonald, 2010). Early framework of diversity centers on the passage of laws preventing discrimination. These laws include: the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Age

Discrimination Act of 1967, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Sandoval & Yuengling, 2012).

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 ending racial segregation in the armed forces. In the early 1970's and before the concept of diversity became a conventional concept, the Department of Defense used equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action as the construct for validating diversity (Stevens, 2012). For the most part, the federal government stood at the forefront, compared to the private sector, in abiding by laws and regulations (Sherrer, 2012; Stevens, 2012).

The Secretary of Defense established the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Equal Opportunity in 1994 to address equal opportunity and equal employment opportunity issues and in 2006, the organization was renamed the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO, 2012; Stevens, 2012). Under the provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2009, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, established by Congress to assess and evaluate opportunities afforded to minorities especially within the senior ranks and to make recommendations, furthered diversity efforts within the armed forces (MLDC, 2011; Stevens, 2012). Finally, each of the services has separate diversity policies or visions and separate coordination offices or departments for service specific efforts and goals. From the armed forces' perspective of today, diversity means more than

just doing the right thing or satisfying equal opportunity laws—diversity denotes a mission imperative (ODMEO, 2012; Stevens, 2012; Streeter, 2014).

Diverse Organizations. Diverse groups with broad perspectives and collective problem solving can outperform homogeneous groups and are less likely to fall prey to *groupthink* mentality (Cox, 1994; Cox & Blake, 1991; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Frost, 2014; Haring, 2013; Hewlett, 2007; Hong & Page, 2004; “The White House Project Report,” 2009). *Groupthink* is a phenomenon that describes situations where critical thinking is lacking in homogenous groups due to pressures to conform to the group (Cox & Blake, 1991). Successfully solving complex problems remains best approached from a team that utilizes unique methods and abilities (Eagly & Chin, 2010). Reed (2011) asserts *collective wisdom* results from ideas from a diverse group. Hong and Page (2004) claim diversity wins over ability and argues the differences in a way an individual thinks offers more benefits than individual academic aptitude in problem solving situations. The researchers further deduce organizations making the most of functional diversity will perform well in competitive environments. Diversity boosts an organization’s exposure to a variety of perspectives resulting in creative problem solving techniques (Sherrer, 2012).

Embracing diversity as an opportunity can translate to strategic gains (Davidson, 2012; Thomas, 1991). Organizations must become more diverse in order to maximize ability to adapt to change and excel in innovation (Kaplan & Donovan, 2013; Mazur, 2010). A diverse organization will exhibit a competitive advantage due to unique human capital and high efficiency (Hewlett & Rashid,

2011; Mazer, 2010; Shore et al., 2011). Diverse groups demonstrate enhanced information processing abilities resulting in increases in creativity capacity (Mazur, 2010; Milliken & Martins, 1996). With a broader base of knowledge and experience, a diverse group positively impacts an organization's ability to make decisions, think creatively, and gain a broader perspective (Cox & Blake, 1991; Frost, 2014; Letendre, 2016; Miller & Katz, 2007). With diversity, and thus differences, conflict derives, and in turn opportunities for innovation are realized (Davidson, 2012; Frost, 2014).

Culturally diverse groups identify with different opinions and viewpoints, offering an alternative perspective to a situation or problem (Cox, 1991; Cox & Blake, 1991). Research shows work group effectiveness increases when diversified compared to homogeneous groups (Cox, 1994; Cox & Blake, 1991; Cox et al., 1991). Additionally, the collective intelligence of a group increases with the increased percentage of women members (Haring, 2013). As an example, at the 2016 National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition, the teams placing first through third all included women as members, whereas the remaining non placing teams were male only ("National collegiate cyber defense competition," 2016; Wajsgas, 2016). Miller and Katz (2007) offer two analogies portraying differences as a reflection of diversity produce better or stronger results in citing, from a biology perspective, in-breeding weakens a population, and from a metallurgy perspective, an alloy is stronger and has better qualities compared to a pure metal. Frost (2014) cites Charles Darwin's century old theory of evolution equating selection from differences allows adaptation and

innovation resulting in an increase in competitiveness. Cox and Blake (1991) propose a “‘value-in-diversity hypothesis’—that diversity brings net-added value to organizational processes” (p. 46). The value-in-diversity is also supported from a cultural diversity perspective (Cox, 1994; Cox et al., 1991; Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Defining Inclusion

“If diversity is the ‘What?,’ then inclusion is the ‘How?’” (S. R. Pinnock, personal communication, May 11, 2016). Not only must a company be diverse, but must also effectively manage the diversity (Cox, 1994). Thomas (1991) calls for an end to assimilation and the *melting pot* folklore and recommends companies discard the age old practice of requiring employees to change in order to fit or blend within the organization. Time and energy individuals spend adapting and assimilating causes a loss in creativity thus lowering the overall performance capability of the organization (Thomas, 1991). Employees want to celebrate, experience recognition for differences, and bring uniqueness to organizations (Davidson, 2012; Thomas, 1991). Additionally, leaders must have a sense of cultural maturity and awareness for effectiveness and management of a multicultural setting (Eagly & Chin, 2010). Since “inclusion is the ‘How?,’” inclusion assimilates needs and conditions to maximize potential (S. R. Pinnock, personal communication, May 11, 2016). As in defining diversity, the literature offers various descriptions for the definition of inclusion. Example definitions of inclusion are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Definitions of Inclusion

Definition of Inclusion	Reference
“describes which individuals are allowed to participate and are enabled to contribute fully in the group”	Miller, 1998, p. 151
“a sense of belonging”; “feeling respected, valued and seen for who we are as individuals”	Miller & Katz, 2007, p. 3
“valuing and integrating each individual’s differences into the way an organization functions and makes decisions”	Lim, Cho, & Curry, 2008, p. 23
“the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteem member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness”	Shore et al., 2011, p. 1265
“the degree to which individuals experience treatment from the group that satisfies their need for belongingness and uniqueness”	Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, & Jans, 2014, p. 370
“the extent to which an individual perceives to be an accepted organizational member that is allowed to be himself or herself within the organization”	Jansen, Otten, & van der Zee, 2015, p. 818

Research indicates successful inclusive practices related to job satisfaction, greater potential in shared goals and values between employees and company, and an increase in employee retention (Shore et al., 2011). In a study conducted among public managers in Texas, a majority-minority state where the Caucasian population is less than half the state’s population, findings

indicate structural and policy changes alone do not create a productive workforce (Sabharwal, 2014). Rather, productivity depends on leaders fostering an inclusive workplace environment where individuals are empowered to realize full potential. Inclusion generates tangible advantage (Kaplan & Donovan, 2013). Inclusion represents a journey for an organization and comprises many ups and downs; inclusion portrays a process, not a destination (Miller & Katz, 2007). With any process, proper management depicts a prerequisite for effective execution.

Managing Diversity and Inclusion

Literature supports the positive outcomes of diversity when managed properly (Mazur, 2010). Managing diversity is a “holistic approach to creating [an]...environment that allows all kinds of people to reach their full potential in pursuit of [an organization’s] objectives” (Thomas, 1991, p. 167). A relatively new concept, diversity management, dates back to the civil rights movement (McDonald, 2010). The moral and ethical imperative of managing diversity promotes social responsibility (Cox, 1994). Cross (2000) suggests overcoming discrimination by acknowledging diversity and valuing differences. Davidson (2012) proposes a distinction between a narrow view of managing diversity with traditional human capital aspects and a more expanded frame termed *leveraging difference* which respects the dissimilarities that accompany visionary thought, the task at hand, and overall organizational strategy.

Organizations most operative at creating an atmosphere conducive to maximizing workforce potential has a competitive advantage over those not as accommodating (Cox & Blake, 1991). Organizational climate must be supportive

and appeal to employees with different perspectives using a balanced structure, thus preventing minority views conforming to that of the majority (Cox et al., 1991; Thomas, 1991). Leadership must embrace the vision and purpose of a diversified workforce (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Effective leaders leverage differences and concentrate on generated opportunities as opposed to others who manage diversity and focus on problems created by the differences (Davidson, 2012). Huselid, Becker, and Beatty (2005) propose differentiation as a means of managing strategic workforce performance and thus optimization through a workforce scorecard method. In contrast, not managing diversity properly may lead to decreased performance thus the need to effectively manage a diverse workforce (Cox & Blake, 1991).

Diversity Management Theory

Simply recruiting a workforce of diverse individuals, a Noah's Ark per se, will not result in an inclusive organization (Liswood, 2010). An organization's success "depends on the ability to empower the total work force. In the context of a diverse work force, this circumstance means that the managing of diversity becomes a critical determinant of success" (Thomas, 1991, p. 10). To achieve diversity and inclusion, the entire organization's culture requires change to bring a new perspective on leadership, training, creative processes, solving problems, commitment, trust, values, and management tools (Miller & Katz, 2007). Sabharwal's (2014) research concludes an inherent relationship exists between diversity management and inclusion; both must be present for a resilient workforce. Thomas (1991) calls for increases in talent to balance a global

market, an impending skills gap, and the changing workforce both demographically and internally (e.g., minorities feeling more comfortable about being different). Employers should value diversity and managing it more effectively. Diversity alone remains not enough; although a company claims a diversified talent pool and well trained managers, often managers are not educated or skilled at tapping into the full potential of the human resource (Cox & Blake, 1991; Thomas, 1991).

Responding to the changing demographics and increasing diversity of the U.S. labor pool, various workforce strategies are proposed such as those to attract younger talent, those that tap into the growing number of available mature workers, and those that leverage the increasing number of female employees (Dychtwald et al., 2006; Tapia, 2015). Research reports key majority stakeholders must be part of the diversity efforts for success and to ensure minority members feel included (Jansen et al., 2015). An organization's success requires a commitment to diversity equating an obligation to all workers (Thomas, 1991). Organizations must approach diversification at three levels simultaneously—the traditional individual level, the interpersonal aspect level, and the organizational level of embracing diversity holistically which includes encompassing the organization's structural design (Thomas, 1991). Effective diversity management practices positively impact organizational performance (Sabharwal, 2014).

Linking the literature and showing the evolutionally development of diversity management to modern day, McDonald (2010) describes four

theoretical stages: (a) equal employment opportunity or affirmative action, (b) valuing differences, (c) diversity management, and (d) global diversity management. The first stage represents the outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement. It forms the basis of theories and models such as equality, anti-discrimination laws, and upward mobilization emerging during the equal employment opportunity or affirmative action stage. Stage two theories emphasize the importance of valuing differences from an individual's perspective, in the setting of internal group theory dynamics, and in terms of multiculturalism triggering organizational interventions such as awareness and sensitivity training. Thirdly, the diversity management stage encompasses such theories as organization theory, organizational change, and diversity competency. Finally, stage four theories in global diversity management acknowledge the need for business strategies with a global perspective. To realize the positives of diversity in the context of a military mission, rigorous diversity management becomes a vital component (Lim et al., 2008). To maintain a globally dominant fighting force capable of adapting to continually changing operational requirements, the U.S. armed forces must effectively leverage diversity (ODMEO, 2012).

Diversity in the Military

In 2003, 23 retired and former Department of Defense leaders (four-star generals, chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and secretaries of defense) filed an *amicus curiae* (Latin for "friend of the court") brief to the U.S. Supreme Court related to an affirmative action case (Lim et al., 2008). In the brief, the highly regarded defense leaders stress the importance of a diverse military leadership

cadre to provide for national security. The workforce composition of the U.S. armed forces must better reflect the Nation which it serves (Lim et al., 2008; MLDC, 2011; ODMEQ, 2012; Sherrer, 2012; Stevens, 2012). Additionally, a critical component to mission effectiveness includes a corps of senior military leaders who reflect the demographic composition of the population they lead (Lim et al., 2008; MLDC, 2011). Not only about valuing diversity, the Department of Defense's "Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan" emphasizes "Diversity is a strategic imperative, critical to mission readiness and accomplishment, and a leadership requirement" (ODMEQ, 2012, p. 3).

With the demographics and composition of the American populace shifting as the number of and within minority groups increases, the military can leverage the opportunity the change poses. A moral argument supports the need for a military force that better parallels the demographic composition of the United States. Stevens (2012) provides more substantial and convincing reasons that include the need to (a) compete for the best talent valued throughout the institution, (b) serve as role models for future generations, (c) establish trust with the American people and the countries which we engage, and (d) enhance mission readiness and effectiveness, all of which only a more diversified force can provide. Innovative organizational thinking requires a military force diverse in thought (Scoppio, 2012).

Navy's Diversity Perspective. The U.S. Navy acknowledges the "Total Force is not fully reflective of our nation's populace – in terms of background, education, skills, ideas, etc. This negatively affects [the Navy's] ability to retain a

broad section of the American people” (Navy Personnel Command, n.d., para 1). In 2016, the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, Jr., chief executive officer of the Department of the Navy (encompasses both the Navy and the Marine Corps), released a revised Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement. In the statement, Secretary Mabus articulates:

A diverse and inclusive workforce has never been more important to the Department of the Navy's success. We are stronger, more effective, and more innovative when our workforce reflects our Nation's rich diversity and our workplace environment fosters respect, dignity, and equal opportunity....A diverse Department fosters creativity and fuels innovation.... As we build our force, we must continue to cultivate an engaged, inclusive, and innovative work environment... This environment will empower and encourage each of our Sailors, Marines, Civilians, and Contractor personnel and will ensure that the Department of the Navy continues to grow ever stronger. (SECNAV, 2016, para. 1-4)

In 2012, the then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the most senior officer in the Department of the Navy, released a “Diversity Vision” for the Navy:

To maintain our warfighting edge, it is essential that our people be diverse in experience, background and ideas; personally and professionally ready; and proficient in the operation of their weapons and systems. Diversity is not founded on statistics, percentages, or quotas. Diversity is about achieving peak performance. Our force will draw upon the widest possible

set of talents and backgrounds to maximize our warfighting capability, adapt to address new threats and challenges, and take advantage of new opportunities. The unique personal characteristics and skills of each Sailor and Civilian will continue to add value to our Navy. Our efforts to attain and sustain a force of diverse talent and experience will be an intrinsic part of recruiting, developing, retaining and employing our people.

(CNO, 2012, p. 1)

Although leadership changed, as of 2015 the policy and vision still remains (Richardson, 2015).

Recognizing the imperative nature that maximizing each sailor's and marine's personal readiness directly links to future mission readiness, the Department of the Navy implements initiatives such as the "21st Century Sailor and Marine" to improve resiliency across the fleet (SECNAV, 2013; DON, n.d.). One of the key program areas comprises inclusion whereby the need for experience in global operations and diversity of thought and background amplifies as critical to mission accomplishment (SECNAV, 2013). Of the 30 line items in the "Department of the Navy Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year 2016," one includes fostering a culture of innovation advancing diversity and inclusion in the workforce (DON, 2015). Nonetheless, recruiting the right diversified talent continues as a challenge since only one in four high school graduates meet eligibility to serve in the Navy (Greenert, 2012; Scoppio, 2012). The military services can benefit from a baseline assessment in evaluating the current level of

diversity and inclusion within the organization and then build a plan to transform an aspired end-state.

The Path as a Model. In today's global market, competitive organizations remain high performing, leverage diversity, and embody an inclusive environment. Miller and Katz's (2007) developmental model, The Path, (see Figure 2) identifies the progression of an organization along the pathway from an exclusive organization to an inclusive organization. The model assists leadership in identifying cultural change intervention strategies based on the assessment of the organization's particular stage.

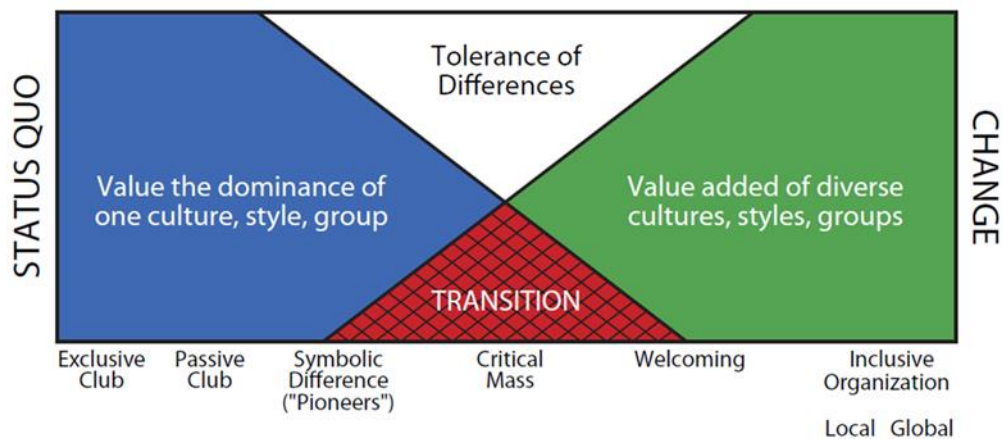


Figure 2. The Path: A Model from Exclusive Club to Inclusive Organization

Note. From "The path from exclusive club to inclusive organization: A developmental process," by F. A. Miller and J. H. Katz (The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group), 2007, which was reprinted with permission. Copyright 1995 by Pfeiffer. Reprinted with permission (Appendix A).

The model proposes an organization must progress in stages of development with the far left the status quo of no change to the highly successful right extreme of an inclusive organization (Miller & Katz, 2007). The five stages of development follow:

1. Moving from status quo through the first stage requires progression through the Exclusive and Passive Clubs. An Exclusive Club demonstrates passive acceptance. Although no specifically exclusive policies exist, the reality is an unwelcoming culture. A Passive Club has policies and programs in place which generally supports the monoculture origins and bias of the majority group.
2. The Symbolic Difference stage reflects organizations still resistant to cultural change but allow individuals with different qualities to assimilate. Pioneers are the first to join who are different and are often viewed as a “token.” Champions follow Pioneers challenging the status quo.
3. The Critical Mass stage describes the point tolerance for difference becomes important and thereby causing the organization to move toward acceptance. The organization welcomes diversity yet lacks the required commitment for cultural change, thus feelings of going back to the way it was before threaten forward motion.
4. The Welcoming stage describes organizations that demonstrate active acceptance rather than mere tolerance for difference.
5. The final Inclusive Organizations stage occurs when organizations embrace diversity and employ it as an added value aspect rather than work around it. An Inclusive Organization encourages individuals of all identity groups to share unique talents and abilities to achieve overall organizational success.

Miller and Katz (2007) further emphasize an organization may have several internal units, functions, or groups evaluated at different stages on The Path at a particular time and cite the U.S. armed forces as an example. Noting General Colin Powell's previous appointment as CJCS, the model assesses African American men at the Welcoming stage. In comparison, women assess at the Symbolic Difference stage, still accomplishing many firsts in the military (Lamothe, 2014; Miller & Katz, 2007; Pellerin, 2016; Tan, 2016).

Gender Diversity in the Military

The MLDC (2011) lists low female representation among senior military officers as one of the underrepresented populations in the U.S. armed forces. The commission contends the military should reflect the demographic configuration of the U.S. population and that the leadership should also echo the populace it leads. According to the 2010 census, women make up a majority of the U.S population at 50.8% (Howden & Meyer, 2011). As of June 2016, the U.S. armed forces active duty component was comprised of 15.8% female officer and enlisted personnel across the four services (DMDC, 2016b). Though the active duty officer corps stands at 18.0% female (O1 - O10), women represent only 6.7% of the upper most leadership flag ranks of admiral and general (see Table 3). Of the 37 total four-star flag officers, only three women serve in this capacity (one Navy admiral who is also the highest ranking African-American woman, and two Air Force generals). There have only been two other four-star female generals with the first promoted in 2008 for a total of five female four-star

flag officers in U.S. military history (Lamothe, 2014; “Highlights in the history of military women,” n.d.).

Table 3

Active Duty Female Officers by Service and Grade

Grade	Army		Air Force		Marine Corps		Navy		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
O-10	0	0.0	2	16.7	0	0.0	1	1.0	3	8.1
O-9	4	8.9	3	7.5	0	0.0	4	11.8	11	8.1
O-8	6	4.7	11	11.2	0	0.0	5	7.5	22	7.0
O-7	8	6.1	5	3.5	1	2.3	11	10.1	25	6.0
O-6	484	11.4	478	14.0	17	2.7	370	12.3	1349	11.9
O-5	1249	13.5	1466	15.2	70	3.7	753	11.6	3538	12.9
O-4	2870	18.3	2559	19.8	225	5.8	1624	15.6	7278	17.0
O-3	5906	19.9	4735	22.2	439	7.0	4061	20.4	15141	19.6
O-2	2407	20.3	1783	25.0	373	10.1	1385	21.7	5948	20.5
O-1	1555	20.2	1575	24.0	250	11.0	1479	21.5	4859	20.7
Total	14489	18.4	12617	20.5	1375	7.4	9693	18.2	38174	18.0

Note. Data source: Compiled from Defense Military Data Center, Active Duty Master Personnel File,

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil>, June 2016 (DMDC, 2016a, 2016b). Excludes warrant officers, cadets, and midshipmen. O-1 = ensign; O-2 = lieutenant junior grade; O-3 = lieutenant; O-4 = lieutenant commander; O-5 = commander; O-6 = captain; O-7 = rear admiral (lower half); O-8 = rear admiral (upper half); O-9 = vice admiral; O-10 = admiral.

The U.S. National Military Strategy calls for the integration of women across the force as a critical component towards enhancing innovation and the country’s warfighting capability (CJCS, 2015). Letendre (2016) asserts the need for gender diverse combat units to dominate the future battlefield of robotics, advanced technology, and autonomous systems. Lucas and Segal (2012) claim the contributions of women and minorities have a tendency to not be appreciated in current society. Scoppio (2012) statistics show only 28% of 17-24-year-olds

are eligible for military service creating a business case to expand the recruitment pool. Therefore, the services should look to draw on the exceptional talents of women.

On March 8, 2016, in a message to all of the Department of Defense celebrating International Women's Day, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter (2016) announces:

The Department of Defense must continue to be open and inclusive as we strive to bring in America's best talent, including from our extraordinary community of women, who make up more than 50 percent of the American population. To succeed in our mission of national defense, we cannot afford to cut ourselves off from half the country's talents and skills—we have to take full advantage of every individual who can meet our high standards. (para 2)

The message continues with an appeal to advance the status of women and girls and to use the talents and skills of the entire American population to build the United States' future military force. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta maintain "We cannot deny ourselves half the talent, half the resources, and half the potential of the population" (Clinton & Panetta, 2014, p. ix).

Gender equality is recognized as an operational necessity and *force multiplier* in operational planning, execution strategies, and military efficiency (Dharmapuri, 2011; Egnell, 2016). Egnell (2013) argues,

The complexity of contemporary operations means that soldiers and officers at all levels need good cognitive skills, problem-solving abilities, and a flexible mindset....The addition of women—and preferably in substantial numbers—may well provide a more mature and balanced unit culture. (p. 41)

Egnell (2016) further contends increasing gender perspectives in military organizations is not only the correct approach but also a smart tactic.

Cunningham (2015) argues the business case for fully integrating women includes: increased group collective intelligence, improved team performance, and increased social sensitivity. With the inclusion of women in security missions, studies divulge operational effectiveness improves across three vital facets: improved information gathering and analysis capability, operational credibility, and better force protection (Egnell, 2013, 2016; Dharmapuri, 2011). Increasing the number of female service members adds new competencies and improves the effectiveness of military operations (Egnell, 2013, 2016).

The United Nations and President Obama encourage the inclusion and empowerment of women in decision making as vital change agents supporting national and international security and peace-building operations (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000; The White House, 2011). Hunt and Lute (2016) affirm that “women bring new eyes to old problems because of their differing experience that can yield valuable insights for conflict prevention, stabilization, and peace maintenance” (p. 11). Egnell (2016) recommends military organizations find a balance between *gender balancing* (increasing

female representation) and *gender mainstreaming* (achieving gender equality through legislation, policies, and programs). An exploration of the history of female support and integration into the U.S. armed forces stands relevant to understanding the current and future need for more female service members.

History of Women in the Armed Forces. History of women in the military dates back to the American Revolutionary War of 1775, women functioned in mostly supportive roles until relatively recently (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). The Army Nurse Corps was established in 1901, with the Navy following suite in 1908 (Devilbiss, 1990; “Highlights in the history of military women,” n.d.). With the onset of World War I and the fear there would not be enough men left behind to fill critical shore billets, the Navy Department authorized women in the Naval Reserve as Yeomen and the Marine Corps enlisted women to fill the roles of clerks and telephone operators. Again with the imminent threat of World War II, the War Department predicted a need to fill critical personal shortages once the military male population was mobilized, thus in 1942, women were accepted into the Naval Reserve under the Women Accepted for Volunteer Service (WAVES) program. Other services established similar programs, such as the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), and the Coast Guard’s SPARs (named from the Coast Guard’s motto of “*Semper Paratus – Always Ready*”).

The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 gave women permanent military status to serve in peacetime but set restrictions on the total number in the force and officer corps as well as rank boundaries constraining

promotion opportunities (Bensahel et al., 2015; Devilbiss, 1990). The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), established in 1951, comprised of civilian women and men appointed by the Secretary of Defense” (DACOWITS, n.d.b; Devilbiss, 1990). DACOWITS serves as an advisory committee providing policy recommendations relating to recruitment, retention, employment, and integration of women in the armed forces (DACOWITS, n.d.a). DACOWITS recommendations influence and impact laws and policy changes relating to gender issues. In 1967, the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act was amended by President Johnson and signed into law. Public Law 90-130 afforded women equal promotion and retirement rights, removed the 2% restriction on total female service members, but kept the combat limitations in place (Devilbiss, 1990; Kamarck, 2015).

Opportunity for gender integration accelerated when the male draft ended in 1973, and the military moved to an all volunteer force (Kamarck, 2015; Letendre, 2016). Three years later, military service academies admitted women. In 1978, women were authorized to serve on and be permanently assigned duty to certain categories of noncombatant ships (e.g., food ships, supply ships, and repair vessels). The 1993 repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law allowed women permanent assignment to combat designated ships and aircraft (Burrelli, 2011). Submarine service was authorized for women in 2011 with the first female officer reporting aboard for duty in early 2015 (Beardsley, 2015; Kamarck, 2015).

In January 2013, then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta rescinded the direct ground combat exclusion policy though the services received a three year

period to conduct research and evaluations to request exceptions to the policy (Clinton & Panetta, 2014; Bensahel et al., 2015; Kamarck, 2015). Less than three years later in December 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter opened all combat jobs to women with no exceptions (Carter, 2015; Kamarck, 2015). Changing the law to allow women to serve in traditionally prohibited positions, commands, and occupational specialties signifies a first step in gender equality, but changing the culture of acceptance and the propensity to serve in those roles may continue as a challenge. Women will need to first elect and qualify to serve in those traditional male occupations, second perform to the standards and excel in the job, and finally decide to commit to a military career in order to promote through the ranks before becoming senior leaders in these once closed career fields.

Women as Leaders. Society expects military leaders to exhibit assertive qualities and “take charge” as in the traditional and perceived leadership role most commonly thought of as a masculine trait yet female leaders are also expected to demonstrate nice and likeable qualities (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007b; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Sandberg, 2013). Often referred to as a *double bind*, women in the workplace must balance the stereotypical feminine role of remaining nice and likeable yet exert the masculine role of an assertive leader; however, they are often judged as overly aggressive and not respected. (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007b; Sandberg, 2013). Female leaders exhibit leadership styles that lean towards more democratic, participative, and collaborative qualities compared to their male equivalents (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Chin, 2010).

In what Eagly and Chin (2010) term “contemporary leaders” and modern cultural models of effective leadership, they claim women exhibit characteristics that more closely align to feminine aspects than earlier models. Eagly and Chin (2010) further perceive women as more communal displaying subservient qualities such as kindness, caring, and gentleness. In contrast, men are perceived as agentic.

Literature offers an exploration of the transformational and transactional leadership styles in the context of the female and male leader. The transformational leadership style places emphasis on creating change, empowerment, creativity, and motivation (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007a). Transformational leaders focus on building trust and confidence within the organization and leverage inspiration from a self-role model perspective (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Lopez-Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, & Martos, 2012). The transformational leadership style most closely aligns with the feminine gender characteristics and communal qualities of women.

In contrast, the transactional leadership style involves assertion of authority and facets of command and control (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Transactional leaders value order and structure. Transactional leaders use direction, correction, reward, and punishment to manage subordinates (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). The transactional leadership style most closely aligns with the agentic traits of men.

Eagly & Carli (2003) summarize the changes in leadership theories emerging from authoritative power to the sharing of power in partnership and

collaborative approaches. Flattening of the hierarchical role of the leader paired with encouragement of teamwork and engaged employees allows a modern perspective of a leader to be more coach-like. Modern views of effective leadership align more to those of female communal gender roles (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007a). Women's more democratic and participative qualities suggest strong transformational leadership characteristics. The transformational leadership style surfaces as most effective for contemporary organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2007a; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012; White House Project, 2009). A transformational leadership approach solves contentious issues such as national security and international security matters more successfully (White House Project, 2009). Eagly (2007) reveals contemporary organizations benefit more from female transformational leadership behavior.

With technological advances in space, cyber, and robotics, the battlefield of the future is continuously changing (Letendre, 2016). The battlefield of today looks very different compared to the frontlines of the past and will continue to develop and advance (Egnell, 2013, 2016; Letendre, 2016). Egnell (2013) describes the current battlefield as immensely complex. The traditional "war" of the past has transformed into military engagements of present to include stability operations, counter-insurgency actions, peace operations, asymmetric and irregular warfare, and low-intensity conflict (Egnell, 2013). Desired attributes of future warriors will rely more on technological knowledge and abilities to achieve mission success rather than brute physical strength often credited to successful traditional combat actions (Letendre, 2016). For example, the Israel Defense

Force surmised women soldiers exhibit more focus and attention to detail traits compared to their male counterparts (Letendre, 2016). Consequently, the Israel Defense Force routinely employs female soldiers as unmanned ground vehicles controllers which require assimilation of a complex suite of sensors. Additionally, the process of self-restraint and deliberation the Israel Defense Force female soldiers display prior to the employment of weapons makes them ideal decision-makers in conflict situations where collateral damage or deaths of non-combatants could result. With the justification for women military leaders established, an exploration of female officer retention follows.

Female Officer Retention

While the number of senior women filling top leadership positions in public and private organizations has increased over the last three decades, numbers still remain relatively low and underrepresented (Bensahel et al., 2015; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Lucas & Segal, 2012; MLDC, 2011; Sandberg, 2013). With an average of 83% of military personnel choosing to leave the armed forces before they are fully vested at 20 years, the Department of Defense benefits greatly by improving retention efforts (Defense Business Board, 2011). Retention identifies as a critical component in maintaining the right diversity (Sherrer, 2012).

Although most service members are single when they enter the armed forces, in due course, most marry and have children (Kelley et al., 2001). More than 43.7% of military women have children (DMDCRS, 2016a). With the potential number of women in the military on the rise, an increasing need exists to understand the dynamics influencing decisions to make the Navy a career

especially since, “the role of a sailor and mother are mutually exclusive” (Kelley et al., 2001, p.56).

Deployment and post-deployment stress as well as inside and outside military social role expectations identify as factors impacting a woman’s decision to continue military service (Lancaster et al., 2013). The value offered in retaining trained and experienced female military members equates as invaluable when compared to the cost of training a new service member (Goodman et al., 2013; Meadows et al., 2016). The challenges and successes impacting the family unit directly translate to retention and a successful military career (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016).

Female Officer Retention Barriers

Women service members report challenges of parenthood, disproportionate domestic responsibilities, unsupportive family policies, and extended and irregular deployment schedules (Bensahel et al., 2015). These challenges create stresses in the family unit negatively impacting the decision to remain in the service (Bensahel et al., 2015). Women show a propensity to prematurely leave the military when faced with conflicts between family and career (Harris, 2009; S. D. Hosek et al., 2001). The literature review documents aspects of sea duty hardships, deployment obligations, conflicting roles of military service with motherhood, and spouses’ stress linked to the barriers of female officer retention.

Sea Duty and Deployment. The Navy is unique to the other branches of the service since it requires sailors to rotate between sea and shore duty

assignments as each member progresses through enlistment and career (Kelley et al., 1994; Kelley et al., 2001; Kelley et al., 2002; Tucker & Kelley, 2009). While assigned to sea duty, a sailor expects to face,

- habitually long and hard working hours onboard a ship or submarine or while assigned to an aviation squadron;
- rotational “duty days” or “duty weekends” where one must stay onboard overnight or over the weekend to run the vessel;
- periods ranging from a few days to six weeks underway as “work-ups” during the pre-deployment cycle; and
- the long period away from home port called a *deployment* which typically lasts between six to eight months (Godwin, 1996; Harris & Gortney, 2014; Kelley et al., 2011; Tucker & Kelley, 2009).

Commonly viewed in three or four phases, the cycle of a deployment includes a pre-deployment (preparation) phase, a deployment (separation) phase, and a post-deployment (reintegration) phase which sometimes separates into a post-deployment phase and a reintegration phase (“Deployment readiness,” n.d.; Meadows et al., 2016; “Military deployment guide,” 2012). During the pre-deployment phase, the service member prepares for required military duties and the anticipated absence. The stage consists of training, medical and dental evaluations, operational and family service briefings, financial and legal paperwork, and preparations for preparing family and home for a separation. Next, the deployment phase includes the departure and physical relocation of the unit or service member to the designated place of operation or

assignment and lasts until the unit is redeployed home. Preparations for returning home also occur towards the end of the deployment phase. Finally, the post deployment phase consists of operational debriefings, medical evaluations, and counseling as the service member reintegrates into the community and family life and returns to normal military duties. Support services are available to the service member and family to assist with reintegration adjustments (Meadows et al., 2016; "Military deployment guide," 2012). Military One Source provides a centralized online location for the military community to access policies, articles, information, interactive tools, and counseling services (<http://www.militaryonesource.mil>).

Although a deployment normally has a set length with an established return date, due to unexpected circumstances which could be political, operational, or material related, the unit's deployment can be extended while on station. The Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP) define U.S. Navy ships' schedules which generally includes a 36-month cycle of maintenance, training, deployment, and sustainment and surge phases (Harris & Gortney, 2014). Potential unexpected circumstances with ship rotations can also cause a deployment date shift. In response to the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, deployments and specifically back-to-back deployments occur more frequently compared to before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Harris, 2009; Kelley et al., 2011). Extended deployments, multiple deployments, and combat deployments cause major and unique stressors to which military families must mentally and

emotionally prepare, endure, and overcome (Bensahel et al., 2015; Meadows et al., 2016).

Deployment Challenges

Negative aspects resultant of long-term separations impact families, service members, and in particular, female service members (Meadows et al., 2016). From the family's perspective, military relatives describe deployments and the challenges associated with the long-term separations the deployment brings as one of the most stressful facets of the armed forces community and each family copes in a unique way using different resources and strategies (Meadows et al., 2016; Rosen, Durand, & Martin, 2000). Among the negative aspects of long-term separations impacting the family unit include: mental health issues, substance abuse, marital problems, suicide, and various complications associated with raising and educating children (Chandra, Burns, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2011; Meadows et al., 2016; Willerton, Wadsworth, & Riggs, 2011). Impacting the entire family, the pre-deployment stage presents a stressful time for all with feelings of frustration, guilt, and anxiety (Godwin, 1996; Kraft, 2010). Children, in particular, must endure and overcome stresses and strains of deployments and reunions (Applewhite & Mays, 1996; Chandra, Burns, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2011; DOD, 2010).

From the service member's perspective, events which the sailor, soldier, airman, or marine experiences during a deployment such as hostility, combat, or trauma, may increase an individual's personal stress and thus have negative consequences on his or her mental health existing well past the post-deployment

phase impacting all family members (J. Hosek & Martorell, 2011; Meadows et al., 2016). Godwin (1996) suggests each deployment has an *emotional cost* to the service member and the family unit. *Horizontal stressors* including routine deployments, deployments in response to war, separation from normal support networks, and reuniting with family effect service men and women and particularly single parent families. Child custody issues often plague service members who potentially face loss of custody of children due to deployments and frequent relocations (“Child custody considerations for members of the military,” n.d.; Godwin, 1996). Additionally, deployments add to overall stress levels in marriages (J. Hosek & Martorell, 2011). Stress experienced in pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment periods may impact retention, thus in times of war, studies targeting the reenlistment decisions of service members facing combat deployments qualify as particularly important (Lancaster et al., 2013).

From the female service member’s perspective, in a study of gender differences and deployment stressors among Gulf War I veterans, Vogt, Pless, King, and King (2005) found women report higher levels of overall anxiety in comparison to men. Additionally, women report more exposure to *interpersonal stressors* or stressors associated with social interactions and relationships during deployment (e.g., sexual harassment, maternal guilt, lack of social support from supervisors and peers). The results also show though anxiety levels increased for both men and women regarding concerns about family and relationship disruptions, women report much higher anxiety in their post-deployment phase.

Military mothers report encountering additional challenges from unpredictable deployment schedules (Harris, 2009). Additionally, when adding single parenthood to the challenges of sea duty, single mothers report high levels of depressive symptomatology (Kelley et al., 2002). After returning from a deployment, mothers can experience hurt and confusion when reuniting with children since it often takes time for the child to reacquaint with the parent who was absent for many months (Godwin, 1996). With the apprehension of family and relationships a primary concern of deployed women, mental health trepidations elevate for those returning from a deployment (Vogt et al., 2005). Consequently, studies of enlisted female sailors indicate the anticipation of a sea duty rotation creates uncertainty in reenlistment decisions (Anderson et al., 1995; Kelley et al., 2001). Though negative aspects of long-term deployments reveal far reaching challenges, positive aspects of separations also leave impressions.

Deployment Benefits

From an internal and self-worth perspective, common themes women report as benefits of deploying include: positive self-change, increase in personal and professional maturity, gaining a sense of independence, increased self-esteem, and self-reflection on personal values (e.g., importance of family) (Godwin, 1996). Drawing on strength from experience and upon being interviewed following a deployment, one mother comments “As difficult as my deployment was, it’s one of the things I’m the most proud of in my life....They were the best and worst seven months of my life....I’m a much better mother now” (Kraft, 2010, track 7). From an external perspective, mothers report

children were more independent and husbands continued to engage in the care and upbringing of the children (Godwin, 1996). One mother stated her marriage appeared more secure after completing the deployment.

Godwin's (1996) research reveals deployments may increase women's feelings of integration and belongingness to the military. In a study of 71 deployed Navy mothers compared to a control group of 83 Navy mothers assigned to shore duty, women in the deployment group were more likely to commit to a Navy career and thus indicate intentions to remain in the Navy compared to women in the non-deploying control group (Kelley et al., 2001). Greater dissatisfaction with the military was more often reported by women in the control group as the reason to leave the military. When mothers in the deployment group were asked at the post-deployment interview if they felt more integrated into the Navy, 54% reported positively. Additionally, the mothers who deployed indicated a commitment to a Navy career at both the pre- and post-deployment phases. Women with greater commitment to the Navy may choose to remain for a sea duty rotation. The study associates those who distinguished daily separation from family members with positive benefits for children as more inclined to remain in the military. Furthermore, the study links integration in the military with plans to reenlist.

Godwin's (1996) ethnographic study of a women's reality with military deployment concluded long-term positive aspects of deployments exceed the short-term negative challenges. One mother comments that she felt her children would be stronger as a result of her commitment to serve and deploy for her

country (Goodman et al., 2013). Navy enlisted women indicate their belief that separation during the workday may actually benefit children (Kelley et al., 2001). Beliefs that a child can adapt and benefit from nonmaternal care encompass tested content within the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (Hock et al., 1989; Hock & Schirtzinger, 1989).

Long-term separations present positive aspects impacting other members of the family unit. By supporting their wives' military careers, husbands indicate they too felt a sense of pride and service to the military (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). Although not as strongly held as the previous benefit, some men perceive successfully overcoming challenges such as separation helps in strengthening marriages. Additionally, the stay-at-home dads report forming strong father-child bonds with children in the absence of the wife (Kelley et al., 2011; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). One father states, "It's given me a whole new relationship with my children which I never had before. My kids and I are closer than we've ever been" (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016, p. 75). Deployments often provide extended family members the opportunity to build closer ties to the military child and build stronger family networks (Kelley et al., 2011). As summarized, deployments offer positive and negative aspects to the family unit. Research of military service and in particular, motherhood, follows.

Military Service and Motherhood. Extensive research documents the effects of military service obligations on the dynamics of a traditional family model from the male service member's perspective (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003; Jensen, Lewis, & Xenakis, 1986; Martin, Rosen, & Sparacino,

2000). Research exploring the same from a female service member's perspective is a relatively new approach with less data available investigating a military mother's perception. The percentage of women in the armed forces has increased significantly from just fewer than 2% at the start of the all volunteer force more than 40 years ago to 15.8% active duty (officer and enlisted) in June 2016. (DMDC, 2016b; Godwin, 1996). Executive Order No.10240 (1951) issued by President Truman involuntarily separated women from active duty once they became pregnant or assumed the role of parent (Birgenheier, 1993; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). The Department of Defense changed the policy in 1974, resulting in the Persian Gulf War (Gulf War I) becoming the first official combat event which included military mothers in a deployed status (E. A. Bell, Roth, & Weed, 1998; Birgenheier, 1993; Vogt et al., 2005). With the historic announcement in December 2015 from Secretary of Defense Ash Carter opening all military occupations and positions to women without exception, the number of women in the armed forces has potential to dramatically increase from the current number of 203,970 (15.8%) active duty female personnel (Carter, 2015; DMDC, 2016b; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). The growing population of female service members increases the need to better understand the dynamics of work-life-family balances and stressors. As more women decide to commit to a military career, eventually more women will exist at upper ranks who can serve as mentors and provide counsel to aspiring junior and mid-grade military women (Ritchie, 2001).

With the establishment of the all-volunteer force, the mean age of the active duty component service member increased steadily from 26.1 for men and 23.7 for women in 1973 to 28.7 and 28.0 respectively in 2016 (DMDCRS, 2016b). An increase in average age means military members are more likely to have families (Kelley et al., 2011). Hence, present-day service members compared to previous generations are more likely to have families (Meadows et al., 2016).

The armed forces' move to increase talent by diversifying its ranks will result in a composition change of its military families already reflected in general society (Kelley et al., 2011; Scoppio, 2012). This may include more single parents, military-married-to-military (mil-to-mil), dual-working parents, aging family members in households, same sex marriages and civil unions, and women as the primary breadwinner. The military culture that supports the traditional head-of-the-household husband and father may not meet the current and future needs of female service members (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). An increase in family unit complexity creates the potential for an increase in family related stress complexity and therefore the need to understand and develop appropriate engagement and counseling techniques (Kelley et al., 2011). With the potential of more women entering military service and the desire to retain them, an increased focus on female specific challenges and needs exists.

Female Officer Maternal Stress

Separation from family is a leading cause of stress for active duty, reserve component, and members of the National Guard who often must put military

responsibilities ahead of personal lives (Bensahel et al., 2015; Godwin, 1996; Harris, 2009; Kelley et al., 2011; Kelley et al., 2002; Ritchie, 2001). Military parents undergo stress when they cannot serve as a primary caregiver during separations; this may be particularly more difficult for mothers (Godwin, 1996; Kelley et al., 2011; Kelley et al., 2002; Ritchie, 2001). Women must internally accept and feel comfortable with decisions to remain in the workforce knowing separation from children is tantamount to continuing a career (DeMeis, Hock, & McBride, 1986; Harris, 2009). In addition to the leadership “double bind” described previously, Williams and Dempsey (2014) contend that mothers face an extra “double bind”—being a good worker and putting the job first conflicts with being a good mother and putting the children first.

Southwell and Wadsworth (2016) reveal a more diverse, complex, and non-traditional structure of military women’s families (e.g., dual-military, single-parent, and step-parent) as compared to men’s that possibly leads to more attention required of a woman to attend to family responsibilities. Research shows military women report “greater psychological symptomatology than do military men—a condition that may be intensified by motherhood” (Kelley et al., 2002, p. 200). For military women who traditionally do most of the household labor, and for women who are also mothers and customarily bear primary childcare and nurturing responsibilities, the contemplation of a long separation from family can be intimidating and pose much stress and significant maternal guilt (Becker, 1985; Bensahel et al., 2015; Godwin, 1996; Kraft, 2010; Ritchie, 2001; Tucker & Kelley, 2009; Vogt et al., 2005). Marriage combined with

motherhood results in higher anxiety and stress for mothers when combined with the burdens of career, child-rearing, and family relationships (Kelley et al., 2002).

Tucker and Kelley (2009) establish feelings of maternal guilt and major negative life events link. Research by Hewlett and Rashid (2011) show maternal guilt to be a “critical pull factor” for women in high-demanding, high-pressure jobs and can outweigh the satisfaction gained from the work. Research reveals mothers anticipating an upcoming deployment are three times as likely to indicate the challenges of work-life balance (e.g., Navy career versus motherhood) will keep them from continuing a military vocation (Kelley et al., 2001). The same research suggests a concern regarding the uncertainties of family separation from non-deploying Navy enlisted mothers when the approach of a sea duty rotation nears. Additionally, maternal stress and apprehension associated with separation exists more prevalently in mothers anticipating a deployment than in those who had newly returned (Kelley et al., 1994). Sandberg (2013) suggests “guilt management can be just as important as time management for mothers” (p.137).

In an informal survey of recently post-deployed women, general feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, sadness, fear, and worries of a spouse’s ability to take care of family and household were conveyed prior to deploying while concerns of marital status, changes seen in their children, and condition of the home were relayed upon return to stateside (Godwin, 1996). In both single and married Navy mothers, maternal assessment prior to a deployment correlated to maternal psychosocial adjustment at the post-deployment stage (Kelley et al.,

2011). Reintegration of a recently deployed member to the family unit classifies as a source of apprehension (Kelley et al., 2001). Therefore, maternal guilt is an important an emotional concept impacting military mothers (Tucker & Kelley, 2009). The literature reveals social role theory constructs towards authenticating female and maternal stress.

Social Role Theory

Biddle's (1986) understanding of role theory considers society's aspect in defining how humans behave in ways which are expected and dependent on respective social identities (e.g. husband, mother, or teacher). Biddle further summarizes various theoretical assumptions in role theory to include expectations exist as the primary originator of roles, expectations become cultured over time, and individuals have knowledge and understanding of expectations. Eagly (1987) considers social roles as determinants of sex differences and proposes the difference in behavior between men and women occurs due to the historical division of labor identifying men as the breadwinner and women as the homemaker.

In consideration of social role theory, "expectations are more than beliefs about the attributes of women and men: Many of these expectations are normative in the sense that they describe qualities or behavioral tendencies believed to be desirable for each sex" (Eagly, 1987, p.13). Social role theory also distinguishes gender roles in defining acceptable social behavior of men and women and accentuates individuals often act in ways that align with expectations of the different gender roles (Eagly, 1987, 1997; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly &

Wood, 2009). The regularly observed differences thoroughly documented in literature correspond to gender stereotypes (Eagly, 1987; Koenig & Eagly, 2014; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). Commonly held opinions regarding men and women's behavior and characteristics mirrors external views regarding others and internal views regarding one's self thus creating a self-perpetuating expectancy (Eagly, 1987). Eagly and Wood (2009) further claim accepted gender roles yield gender identities. The internalization of gender roles suggests individuals adopt recognized gender behaviors, attitudes, skills, and characteristics for themselves (Eagly, 1987).

Despite large changes in the occupational roles of women over the last 100 years, a common gender stereotype still describes women as communal and men as agentic (Eagly, 1987, 1997, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007b; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig & Eagly, 2014). In comparison to men, research documents the expectation that women exhibit communal qualities such as: empathetic, expressive, nurturing, caring, submissive, cooperative, and mentoring (Eagly, 1987, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007b; Eagly & Karau, 2002). In contrast, men exhibit more agentic qualities such as: aggressive, assertive, ambitious, forceful, and dominant compared to women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007b; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Role conflict describes the existence of more than one unharmonious expectation of conduct from an individual (Biddle, 1996). Role conflict causes conflicting pressures and increased stress in people and leads to reduced organizational commitment, lower job satisfaction, and increased resignations in

the workplace (Biddle, 1986; Dobрева-Martinova, Villeneuve, Strickland, & Matheson, 2002). Individuals who act contrary to personal values and identity experience undesirable consequences (Shore et al., 2011). In studies of Western societies, increased stress among women associates with role conflict of balancing traditional homemaker with a more modern professional career (Biddle, 1986). In a longitudinal study, DeMeis, Hock, and McBride (1986) record the conflict women often experience when comparing the role of new motherhood with the role of career. Women show a propensity to prematurely leave the military when faced with conflicts between family and career (Harris, 2009; S. D. Hosek et al., 2001). In coping with role conflict, Hall (1972) proposes three types of reactions where the first entails negotiation such to revise the expectations, the second requires altering one's outlook and perception so challenges are viewed more easily achievable, and the third involves a change in one's behavior to improve self-performance. A woman's social identity to her self-understanding as first a woman, wife, or mother can constrain her behavior as a military member and leader (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ely, 1995).

Conflict such as *sexual tension* (feeling uncomfortable working with the opposite gender) arises when women break the sexual contract of leaving the home and further compounds when women enter a traditionally male occupation (E. L. J. E. Bell & Nkomo, 2003). Husbands of military wives report internal conflicts in their non-traditional role of stay-at-home dad with some feeling "emasculated" and disappointment in themselves in not providing the main source of income (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016, p. 76). Additionally, for

husbands who hold tightly to traditional gender role ideologies, contentment in a non-breadwinner status may prove difficult and a challenging factor in the marital relationship adding more stress to the already burdened wife. Women who hold stronger traditional values also have higher maternal separation anxiety (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992).

Maternal Separation Anxiety

Hock, McBride, and Gnezda (1989) define *maternal separation anxiety* as “an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience: it may be evidenced by expressions of worry, sadness, or guilt” (p. 794). Hock and Schirtzinger (1989) summarize maternal separation anxiety’s impact to family homeostasis. In a study of traditional job-related mother-infant separation anxiety, the issue is approached with the belief mothers experience the separation differently than fathers. Mothers’ heightened anxiety regarding separation attributes to the violation of societal norms and expectations. Individual personality, internal biases, and exposed cultural related roles determine the way a mother feels about separation.

Hock, McBride, and Gnezda (1989) further view maternal separation anxiety as a personality disposition rather than a debilitating state of anxiety. In a later longitudinal investigation of working and non-working mothers, correlations of high and low levels of maternal separation anxiety were examined at age 8 months, 3.5 years, and 6 years (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992). Theoretically grounding maternal separation anxiety on attachment theory and object relations theory, separation anxiety is positively associated with both depressive

symptomatology and sex-role traditionalism. Understanding sex-role traditionalism, one must first understand the cultural origins of maternal separation anxiety which links directly to the traditional role of wife and mother.

Mothers with indications of high anxiety compared to low anxiety express feelings of substandard mothers, professing inferiority as a wife, and exhibiting lower self-worth (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992). In particular, observations of “higher levels of depressive symptomatology, more difficulties coping with stress, a more negative internal representation of self, and more traditional sex-role expectations and preferences” (p. 101) exist in high compared to low separation anxiety mothers of entry school age children. More importantly, the study also reveals the age of the child may matter in terms of maternal separation anxiety.

In comparison to traditional job-related separation, military women facing long-term deployments and thus extended periods of separation experience considerable parting anxiety (Kelley et al., 1994). In an ethnographic study of 16 deployed Navy women on ships, for those who were mothers, the difficulty of leaving children was evident with one study participant stating that leaving her baby was the hardest thing she had ever done (Godwin, 1996). Ritchie (2001) concludes separation from younger children causes both men and women the most distress. Single Navy enlisted mothers in a deployment status report higher levels of anxiety as compared to single mothers in a non-deploying status (Kelley et al., 2002). Feelings of maternal stress anxiety are not fixed, but rather change over time as the child grows and women must internally accept how they might

balance career and family responsibilities, especially separations from offspring (DeMeis et al., 1986; Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992).

Spouses' Stress. Southwell and Wadsworth's (2016) interviews with 20 civilian husbands of active duty wives reveal challenges and stress associated with the wives' active duty service. The wives' military schedules were long and irregular preventing the family from establishing a work-life balance. Absences of the wife during training and deployments cause the husband to perform the spouse's household tasks. Additionally, husbands convey several perceptions regarding challenges towards integration into the military community. First, military sponsored activities and support services were tailored to female spouses and thus did not meet male spouse needs. Second, lack of support resources such as support groups for male spouses were commonly identified. Third, husbands indicated a stigma associated with and feelings of isolation from both the military and non-military communities. Female service members and their families require different support services and networks to meet current needs. Since female officers indicate their decisions to remain in the service are powerfully influenced by the presence of a strong and supportive family network, mainly their spouse, any cause or increase in stress to the spouse or support system may jeopardize retention plans (Lince, Walker, Stevens & Sauer, 2011). All of these issues can lead to risks towards female retention in the military (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016).

Female Officer Retention Strategies

The unique requirements of a military career such as frequent relocations, numerous and long-term deployments, exposure to life-threatening situations, and the commitment to put service before self, pose distinct challenges in retaining a trained and quality force (Payne, Huffman, & Tremble, 2004). Since the inception of the all-volunteer force in 1973, the Department of Defense devotes more resources to the recruitment and retention of quality service members. The military spends an average cost per year of \$115,000 for each service member, yet the average military career is less than 10 years long (Blaisure, Saathoff-Wells, Pereira, Wadsworth, & Dombro, 2016; Korb, Rothman, & Hoffman, 2015). Documented family support services, factors associated with the Family Military Integration Model, and mentoring strategies offer a perspective towards growing female officer retention among military ranks.

Family Support Services. Military related separations and associated complications impact the entire family unit, (Chandra, Burns, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2011; Harris, 2009; J. Hosek & Martorell, 2011; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 2011; Meadows et al., 2016; Willerton, Wadsworth, & Riggs, 2011). Accordingly, military readiness organizations offer support services and products to families in preparation for a service member's deployment ("Documents for a deployed service member's designated family caregiver," 2016; Meadows et al., 2016; "Military deployment guide," 2012; Military One Source, n.d.; Rough, 2014). Among these include: counseling services, support groups, pamphlets, guidebooks, and brochures describing the emotional stages of long-term

separations, books for children and teenagers, and legal and financial preparation checklists (e.g., wills, power of attorney, life insurance, emergency financial plan).

Early intervention and counseling type programs focusing on difficulties prove essential to offering coping tactics for all members of the family (Harris, 2009; Kelley, 1994). Military mothers indicate that although informational briefings offered at the pre- and post-deployment stages were helpful towards dispelling the fears of the unknown regarding family expectations, the discussions focus on the traditional model of the husband deploying with the wife managing the household and raising the children (Goodman et al., 2013). Pre- and post-deployment programs and counseling designed to support members of the non-traditional family unit may prove beneficial (Harris, 2009; Kelley et al., 2002; Meadows et al., 2016).

Contrary to the generally accepted belief that the breaking of the mother-child bond as more detrimental to the child than that of the father-child, empirical data shows no difference in adverse effects upon children when comparing the impact of maternal versus paternal separation. (Applewhite & Mays, 1996). Mothers might be reassured to learn the fallacy of this accepted theory, thus reducing some of the guilt felt after a long separation from children (Applewhite & Mays, 1996; Slaughter, 2015). Education and training about the benefits of deployment for women and the family unit may help curb the fears of long-term separations and thus improve retention (Godwin, 1996). Furthermore, support

from friends as well as a spouse signifies a significant underlying factor in determining a mothers' welfare (Kelley et al., 2002).

The act of husbands and partners assuming a greater portion of childrearing and housework opens career opportunities to women (Eagly, 2007; Sandberg, 2013). Mothers who discern reliance on spouses to take care of children express reduced concerns about sea duty (Kelley et al., 2002). Interviews with mothers who have deployed reveal that "planning as much as possible for contingencies makes them feel better about leaving" (Kraft, 2010, track 3). Additionally, military mothers comment positively on post-deployment classes which focus on reintegration into the household and reestablishment of family relationships. The number of pre-deployment activities utilized by families directly relates to reports of higher family well-being and satisfaction with parenting (Meadows et al., 2016). Tailored support to both the service member and family members equates to the most critical factor during the deployment itself and consequential to the long-term family environment (Meadows et al., 2016).

Although military life may be considered a struggle for most families, much can be learned from successful and more experienced service members and families (Kraft, 2010; Meadows et al., 2016). Positive correlations surface between the connectedness of a military family's engagement with other military families, and the retention intentions of a service member with spousal and teenager military commitment (Meadows et al., 2016). Therefore, programs facilitating connectedness in addition to programs addressing the unique

challenges of female service members may prove favorable in improving military integration and thus retention according to the Family Military Integration Model (Harris, 2009; Meadows et al., 2016).

Family Military Integration Model. The family military integration model (Figure 3) builds on the premise families are foundational to providing the support a member needs for continued military service (Meadows et al., 2016). The model includes four categorical factors of community, economic, military, and psychosocial and expresses interrelations and ability to influence family members' military integration. The factors "shape family members' interpretation of the deployment, which then shapes [personal] military integration. Military integration is operationalized as individuals' military satisfaction, commitment, and retention intentions (i.e. desire [for the service member] to stay in active duty)" (Meadows et al., 2016. p. 265).

With the positive support of the family military integration model factors, military members may be more likely to decide to continue a military career (Meadows et al., 2016). Unfortunately, extended deployments likely will erode families' ability to cope and thus potentially weaken the family units' military integration. In addition to improving family integration, the importance of mentoring in increasing retention of women becomes evident.

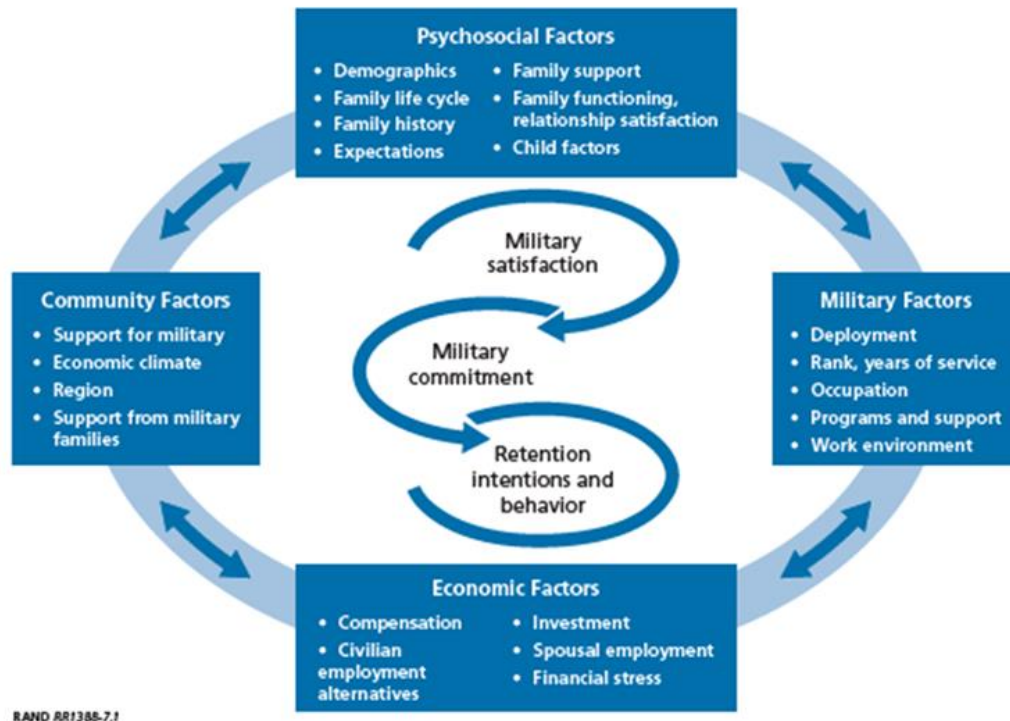


Figure 3. Family Military Integration Model

Note. From “The deployment life study: Longitudinal analysis of military families across the deployment cycle,” by S. O. Meadows et al. (RAND Corporation), 2016. Reprinted with permission (Appendix B).

Mentoring. Mentorship plays a positive role in the development, advancement, and retention of women in both the corporate world as well as the armed forces (Bensahel et al., 2015; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998; Sandberg, 2013). Individuals who have mentors cope with career barriers more successfully than workers who do not (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). Female mentees acquire valuable work-family management strategies by observing women leaders and mentors (Parker & Kram, 1993; Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). Female executive leaders and military women appreciate self-inspiration and recognize the value of serving as a good role model to other women (Bensahel et al., 2015; Lince et al., 2011; Ragins et al., 1998).

Merging a triad construct of social identity theory, relational demography, and similarity-attraction paradigm, benefits of same-demographic relationships emerge (Foley, Linnehan, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2006; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Shore et al., 2011). Research supports demographic similarity documenting members more closely identify with other members who share the same demographics (e.g. gender) on the basis of mutual life experiences and principles (Foley et al., 2006; Ragins, 1997a, 1997b; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Additionally, women respond more favorably regarding supportive behaviors when mentored by a female supervisor (Foley et al., 2006). Furthering the triad concept, Foley et al. (2006) draws a parallel to the mentor-protégé dyad noting same-gender relationships result in greater levels of trust and support.

Eagly (1987) links nurturing activities and helping behaviors with the female gender role. Women's more communal traits such as nurturing and mentoring support expectations in the caring of others, the emotional support towards others, and the assistance toward goal attainment of others as illustrations of documented helping behaviors (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007b). In a study of active duty female Navy officer oceanographers who identify as undecided in making the Navy a career, 82% of respondents report wanting a female mentor (as opposed to wanting a male mentor or that gender did not matter) for career and family balance even though 82% did not yet have children and 59% were currently single (Lince et al., 2011).

After a decade and a half of the United States engaged in war, the personal and work-related stresses of deployments and the increasing length of

deployments translate negatively towards military retention (Harris, 2009; J. Hosek, Kavanagh, & Miller, 2006; J. Hosek & Martorell, 2009). For women, adding the obligation to balance work, family, and motherhood is viewed by many as a barrier too difficult to surmount (Sandberg, 2013; Slaughter, 2015). Stories describe successful women facing and overcoming civilian and military workplace challenges (Biank & Ward, 2013; Hewlett, 2007; Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Holmstedt, 2007; Lemmon, 2015; Sandberg, 2013). Women want to help and inspire others by actively participating in mentoring initiatives and offering creative ideas towards overcoming work-life balance challenges (Bensahel et al., 2015; Sandberg, 2013). By increasing the number of females in upper leadership positions, women will consequently inspire others to consider the military as a future career (Bensahel et al., 2015). Additionally, since men make up the majority of senior ranks and positions in both the military and civilian sectors, males are in the best position to foster development of subordinate personnel; thus men must be a stakeholder in developing a solution (Bensahel et al., 2015; Cross, 2000). With leadership better focusing on the areas of concern in retaining quality women, the overall result should see an increase in the number of women throughout the ranks (Ritchie, 2001).

Summary

This chapter offers a review of the literature supporting the need to increase female officer retention in the U.S. Navy. The requirement for a talented defense workforce to ensure current and future military readiness offers insight for the need to bridge the military's gender gap. Definitions and evolution

of workforce diversity and inclusion provide a foundation and business case for establishing a more diverse and inclusive armed forces. Requirements for greater gender diversity to increase military effectiveness and the strengths women leaders bring to an organization clearly establish the military's need to increase female officer retention.

A review of the literature reveals barriers to female officer retention including sea duty hardships, deployment obligations, conflicting roles of military service with motherhood, and spouses' stress. Strategies for increasing female officer retention include changes to family support services, improvements to military family integration, and female mentoring initiatives.

Chapter III explains the research methodology and study design construct and includes sections on the study population and sample and data collection. Chapter IV comprises the results and an analysis of the data. Chapter V contains conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a review of the study research and the importance of increasing female representation in the senior officer ranks of the U.S. armed forces. The chapter also includes the research objectives. A presentation of the research methodology and study design details the study approach. Participant criteria and selection, instrumentation approach, pilot study, and data collection follow. Issues regarding confidentiality and role of the researcher conclude the chapter.

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe effective and successful strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces. As the population of female service members increases, the need to better understand the dynamics of work-life-family balances and stressors increases (Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016). With the potential of more women entering military service and the desire to retain them, an increased focus on female specific challenges and needs exists (Kelley et al., 2011). Research shows women tend to be more communal, motivated as mentors, and inspired by learning how others have succeeded in the challenging work-life domain (Bensahel et al., 2015; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007b; Parker & Kram, 1993; Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). This study gathered information from active duty Navy officer mothers who successfully completed deployments.

Research Objectives

This study addresses the following research objectives (RO):

- RO1: Describe the demographic characteristics of the sample in terms of age, rank, total time in service, total number of deployments, type and location of deployment(s), length of deployment(s), time since last deployment, marital status, number and age of children at time of deployment(s), and relationship of guardian during last deployment.
- RO2: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully prepare for a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.
- RO3: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully endure a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.
- RO4: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully reintegrate with children, family, and home upkeep following a long-term deployment.
- RO5: Identify positive outcomes resulting from Navy officer mothers' long-term deployments relating to children, family, and home upkeep.

Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative, constructionist research approach is used in this study.

Given (2016) suggests the inductive (rather than deductive) tactic of qualitative

research as an appropriate method when studying the manner people understand their environment. Creswell (2003) recommends use of a qualitative method when understanding behavior and attitudes and to construct rich and thorough details from participants. Corbin and Strauss (2008) state a qualitative study allows the investigator to explore the “inner experience of participants” (p. 12) through discovery rather than testing. Whereas quantitative research often focuses on the “who, what, where, how many, and other descriptive details, qualitative research explores the *why* questions that address various phenomena” (Given, 2016, p. 2). Constructionism grounds people’s view of reality and how one perceives the world with the goal of emphasizing similarities and differences across a particular group (Given, 2016).

This study used a phenomenological research method informed by hermeneutics and idiography called interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). First, phenomenology focuses on unearthing of the *essence of experience* rather than using explicit theory (Creswell, 2003). Phenomenological researchers focus on “embodied, experiential meanings aiming for a fresh, complex, rich description of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived” (Finlay, 2009, p. 6). Second, hermeneutics denotes the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Moustakas (1994) describes the science of hermeneutics also as an art that includes the reading and interpretation of text which is fully and deeply understood by the reader. Additionally, an interrelationship exists between the articulated and mindful description of a particular experience and the underlying causes that explain the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, idiography

undertakes *the particular* through detail and understanding a specific context (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

IPA concentrates on how people interpret life experiences in the context of exploring one's own terms (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Furthermore, using IPA research in situations of major life events and thus those of considerable meaning to the participant (e.g., starting a new job, birth of a child, loss of a family member, etc.) offers a method for capturing and analyzing deep reflection of the experience (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). For this reason, IPA served as the methodology in examining this study's research objectives which captures the essence of a mother leaving children and family for an extended period of time on a naval deployment.

Participants

In contrast to quantitative research, which generally requires large populations and probabilistic sampling methods to meet statistical significance criteria, qualitative studies often use relatively smaller samples to allow in-depth examination and sampling approaches such as purpose, maximum variation, and snowball sampling also known as referral by participants (Creswell, 2003; Given, 2016; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Since IPA's idiographic approach focuses on a particular phenomenon, sample sizes are usually small and homogenous resulting in specific and meaningful outcomes (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Suggested sample sizes between three and six for student studies and four and ten for professional doctorates are suggested for researchers not familiar with IPA (Smith et al., 2009). Through the iterative

process of data collection and analysis, new themes continue to emerge; however, once additional data does not reveal new themes, the researcher determines saturation has been reached and thus will end the interviewing phase (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Given, 2016; Richards, 2009). The researcher's original intent was to conduct in-depth, face-to-face interviews with five to ten participants or until saturation was reached as determined with the concurrence of the dissertation Committee Chair.

Although a homogenous sample of female Navy officer mothers denoted the goal, participants were selected such that the sample included a range of ranks (junior, mid-grade, and senior), ages of children at the time of the deployment (infant and toddler, school age, and teenager), and time since the last deployment (recent, mid-term, and past) to explore a wide array of strategies and personal experiences for potential themes. In screening potential participants and ensuring participants met the study's criteria for participation, each completed a "Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form" (see Appendix C).

The participants of this study included only U.S. Navy officers who completed a deployment while also a mother. Criteria for inclusion in the study follow:

1. Active duty female Navy officers from the rank of ensign to admiral (O1 - O10).
2. Completed at least one Navy deployment of at least four months in length within the last 6 months to 25 years.

3. Mother of a minor child during the deployment time period; minor child must have been either naturally born to the participant or adopted as an infant by the participant and the participant must have had full care or custody of the minor child (i.e., minor step-children were excluded).
4. Access to the commutable Washington, DC area for 45 - 90 minute face-to-face interview.

Leveraging informal social and professional networks and leaders of professional organizations who are familiar with the changing status and dynamics of members allows the researcher to reach a sample that meets stated goals (Given, 2016; Smith et al., 2009; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016).

Participant recruitment was conducted via purposive sampling in a three phased approach. First, the membership of the Sea Service Leadership Association (SSLA) was invited to participate. A non-profit organization established in 1978 supporting women in the U.S. maritime services (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard), the SSLA provides professional development opportunities through networking, education, and mentorship (SSLA, n.d.). The SSLA President provided the organization's membership of roughly 350 women (estimate of 25% live in the commutable Washington, DC area) an opportunity to participate in the research project by emailing members and posting an invitation (Appendix D) to the SSLA Facebook page (R. A. Goscinski, personal communication, September 21, 2016). Anticipating a challenge in finding participants who meet the criteria of having access to the commutable Washington, DC area for a face-to-face interview and since active duty military members often transfer duty stations

every two to three years, the invitation included a snowball sampling recruitment clause. The snowball sampling clause encouraged SSLA members to forward the invitation to others who may qualify and be interested in participating in the study.

Phase two of the recruitment process was initiated three weeks following phase one since an acceptable number and range of participants had not yet been met. The researcher posted an invitation (Appendix E) to the “DC Metro Area Female Navy Officer—Moms & Support” Facebook page. The group has 46 members and includes active, reserve, retired, and former female officers (DC Metro Area Female Navy Officer—Moms & Support, 2016). The site offers an opportunity for fellow Navy mothers and other guardians to ask questions, share resources, and provide advice on issues relating to motherhood in the Navy. Most members of the group are geographically located in Washington, DC. The invitational posting also included a snowball sampling recruitment clause.

If an acceptable number and range of participants was still needed, the researcher would have initiated the third and final phase of the recruitment process by posting an invitation (Appendix E) to the “Female Navy Officers” Facebook page. Providing a forum for networking, education, and mentoring, the closed group has 2,544 members and is structured for active, reserve, retired, and veteran female officers only (Female Navy Officers, ca. 2016). Though there was no need for the researcher to recruit via the third phase, a member of the Female Navy Officers Facebook page posted the recruitment and essentially

initiated the final phase. Again, the invitational posting included a snowball sampling recruitment clause.

The researcher received a total of 36 responses to the study recruitment posting. Once a potential participant responded to the study posting, the researcher forwarded an invitational email (Appendix F) which included a request to complete and return the “Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form.” For those that responded to the study recruitment and acknowledged they didn’t meet the eligibility criteria (most due to geographic location not within the DC commutable area), the researcher responded via email thanking them for their interest, explaining why they did not qualify, and informed them the results would be shared once approved. Of the 23 demographic collection forms distributed to potential candidates, 22 were returned completed with 20 meeting all study criteria.

From the 20 potential candidates that qualified, the researcher selected a sample that best reflected a variety of participant perspectives to include a range of ranks (junior, mid-grade, and senior), ages of children at the time of the deployment (infant and toddler, school age, and teenager), and time since the last deployment (recent, mid-term, and past). For those selected to participate, the researcher sent an email inviting participation in the study and coordinating an interview date, time, and location (Appendix G). The invitational email also contained the researcher’s contact information, explained pseudonyms would be used to protect privacy, informed participants of the use of an audio recording device, and provided the option to withdraw from the study at any time. For

those individuals not chosen to participate, the researcher sent an email communicating non-selection, appreciation for their interest in the study, and the option to request a copy of the study results once finalized and approved. (Appendix H).

Instrumentation

Phenomenological inquiry commonly uses individual and group interviews to engage with people to gather the rich, detailed information required (Given, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest the practice of in-depth interview strategy when focusing on individual lived experience. More specifically, individual in-depth interviews are more suitable in IPA for allowing the individual to tell their intimate story and collecting the rich data of their experience (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Furthermore, IPA favors semi-structured, face-to-face interviews initiating dialogue that builds rapport. This structure allows participants “space to think, speak and be heard” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 57). Kelley et al. (2001) establishes the importance of using open-ended questions to assess female military retention. Qualitative research reveals emerging issues thus the researcher may need to adjust and refine the questions to best capture the phenomenon (Creswell, 20013; Given, 2016).

Appreciative Inquiry

Used as a model or methodology for change leadership, appreciative inquiry approaches issues from a positive perspective rather than a more traditional and often negative problem-solving approach (Hammond, 1998). Appreciative inquiry also follows a constructivist principle acknowledging

significance of individuals, the importance of language, and meaningful interpretations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The phases of appreciative inquiry include the 4-D cycle of:

1. Discovery – identifying the best,
2. Dream – vision of discovered potential,
3. Design – drawing on and intensifying the positive, and
4. Destiny – sustain momentum for positive change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Appreciative inquiry encompasses asking questions in a positive tone to seek “heightened positive potential [and] untapped and rich accounts of the positive” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8). The basis for a positive approach includes asking engaging questions to help interviewees express important experiences of value (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Positive questions result in positive conversations and outcomes (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom, & Kaplin, 2002). Since the purpose of this research included collecting effective and successful strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment, in keeping with the positive revolution and spirit of appreciative inquiry, the interview schedule and research questions were designed with an affirmative construct. Maintaining a positive focus also assisted in minimizing sensitive issues and limited emotional distress.

Research Instrument

The initial IPA instrument consisted of 11 semi-structured, open-ended questions. The questions were prepared by the researcher and approved by the

University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the interviews (Appendix I). Smith et al. (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2015) suggest leniency to the interviewers in making slight modifications to the questions and the order which the questions are asked during the interviews based on reaction to the participants' responses. The proposal approved minor modifications to the questions and the order of the questions by the researcher. Additionally, as a result of the pilot study, two additional questions (no. 11 and 13) were added resulting in a total of 13 questions for the final study instrument.

The opening interview question encouraged the respondent to recollect a detailed and familiar experience to encourage uninhibited and ease of dialogue (Smith et al., 2009). Thus the first "warm-up" question inquired about the participant's active duty military experience. The remaining questions included, but were not limited to, the following: related personal and professional experiences, deployment and reintegration adjustments, coping mechanisms, family support, personal and professional growth, and positive impacts. The 13 semi-structured, open-ended interview questions are included in Appendix J. Each interview question correlates to a specific research objective (see Table 4).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2015) recommends the researcher use prompts or simpler questions (e.g., What worked?, When did you feel good?) to assist the respondent should it appear the question is difficult to answer. Additionally, deeper questions (e.g., Why?, How did you feel?) are recommended to encourage the respondent to talk more in depth and in detail regarding a particular subject. The researcher made use of

these prompts and deeper questions included in Appendix J in assisting the respondent to answer the intended question, to help the discussion refocus when the conversation went slightly astray, and to encourage a more in-depth response from the respondent.

Table 4

Research Objective and Interview Question Correlation

Research Objective (RO)	Interview Question
RO1	Demographics Collection Form, 1
RO2	2, 6, 10, 11, 13
RO3	3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13
RO4	7, 10, 11, 13
RO5	8, 9, 12, 13

Interview Schedule

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2015) recommends the use of an interview schedule of procedures, particularly for the novice IPA researcher, to enable the researcher to focus on the actual interview rather than the process. An interview schedule allows the interviewer to use active listening skills, to be responsive and flexible, and to be highly engaged throughout the entire interview. The purpose of the interview schedule includes overall process organization (a *virtual map*), preparation for likely content which may be sensitive, setting a loose agenda, and framing the interview in an open

forum. The researcher utilized the interview procedures included in Appendix K to facilitate a comfortable and insightful interaction with the subject.

Pilot Study

Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest the use of a pilot study to refine the interview questions and test the interview procedures. Given (2016) recommends pretesting the data collection with a pilot study in order to (a) practice and perfect the survey instrument, (b) test the data collection equipment, (c) assess the realistic time required to conduct the interview, and (d) develop the researcher's confidence through rehearsing the process. The researcher selected the first responder to the initial recruitment announcement to pilot the study for a number of reasons. First, the pilot candidate met all study criteria with the exception of having access to the commutable Washington, DC area, hence would not have qualified as a final candidate. Second, the pilot candidate was close in rank to the researcher and therefore assumed would be more inclined and feel more comfortable in making suggestions for improvement than someone junior in rank. Third, she was very passionate in wanting to participate in the study specifically requesting to conduct the interview via electronic means. Finally, the researcher and the pilot candidate knew each other professionally. Though it was purely a coincidence that a known candidate would be the first to respond to the recruitment announcement, the researcher evaluated the previously established professional relationship would be an additional benefit such that the pilot candidate would be more inclined to make comments and recommendations for improvements to the initial study questions. This in fact

occurred, consequently some of the wording of the questions was adjusted and two additional questions were added.

The pilot study allowed the researcher to practice and test the interview procedures, the delivery and explanation of the informed consent form, the interview instrument, and the timing of the interview. Due to geographic separation, the pilot study was conducted using Facetime. During the course of the pilot interview, communications was lost multiple times interrupting the flow of the interview sequencing. Towards the end of the interview, video conferencing efforts were abandoned and the pilot test was completed via telephone (audio only). The difficulties encountered using electronic conferencing served to amplify the need for strict face-to-face interviews in the actual study.

Data Collection

Participants selected for the study were given the opportunity to coordinate the date, time, and location (home, office, or some other safe, quiet, and suitable location within the commutable D.C. area) for the interview with the researcher. The safety of the participant and researcher was of the upmost importance thus it was iterated both must feel comfortable about the location of the meeting. Interviews were conducted mainly at workplace offices and libraries, but one was conducted at the participant's home and one was conducted at the interviewer's home.

At the start of the interview process, participants were reminded of the purpose of the study, their rights as human subjects and informed consent (Appendix L), the dialogue would be audiotaped, and their right to withdraw from

the study at any time. Givens (2016) recommends the use of personal names since it “helps to humanize the participants so the reader can see the person behind the data being presented” (p.166). Participants were asked to select a feminine pseudonym first name should they choose not to use their real name. A list of female first names was provided to help with the selection of a pseudonym. Though most of the participants elected to use a pseudonym, several participants chose to use their actual first name expressing they wanted to be personally connected to the study.

The average length of the interviews was 60 minutes with the shortest 44 minutes and the longest 74 minutes. The researcher used the interview schedule (Appendix K) and took extensive notes during the interviews. Notes included non-verbal cues and characteristics for parallel purposes to better understand the verbal data that was later transcribed during the data analysis phase. Notes also assisted the transcription process of properly deciphering the military and Navy jargon and terminology discussed by the participants during each interview (e.g., “I was bored.” vs. “I was aboard.”).

The study timeline spanned a four month period. The tasks and procedures consisted of recruitment, pilot study, participant selection, interviews, transcription validation, analysis, results, recommendations, and conclusions. The study’s procedures followed those presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Study Procedures

Study Timeline	Task
Weeks 1 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Began recruitment of participants:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sent Phase 1 recruitment communication.○ Sent invitational email and “Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form” to interested participants.○ Determined an acceptable sample was not reached.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sent Phase 2 recruitment communication.▪ Phase 3 was initiated by a member of a Facebook page group.▪ Acceptable sample number was reached▪ Continued with participant selection.• Conducted “pilot test” interview.
Weeks 5-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sent invitational emails to selected participants and arranged interview appointment locations, dates, and times.• Conducted all interviews, sent post-interview thank you emails, transcribed the interview data, sent the transcription to the participant for validation.
Weeks 9 - 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued transcription validation.• Started analysis.• Determined saturation was reached.• Completed analysis.• Started writing results.
Weeks 12-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed results and conclusions.• Sent non-selection and thank you notification emails to participants not chosen.
Approved dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sent final thank you email with results to participants.

Maintaining confidentiality of this lived experience is paramount and is discussed in the next section.

Confidentiality

Since the nature of qualitative research and specifically IPA research involves interaction with human subjects, the researcher followed all guidelines required and approved by the University of Southern Mississippi IRB (see Appendix I). The researcher explained and obtained informed consent from all participants using the IRB's "Long Form Consent" (see Appendix L). The researcher ensured findings were revealed and managed in respectful and suitable ways (Given, 2016). Since IPA research is humanistic and focuses on an individual's feelings, keeping data completely confidential and therefore not viewed by others is not an option; however names of the participants were held in confidence and anonymity was strictly adhered (Seidman, 2013; Smith et al., 2009).

To protect the anonymity of the participant, a feminine pseudonym first name was made available and assigned to all requesting participants. The pseudonym was used and correlated to the information provided and used throughout the study analysis and results. Since pseudonyms were assigned and used prior to the start of the recorded interviews, the transcriptions are not identifiable by name; however, the contracted transcriptionist signed a non-disclosure agreement at the start of the contract for added confidentiality. Aside from the contracted transcription service, only the Principal Investigator had access to the collected interview transcriptions and annotated notes. At the

conclusion of the research, all hard copy identifiable data was scanned and saved electronically with hardcopies shredded. All digital identifiable data was saved in a password protected file. Identifiable data will be deleted or destroyed three years following publishing and unidentifiable data will be maintained for an unlimited period of time to be used in potential future research and publications. At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was provided a handout that included information on how to contact military family support and counseling services (e.g., Military One Source, Navy Fleet and Family Services, etc.) should any sensitive feelings arise as a result of the dialogue (see Appendix M).

Following each interview, the researcher sent a post-interview thank you to the participant (Appendix N). In appreciation for the participants' continued inclusion and support, the researcher sent a final thank you email along with an attachment of the approved dissertation and executive summary (Appendix O). Not only as matter of ethics to reveal bias in research, but the IPA process requires specifically addressing the role of the researcher.

Role of the Researcher

The interpretative nature of qualitative research by the researcher prevents complete elimination of bias during the process of data collection, data analysis, and in constructing final conclusion since all is accomplished through the researcher's *personal lens* (Creswell, 2003). "The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study....The personal-self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self" (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Preskill

and Coghlan (2003) claim life experiences result in inherent bias in all evaluators thus researchers must understand the effects personal own bias has towards ongoing processes. Though reflexivity presents limitations, it also embodies honesty and sincerity which is a fundamental trait to this intrinsically humanistic method (Creswell, 2003).

A benefit of phenomenological interviewing includes the allowance of combining the personal experience of the researcher with those of the participants to help reveal a more deep and robust understanding of lived significance (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) view the IPA researcher practicing *double hermeneutics* such that “the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them” (p. 3) thus describing the dual role of the researcher. Myers (2009) believes the best way for researchers to study people comes *from the inside*. Drawing on one’s own personal experience in a subject or role, a researcher can leverage internalized knowledge to formulate more relevant and deeper questions (Given, 2016). Likewise, the dual role enables the researcher to establish trust and build rapport with participants, thus accessing information which would not be available otherwise. Given (2016) further recognizes bias is always present in qualitative research, but can be an asset when the qualitative researcher acknowledges, understands, and embraces his or her personal bias. The researcher must identify potential personal bias to better understand how it may impact the study design, data collection, data analysis, and conclusions and

then consciously make appropriate choices to embrace, neutralize, or minimize the bias per the employed methodology.

The researcher in this study is an active duty female member of the U.S. Navy with over 24 years of service and currently holds the rank of captain (O-6), a senior level officer one grade below flag rank (admiral or general). She also deployed as a mother and mid-grade officer (lieutenant commander, O-4) in 2006 leaving two children under the age of 3 in the care of her spouse which she acknowledges was an extremely emotional and stressful period in her personal and professional life. Since this study included face-to-face interviews of participants who were also active duty female Navy officers and mothers, the researcher concedes the existence of personal bias as a result of the data collection and analysis processes. The researcher followed the guidelines of IPA during data collection and analysis leveraging double hermeneutics.

Summary

This chapter offers a review of the proposed research, the importance of increasing female representation in the senior officer ranks of the military, and a reiteration of the research objectives. Demonstrations of research methodology and design details were presented. Participant criteria and selection procedures, instrumentation preparations, pilot study, and data collection discussions followed. The chapter concludes with issues of confidentiality and the importance of the role of the researcher. The remaining chapters include analysis and results of the data followed by conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

This chapter offers a review of the analysis and study results. Despite the researcher's focus on identifying and describing effective strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to embrace a long-term deployment, the findings not only answered the established five ROs, but also highlighted many common experiences of these mothers as they endured separation from their children, spouses, other family members, friends, and neighbors. This chapter provides a rich description of the experiences of Navy officer mothers by presenting emergent themes as a result of the analytic process.

First, the data analysis process is explained. Second, the demographics of the study group are described satisfying RO1. Third, the identified positive strategies and four of the superordinate emergent themes are organized and aligned under the supporting RO2, RO3, RO4, and RO5. There were three superordinate themes which did not align under a single RO, but rather emerged as recurring themes supporting multiple ROs. These cross-cutting themes characterized successful strategies of the pre-deployment phase, the deployment phase, and the post-deployment phase aligning under all three RO2, RO3, and RO4 (see Figure 4).

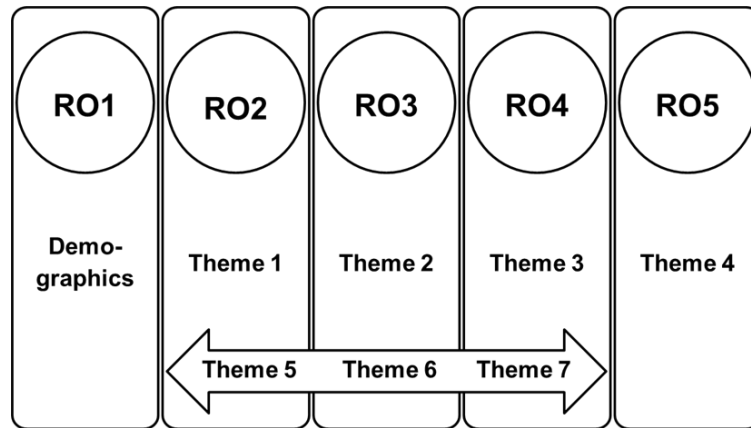


Figure 4. Research Objective and Theme Alignment

Following the discussion of each superordinate theme and sub-theme are excerpts taken directly from the verbatim transcripts with occasional changes, omissions, and notes of emotions included when necessary to improve clarity and understanding and to set the tone of the comments. Though often multiple examples of excerpts across the sample were available for the researcher to choose, selection was based on the richness of the participants' comments and to ensure where possible numerous mothers' voices were heard throughout the various themes. Additionally, excerpts were selected to demonstrate convergence or divergence of the experiences. The superordinate themes are then correlated to each of the ROs in a summary table. Finally, the researcher shares the approaches used to validate the findings.

Data Analysis

The IPA process requires the researcher to completely immerse in the data, thus full-text transcriptions are necessary so the data can be read multiple times as well as re-playing of audio-recordings during the initial analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Creswell (2003) explains the iterative process of qualitative

analysis as a back and forth cycle of collection, analysis, and problem reformulation. Contradictory to various phenomenological analysis methods identified by Moustakas (1994) such as the modified van Kaam and modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen methods, IPA does not advocate a defined analysis process. The IPA analysis is typically a nonlinear, complex, time consuming process. For the novice IPA researcher, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) offer a six step heuristic based *unidirectional guide* designed to “encourage a reflective engagement with the participant’s account” (p.80). The general steps to the IPA process include:

1. reading and re-reading,
2. initial noting,
3. developing emergent themes,
4. searching for connections across emergent themes,
5. moving to the next case, and
6. looking for patterns across cases.

This study employed the above six step process as the basis during data analysis. The researcher utilized and refined the process Smith and Osborn (2015) recommends for students beginning IPA. To allow the researcher to become infinitely familiar and fully immersed in the data, the researcher conducted the data analysis and identification of themes by hand analysis and creation of basic tables and spreadsheets.

Individual Case Analysis

IPA theory requires the investigator approach each case separately and on its own terms in order to preserve individuality. For each case, the researcher read and reread the interview, conducted a first pass analysis followed by a second pass analysis, clustered and organized emerging themes, and then began the next case analysis anew. Once the analysis was completed for each individual case, the researcher moved onto the cross case analysis.

Reading and Rereading. The researcher personally conducted each face-to-face interview. Prior to sending the interview to the transcriptionist, the researcher reviewed the annotated verbal and non-verbal notes. A summary of general emotions and list of military jargon was provided to the transcriptionist to assist with the verbatim transcription. Once the transcribed interview was received, the researcher listened to the interview while reading through the transcription word by word checking for accuracy. The transcription was then sent to the participant for validation, a process called member checking. If corrections were made by the participant, the corrected file was then used during the analysis.

First Pass Analysis. Beginning the initial analysis, the researcher added consecutive line numbers to the document. While reading through the transcript, the researcher used pencil to underline interesting or significant comments by the respondent and used the left margin to write free textual analysis. Following Smith and Osborn's (2015) suggestion that there are no rules for these initial comments, the researcher annotated phrases, key words, emotion, use of

language, and posed potential questions. Additionally, the researcher used color pen to circle ideas that specifically aligned to the positive strategies of RO2 - RO5 and made an RO annotation in the right hand margin. Comments that were recognized as potentially linking back to the research literature were highlighted. Once this initial commenting pass was complete for the entire transcript, the researcher began the second pass.

Second Pass Analysis. The researcher returned to the beginning of the transcript and for the second analysis pass, used a different color pen in the right hand margin to document emerging themes. In an attempt to consolidate the initial first pass comments and notes into succinct phrases, the emerging themes are intended to “capture the essential quality of what was found in the text” (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 41). The conversion of notes into themes was continued for the entire transcript. See Appendix P for a sample of the initial and second pass analysis.

Clustering. Following the first and second analyses passes, the emerging themes were documented chronologically in a single row. The themes were cut into strips and arranged on a large surface. This allowed the researcher to look for patterns and then link, arrange, and reorder the themes into related clusters. Some became superordinate concepts but most were subordinate. This step was unnecessary after completing three separate cases; the researcher no longer needed to list out and cut up the emerging themes. The clustering was completed without this added step for the remainder of the cases.

A cluster table was created for each individual case listing the superordinate and subordinate themes. Quoted excerpts of key words from the transcript were documented in a table along with the corresponding line number. This step parallels the recommended *In Vivo* coding (also called “verbatim coding”) by Saldaña (2016). See Appendix Q for an example cluster table. To ensure the quotes used in the table were the correct context to the subordinate theme, the researcher reviewed the audio recording when necessary making use of the timestamps for efficiency. Once the cluster table was complete, the researcher moved to the next case.

Subsequent Case Analysis. In analyzing the next and subsequent cases, IPA theory requires the investigator approach each case on its own terms in order to preserve individuality. Maintaining objectivity and not being overly influenced from case to case proved difficult for the researcher; however, this is recognized as a known challenge when conducting IPA (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher began each case anew allowing the themes to arise from the individual transcript and documented in the cluster table. The researcher conducted nine interviews. Upon conclusion of the individual case analyses and with the concurrence of the dissertation chair, determined in retrospect, saturation was reached after the seventh participant. Once all nine cases were individually analyzed and each cluster table was completed, the process of cross case analysis began.

Cross Case Analysis

The final step in the analysis process was to create a master spreadsheet of themes for the group thus documenting correlations and differences and convergences and divergences between the themes and cases. The process of cross case analysis was conducted by listing in pencil (for ease of changing) the emerging superordinate and subthemes in the far left two columns and creating separate columns for each individual case (participant) on the right hand side. Themes were selected by prevalence of data, richness of the passage in emphasizing the theme, and how the theme supports additional interpretations of the experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Using the individual cluster tables, the researcher marked on the spreadsheet (graph paper) whether or not the theme correlated with the participant (X = strong correlation, x = slight correlation, blank = no correlation, O = outlier or difference).

This stage of the analysis process proved quite difficult. Smith and Osborn (2015) encourage student researchers to envision this stage of the process as “an intellectual opportunity rather than a difficulty” (p. 48). Complicating matters, Smith and Osborn further mention the potential need for re-analysis of earlier transcripts and indeed the researcher found it necessary to re-analyze the first two cases. So the cross analysis was stopped once it became apparent the first two cases were not aligning. The individual case analysis process was repeated in its entirety for the first two cases, resulting in new cluster tables. The process of cross case analysis was then resumed. Patterns and links between the themes were annotated. New titles for

subordinate themes and subthemes were explored and assigned. Appendix R provides a sample of the cross case master spreadsheet process.

Demographic Characteristics

RO1: Describe the demographic characteristics of the sample in terms of age, rank, total time in service, total number of deployments, type and location of deployment(s), length of deployment(s), time since last deployment, marital status, number and age of children at time of deployment(s), and relationship of guardian during last deployment.

Demographic data provided by the participant was collected using the Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form (Appendix C). The age of the participants ranged from 38 to 49 years with the average age of the sample 43.8 years. The military ranks of the participants at the time of their most recent deployment included: one ensign (O-1), one lieutenant junior grade (O-2), one lieutenant (O-3), three lieutenant commanders (O-4), two commanders (O-5), and one captain (O-6). At the time the interviews were conducted, one-third of the participants still held the same rank, one-third had been promoted once to the next senior rank, and one-third had been promoted twice to two ranks more senior. The resultant ranks at the time of the interviews included: one lieutenant (O-3), three lieutenant commanders (O-4), three commanders (O-5), one captain (O-6), and one rear admiral lower half (O-7). Participant total time of active duty military service spanned from 13.5 years to 29 years with an average of 21.5 years of military experience.

Though a majority of the participants reported deploying only once as a mother, three reported deploying twice and one reported deploying three times as a mother. Seven of the participants described their last deployment as a traditional naval deployment which included embarking a Navy vessel. The remaining two participants characterized their last deployments as: a humanitarian assistance mission to Haiti and a staff deployment to Iraq. The length of the last deployment ranged from four months to 11 months with an average deployment length of 7.3 months for the group. The time passing since the start of the last deployment for the sample ranges from as recent as 2 years 4 months to as long as 12 years 11 months with an average of 7 years 4 months.

All participants were married during the time of their most recent deployment. All but one of the participants stated that the guardian of their children during the deployment was their husband which for seven of them was also the children's natural or adopted father and for one family was the children's step-father. Only one participant had her mother, the child's grandmother, care for her child while she was deployed due to the husband also being deployed during the same time period.

Among the participants of the study, there were a total of 15 children reported to be impacted and in their households during the time period of the most recent deployment. The age of the children ranged from 11 months to 15-years-old with an average age of just over 6-years-old. Four of the participants had only one child and their ages were 1, 5, 6, and 13. Four participants had two children with ages: 11 months and 5, 1 and 3, 6 and 9, and 11 and 15. One

participant had three children who were 2, 8, and 10 at the time of her most recent deployment. Table 6 provides an overview of the demographics of the nine study participants.

Table 6

Demographics Summary of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Isabelle	Sara	Ann	Faith	Molly	Betsy	Wendy	Danelle	Ashleigh
Rank ^a	O-1	O-4	O-5	O-5	O-4	O-3	O-4	O-6	O-2
Rank ^b	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-5	O-5	O-4	O-6	O-7	O-4
Age ^b	38	39	41	42	42	49	49	49	46
Years of Service ^b	13.5	15.5	19.5	20	20.5	29	28.5	27	20
No. of Deployments as a Mother ^b	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	1
Length of Deployment (mos.)	6	8.5	10	4	8	4	6	8	11
Years Since Start of Last Deployment (yrs. - mos.)	7 - 11	5 - 0	2 - 4	3 - 7	6 - 1	8 - 2	12 - 11	8 - 4	12 - 0
Type of Deployment	ship	ship	ship	ship	ship	HA to Haiti	ship	ship	staff to Iraq
Age of Child ^a (in yrs.)	1, 3	1	6, 9	5	2, 8, 10	11, 15	11 mos., 5	13	6
Marital Status ^a	married	married	married	married	married	married	married	married	married
Guardian's Relationship ^c	husband /father	husband /father	husband /father	husband /father	husband /father	husband /step-father	husband /father	husband /father	mother /grand-mother

Note. ^aAt time of the participant's most recent deployment; ^bCurrent; ^cTo the participant/to the child; HA = humanitarian assistance; yrs. = years; mos. = months; O-1 =

ensign; O-2 = lieutenant junior grade; O-3 = lieutenant; O-4 = lieutenant commander; O-5 = commander; O-6 = captain; O-7 = rear admiral (lower half).

In the purposive sample, participants were selected with a sample including a range of ranks (junior, mid-grade, and senior), ages of children at the time of the deployment (infant and toddler, school age, and teenager), and time since the last deployment (recent, mid-term, and past) to explore a wide array of strategies and personal experiences for potential themes. Table 7 provides a summary of the purposive sample in the context of the desired categories.

Table 7

Description of Purposive Sample

Desired Categories	Sub-categories	Qualifying Participants
Rank*	Junior (O1-O3)	3
	Mid-grade (O4-O5)	5
	Senior (O6-O10)	1
Age of child**	Infant and Toddler (0-4)	4
	School age (5-12)	6
	Teenager (13-19)	2
Time since last deployment	Recent (6mos-4 years)	2
	Mid-term (5-10 years)	5
	Past (11-25 years)	2

Note. *Participant's rank at the start of the most recent deployment. **Age of the child at the start of the most recent deployment. There were three participants who had children with ages that aligned under multiple sub-categories.

Study Participants - A Descriptive Summary

The following section provides a more descriptive summary of each participant. Most of the information in the summaries is derived from the data provided by the participants as reported in the Study Criteria and Demographics

Collection Forms. Additional information from each interview is included in order to add depth of individual situation and context. The elected pseudonym is used if the participant chose one.

Isabella

A prior enlisted sailor, Isabella has served in the Navy for over 13 years which includes almost 10 years as an officer in the information warfare community. She deployed once for 6 months on a ship (aircraft carrier) nearly 8 years ago and has been geographically separated from her family for the past 17 months. At the time of her deployment, Isabella was an ensign (O-1) and married to a fellow military member. Together they had two daughters, ages 1 (adopted as an infant) and 3, which her husband cared for while she deployed. Today, she is 38-years-old and a lieutenant (O-3). She and her husband are the parents of four daughters, ages 4, 6, 9, and 11. Isabella is scheduled to deploy again in late 2017.

Sara

Familiar with the challenges of deployments, Sara is a 39 year old lieutenant commander (O-4) in the aviation community with 15.5 years of active duty service and extensive sea duty experience. She has deployed once while single, three times while married, and once as a married mother. Sara's last deployment was on a ship (aircraft carrier) 5 years ago. The deployment was originally scheduled to last 5 months but was extended multiple times, finally ending 8.5 months later. As a deployed lieutenant commander (O-4), she left her

1-year-old daughter in the very capable hands of her husband who also wears a uniform in service to the United States. Today, Sara and her husband have a 6-year-old daughter and a 1-year-old son. Sara anticipates deploying again in 2019 in a senior leadership role.

Ann

Ann is a 41-year-old information warfare community officer with 19.5 years of active duty service. As a commander (O-5), she deployed 2.5 years ago on a ship (aircraft carrier) for 10 months entrusting her active duty husband to care for their 9-years-old son and 6-years-old daughter. This last deployment occurred 9 months following the return of her previous 7 month deployment to Afghanistan. Ann begins the screening process for potential major command later this year.

Faith

As a married surface warfare officer, Faith held the rank of commander (O-5) at the time of her most recent deployment 3.5 years ago. She was the commanding officer of a destroyer and thus in a very senior leadership role with increased responsibilities. Her retired military husband cared for their 5-years-old son for the 4 months of her deployment which quickly followed her previous executive officer (second in command) deployment of 7.5 months in length. Faith is 42-years-old, has served in the Navy as an officer for more than 20 years, and still holds the rank of commander. Faith anticipates her next deployment will be in two years.

Molly

A 42-years-old mother of three children, Molly is a commander (O-5) who has served in the Navy for more than 20 years. As an information warfare community officer, she has deployed only once 6 years ago on a large-deck amphibious ship. During that eight month deployment, Molly held the rank of lieutenant commander (O-4). She was married to an active duty service member who cared for their one son, age 10, and two daughters, ages 8 and 2.

Betsy

Betsy has worn a Navy uniform for almost 29 years, 14 as an enlisted sailor and 15 as an officer. A 49-years-old information warfare community lieutenant commander (O-4), she has deployed a total of three times as a mother. Her first deployment was as a single parent, but the last two deployments she was married to her second husband. He is a retired military member who is full-time employed and a step-father to her children. Betsy's second deployment was to a combat zone in Iraq in 2005. Her last deployment was a 4 month humanitarian assistance mission on a large-deck amphibious ship more than 8 years ago. At the time, Betsy wore the rank of lieutenant (O-3) and her daughter and son were 15 and 11 respectively. Today, her children are young adults at the ages of 24 and 20.

Wendy

A 49-years-old information warfare community officer captain (O-6), Wendy has served in the Navy for almost 29 years. Though she has deployed

previously, she deployed once as a mother onboard a large deck amphibious ship 13 years ago. During her last deployment as a lieutenant commander (O-4), Wendy was separated from her two boys who were 11-months-old and 5-years-old. Her disabled husband cared for their sons until she returned 6 months later. Her children are now 15 and 19 with the oldest in college.

Danelle

Danelle is a rear admiral (O-7) and senior leader within the information warfare community. An officer for 27 years, she has deployed twice since becoming a mother. Her last deployment was as a captain (O-6) on a ship (aircraft carrier) 8.5 years ago. Her civilian husband cared for their 13-years-old daughter for the 8 months of the deployment. Today, her daughter is 20 and holds a career in the performing arts.

Ashleigh

A member of the Navy's medical community, Ashleigh volunteered for a combat deployment to Iraq in 2005. Originally 7 months in length, her deployment as a lieutenant junior grade (O-2) was extended to 11 months while she was on station. The plan was to have her husband care for their 6-years-old daughter; however, since he was also active duty, his unit was called to deploy to Iraq during the same time period. Ashleigh's mother served as guardian of the child. Today Ashleigh is 46-years-old, holds the rank of lieutenant commander (O-4), and has been in the Navy for 20 years, 6 as enlisted and the last 14 as an officer. Their daughter is now 18 and attends college.

Deployment Preparation Strategies

RO2: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully prepare for a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.

Preparation for Long-term Deployment Strategies List

The participants mentioned many strategies for preparing their children, family, and household for a long-term deployment. The ideas were both practical and creative. The strategies are organized in Appendix S under four categories: to maintain connection with family, to keep things organized in the household, to maintain connection with the community, and to prepare yourself. Some of the most frequently mentioned strategies included being honest and talking to their children, preparing plenty of photos (videos, photobooks, and slideshows), creating planning lists, coordinating childcare, prearranging extended family assistance and visits, purchasing or collecting personal comfort and coping items, and spending quality family time together. See Appendix S for the complete list of pre-deployment strategies shared by the participants.

Theme 1: Preparedness Provided a Sense of Control

All nine participants shared examples of strategies they used to prepare themselves and their families for the upcoming deployment. Specifically, two-thirds of the participants mentioned the need for preparing or doing things to help maintain their sense of perceived control of the family by organizing in advance

and preparing “to-do” lists. Five of the participants referred to themselves as having a controlling personality (e.g., Type A).

- “I think...anytime you’re preparing for deployment, there’s...it’s gonna be stressful and it’s gonna be challenging, but you just kind of take it in stride and I’m definitely a list person. I always have checklists. I have my entire career planned out on a Power Point. So, um, you know, I-I just had a list of things that I wanted to make sure I took care of and just ticked them off when I needed to, um...or when I was able to get that stuff done. So that helped me...to not be as stressed, ‘cause I had a plan.” (Isabella, lines 88-95)
- “You start putting your budget together. You get everything ready. You get your house ready as if you’re spring cleaning: painting, scrubbing, cleaning the garage, cleaning...the closet. Because most of the time your husband is not going to do those things and you want life to be a little bit easier for them. So the things that you normally do, um, you prep them for the period of time that you’re going to be gone.” (Ashleigh, lines 136-144)
- “So, maybe I’m OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and I like to plan...” (Sara, lines 562-563)
- “I think...well, I think, um...you know, you realized that you have to let go some of the control. I mean, you want to, um, I don’t know, people

like me, Type A people, want to have control of everything.” (Faith, lines 698-700)

Enduring Deployment Strategies

RO3: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully endure a long-term deployment in terms of separation from children, family, and home upkeep.

Enduring Long-term Deployment Strategies List

The participants revealed numerous strategies for enduring the separation from children, family and household of a long-term deployment. The approaches were personal and insightful, and often involved expressing self-reflection. The strategies are organized in Appendix S under four categories: to maintain connection with the family, to create a community support system, to keep things organized in the household, and to sustain yourself. Some of the most recurring strategies included the importance of maximizing communications between mother and family (emails, phone calls, videos, audio recordings, and live streaming), having photos of children, especially current pictures, sending and receiving care packages, and staying busy while on deployment by standing watches, working towards professional qualifications, and engaging in physical exercise. Some of the most creative ideas included mailing back and forth micro SD (secure digital) cards that contained recent photos and videos and establishing a deployment tradition for each port such as taking a photo with a

child's toy in each port. See Appendix S for the participants' collective list of deployment strategies.

Theme 2: Coping Mechanisms

Once on deployment, the participants relied on individual means of coping with the separation. Their coping mechanisms include four sub-themes: (a) focusing on self, (b) personal comfort items, (c) local support networks, and (d) being a role model to their children.

Sub-theme 2.1: Focusing on Self. The predominant sub-theme of coping mechanisms for all participants was the ability to focus on herself and the accomplishment of the goals she established (e.g., professional qualifications). For all of the participants, this included essentially focusing completely on their work in order to stay busy. This tactic was an attempt to limit the time available to worry about the family.

- “Um...uhm...the busy days, working 12-18-hour days sometimes just helps the time pass. So being constantly busy was...was nice. I didn't feel like, you know, my six, seven-month deployment was actually that long because I was just constantly busy. I would work and I would sleep and that was basically it. So I didn't have a lot of time to sit and worry about what was going on with my kids.” (Isabella, lines 123-128)
- “So, um, but the funny thing is, I always thought, um, [*chuckles*] sea duty, when you're on deployment, it-it's easier than being a parent. It's easier than being home and...and working, and um, and being a mom.

Because you...the separation piece is hard, so it's the-it's a different aspect, I guess. That's all you have is work. And so if you – like I said, if you...you don't want to focus on, you know, the fact that you're not with your family and you're miserable and you miss your kids, so you throw yourself into...all your duties that you're doing there....And that went a long way, um, for me helping being able to cope.” (Molly, lines 673-684)

- “But I stayed busy with my [officer of the deck watch] and I stayed busy in my division and helping them out doing all things and working out. You just find ways to keep yourself busy. If you go into your office and you sit there a couple of hours checking emails and then you go on into your stateroom, you'll go in there just laying, thinking about stuff instead of actually staying busy and keeping your mind occupied on the task at hand where you are.” (Betsy, lines 256-262)

Several participants also reported they found ease in taking advantage of frequent and often daily personal exercise as well as the importance of taking personal time off to relax.

- “PT-ed [physical training] quite a bit. Um...we ran when we were out there. I started running marathons.” (Ashleigh, lines 233-234)
- “You know that there's gonna be a day when you're going to pull up to port and get off the ship and kind of let your hair down. (Isabella, lines 303-304)

Most of the participants described a general selfless devotion to their family and their home. In contrast, and to the surprise of the individuals, four of the participants found solace in focusing only on themselves during the period of the deployment. These four officers were not in senior leadership roles so this particular experience is not shared by those who were higher-in rank nor by those with a senior leadership role.

- “And so I think very few people in military, at least from my personal experience, there’s very few times you are only in charge of yourself. Very few times when the only person you really have to worry about is you.” (Ann, lines 236-239)

Sub-theme 2.2: Personal Comfort Items. All nine participants discussed the importance of having personal items that provided them comfort while deployed. The predominant items were pictures of their kids, but other things such as children’s artwork, a favorite pillow and blanket, and personal toiletry items (e.g., lotions, perfume, etc.) were also commonly mentioned.

- “I had pictures, um, blankets made with, you know, their pictures on it. Um, so I think it’s just the things from home that you take out there with you.” (Sara, lines 214-217)
- “So I started gathering – the big thing for me was I knew I wasn’t gonna be able to physically be with them. But I wanted to be, um, surrounded by them, if you will. So I started to, um, to grab some of the stuff that they made at school. That was, you know, the biggest

thing. Um, pictures, took those with me on the ship and really just plastered my whole area around my rack and my desk with-with their pictures that they had drawn. So that was, um, that was the big thing for me. I took a couple of my daughters' pillow cases and used that the whole time. They're Tinkerbell pillowcases, um, you know, and that helped." (Molly, lines 130-138)

Sub-theme 2.3: Local Support Networks. Support from others was a repeating sub-theme in six of the nine participants. The importance of having a roommate or someone close to them to talk to was shared by three. General camaraderie and the metaphoric comparison that the ship or the unit becomes one's family was also prevalent in more than half of the participants' reflections.

- "Everybody gets into like where they feel like they're a family. And you really feel like that shipmate--camaraderie when you're on deployment. And you don't get that anywhere and so that to me is the most rewarding, the shipmate feeling of teamwork and being together, and you're on this together and you're working it." (Danelle, lines 703-708)
- "Well, in my section, um, my...the other [command duty officer] was my roommate, um, who I still talk to and kept in touch and she was great, you know, even for coping on the ship. She was awesome.... We helped each other...And so even having that-that support on the ship, you know, with um, with your roommates and other members of the wardroom, really helpful too. Um, and again, being part of the

watch teams...And you're all coping with, you know, everyone is coping with being away from-from loved ones." (Molly, lines 473-489)

Sub-theme 2.4: Being a Role Model to Their Children. In this coping mechanisms sub-theme, seven of the mothers experienced comfort in justifying their absence with the beliefs of being a good role model to their children. Five of the seven had girls and three specifically correlated their own need to inspire their daughters to assume the strong characteristics that they hoped to exemplify.

- "So...as a strong woman, my responsibility is to teach [my daughter] how to be a strong woman. And I signed my name on the dotted line. So I understood the responsibility that I took of – took when I signed. And although I did not want to leave her, I knew that I would come back and I would be a better mother as well as I trusted the Lord that the experience would assist her and her life." (Ashleigh, lines 215-220)
- "One of these days, you know, my kids are going to be super proud of me. And I had all daughters, so just thinking, um...you know, I'm proud to be the type of woman that I am, for my girls to see." (Isabella, lines 270-273)
- "...being a strong woman is a great role model for [my son] for... uh...showing that women can be strong, and competent, and loving and, um, all the things that he needs to see moving forward." (Faith, lines 883-885)

Deployment Reintegration Strategies

RO4: Describe strategies Navy officer mothers used or recommend to successfully reintegrate with children, family, and home upkeep following a long-term deployment.

Reintegration from Long-term Deployment Strategies List

The participants offered suggestions of strategies used for post-deployment reintegration with their children, family, and household following a long-term deployment. The ideas were more limited compared to the pre-deployment and separation strategies offered. Most of the participants described planning for this phase to be the hardest. The strategies are organized in Appendix S under three categories: to maintain connection with family, to maintain connection with community, and to overcome changes in the household that occurred during deployment. Some of the strategies mentioned repeatedly comprised communicating a plan with husband and caregiver, determining best way to fit back into the family unit (e.g., easing back into the household to learn the new family routine or reintegrate as an abrupt return to the previous pre-deployment life), and spending quality time together as a family. Additionally, several participants agreed that attending return and reunion classes offered by the Fleet and Family Services Center would have been helpful. See Appendix S for the thorough list of post-deployment strategies shared by the participants.

Theme 3: Reintegration Requires Acceptance of Change

All but one participant shared ideas and examples of how they prepared or would have prepared themselves and their families for the post deployment and reintegration phase. Specifically, five of the participants mentioned the challenges and difficulties of this phase and three admitted they did not really plan for it because they either had not really thought about it or they just did not know how to plan for it. Wendy experienced the additional stress and personal shock of returning to a toddler who had basically forgotten her. For all of the participants, the emerging theme centered around how each accepted the change that occurred during her absence. This change may have occurred in the children (mentally or physically), in the husband, in the house, or in the family unit (e.g., changes in family routines). Of the participants who discussed the reintegration phase, the manner in which the participants approached handling the changes was essentially split with four saying they took it slow and eased back into the new family routine and the other four describing that they jumped right back into previous roles and routines picking up where they left off prior to deploying.

- Huh. I think returning home is harder than leaving sometimes. Um...not necessarily with the kids, but with your spouse. You know, kind of turn the reign back over, or take it back or whatever. So um...[family] have their own schedule now. It may have been different from the schedule you had before. Different ways that, you know,

different spouses do things. It's gonna be...it's gonna be different. And then, being the person that has been gone for 6-7 months, you walk back in and you're kind of like, 'Okay, I know things have changed so just get that in my mind. Okay, I know things are gonna be different. The girls are gonna be different. They're gonna be older.' Um...maybe they're saying more, or whatever. So just kind of getting used to the changes and the environment that is any at least familiar. You know, you think that everything is gonna be familiar, but then you get home and it's kinda like, everything is not as familiar as I thought it would be. Things have changed....I did a lot of prep for me leaving but I didn't really know how to prepare for coming home, I think." (Isabella, lines 312-334)

- "When I would come home from deployment, I would get the 'Mommy, we don't do things that way. Mommy, that's not how I take my bath anymore. Mommy, no, that's not how I like my peanut butter and honey sandwich anymore.' O-okay. And so, and-and it would make me feel bad, um, but then I would have to remember that I was gone and that things change and that I would have to be able to adapt also." (Faith, lines 264-269)
- "So one of the things, um...you know, I had conversations with my husband about like, 'Hey, so what are some of the things you guys are doing? I don't want to disrupt some of the things you're doing.' You

know what I mean? Like if something is working well, I'm not gonna go in with guns a blazing and say, 'We need to do it this way,' you know. So just kind of let them do their own thing and continue to do your own thing, just melded into what they're doing." (Danelle, lines 449-456)

- "You go home and you start to get right back into it. Um...so it was really...um...I don't know that I did that much preparation or that it was just sort of, you know, I got home and it was assumed I was gonna start back up, you know, with all the usual things, you know, when I got there." (Molly, lines 514-518)

Wendy was an outlier and expressed feelings of indifference to the planning of and actual reintegration phase. She did, however, discuss her and her family's interactions and reactions during the homecoming event. In particular, she was unprepared for the devastating realization that her youngest child of 17-months old had forgotten her completely.

- "I didn't do anything. I wasn't there. So I didn't do anything to prepare for the return home, at all." (Wendy, lines 506-507) "Um... [reintegration] was hard. I kinda screwed up because I offended my husband the first day, because I saw my [oldest] son...and...so I just grabbed my son and I'm walking with him [*voice quivering*] and I didn't mean to, but I walked away from husband, 'cause I'm holding my son. And he was all upset, "You didn't even come to say hi to me or [youngest son].' It was like, 'Why?'" (Wendy, lines 536-540) "Well I

mean, like I said, he was eleven months when I left....And then I left for the equivalent of half of his life [*chuckles sarcastically*]. You know, so...um...yeah, so...I mean it was a normal thing but you don't expect that your kid will have forgotten you. You know, nobody tells you that your kid will have forgotten you. So that's not something you're prepared for. Nobody – that's not something anybody ever mentioned to me." (Wendy, lines 620-630)

Deployment Positive Outcomes and Benefits

RO5: Identify positive outcomes resulting from Navy officer mothers' long-term deployments relating to children, family, and home upkeep.

Positive Outcomes Resulting from Long-term Deployment List

The participants offered their thoughts on positive outcomes and benefits to their children, family, and household resulting from a long-term deployment. The participants were not asked to isolate the deployment as the single cause, but rather to share the benefits or positive impacts experienced in their family unit that might be attributed to the period of long-term separation. The benefits are organized in Appendix S under five categories: for self, for spouse, for children, for family unit as a whole, and for the community of others. Some of the more commonly mentioned outcomes were family unit grew stronger and closer together, children became more resilient, confident, independent, and mature, and a deep appreciation of the time spent with people cared for most in life. See Appendix S for the inclusive list of positive outcomes and benefits to the

participants' children, family, and household as a result of a long-term deployment.

Theme 4: Long-term Positive Realizations of Deployment

Reflecting on the long-term positive realizations and benefits of the deployment for and among the family unit was an important and clearly communicated aspect. Various long-term benefits were acknowledged by all nine participants. This superordinate theme comprises four sub-themes: (a) family benefitted, (b) importance of spending quality time with family, (c) self-reflection, and (d) satisfaction of personal decisions.

Sub-theme 4.1: Family Benefitted. All nine participants experienced various benefits to their family as a result of the deployment experience. Family benefits included those for the individual child, the family unit overall, the husband-wife relationship, the family unit overall, and extended family opportunities. All but one participant specifically mentioned that their children benefited by becoming stronger, more mature, and resilient.

- “I could’ve never taught that...I could’ve never taught that [*cries*]. [*Sighs*] as a mom, all you want to do is...[*sighs*] prepare your [*sniffs*] kids for life [*chuckles*]. And life is not fair. And...we could worry about all the little things; however, what you wanna know is they’re able to hold their own. They’re able to fend for themselves [*sniffs*] and they’re able to emotionally...[*sniffs*] deal with life’s difficulties and challenges. And...as a mother, we can always try to do that for them, but the reality

is, it's if they don't know how to do it for themselves, they'll fail. And that experience, that gesture [of getting a tattoo with a cross and her parents' dog tags], kind of defying me [*chuckles*] 'cause I said no to tattoos [*sniffs*]. Um...[daughter] said that every time she gets into a hard situation, um, all she has to do is put her hand on her tattoo and remember she made it through [simultaneous combat deployments of both her parents] so she can make it through anything." (Ashleigh, lines 556-572)

- "I think my older two, um, even now, you know, six years later, as they're teenagers and they're in high school, um, they're very resilient and they're very adaptive. Um...you know, in that, um, a primary caregiver for them was gone for eight months. You know, and-and they were able to...to do okay and help out, you know, where they could around the house. Um...and so I think it, you know, it-it builds their, um, it builds their adaptability and it's – I-I think th-they're able to handle, um...not that you want them to be able to handle stress, but I think they're able to handle stress a little bit better, um, because they had, they've had a stressor put on their life." (Molly, lines 703-712)

Overall strengthening of their family unit was realized by two-thirds of the participants.

- "And I-I think when I came back, that was the realization [*quiver in voice*] for [kids] that...I saw a change in both of them after that one.

And then as they're growing mature, you still see what they accept life and they know what life is about. But when I came home from Iraq, I believe our whole family was closer than we were when I left." (Betsy, lines 796-800)

- "Hey, I think, you know, that which doesn't kill you makes you stronger. So I think, you know, here again, proving that we can succeed as a family unit, um, through a deployment, through two deployments. Um...huh, I think it just shows that we can endure anything." (Faith, lines 911-914)

In contrast, only Ann disagreed regarding long-term benefits to her children, her husband, and overall family unit by noting she felt her family lost in the long run.

- "[*sighs*] No, I don't think the kids benefited. I mean, sure, they probably got a little bit stronger 'cause they went through something adverse and adversary it will make you so much stronger. Did they have to go through it twice? Did they have to go through it for 10 months? No. I think you're kidding yourself if, if you as a service member think, 'Oh, my kids are going to be so much better off because I deployed.' The deployment is about you. It's your career. It's your Navy life. Uh...no, my kids were worse off. My husband was worse off because he didn't have a spouse the whole time. He didn't have the emotional support. He didn't have another set of hands to help him run kids around. I think they lose." (Ann, lines 847-857)

More than half of the participants experienced positive long-term benefits in their relationship with their spouse.

- “My husband and I learned a lot about each other during that deployment.” (Betsy, lines 732-733)
- “Um...[husband]...grew in a mature way and understood that we are in it for the long haul. So ir-regardless of work, ir-regardless of what’s going on in life, we grew together [*sniffs*].” (Ashleigh, lines 598-600)
“So those moments apart actually tend to bring you closer together, um...because you’re both working towards the same goal.” (Ashleigh, lines 784-785)
- “I think for my husband it was more that we realized that we were a good team.” (Sara, lines 318-319)

Seven of the nine participants experienced opportunities in strengthening their connections with extended family.

- “And...m-my children. And my mom. She was very involved also and knowing that...my husband had a good relationship with my family, so my mom would still take her trips down even though I wasn’t there. She still felt comfortable going down and he would still – they would spend every spring break with her.” (Betsy, line 437-441)
- “And that [engagement with extended family] continued throughout my, um, entire, uh...tour to include my deployments. So...I’m – so I really think that, um, that was very beneficial.” (Faith, lines 304-306)

Sub-theme 4.2: Importance of Spending Quality Time with Family. Every participant expressed the importance and appreciation of spending quality time with family.

- “Like we would go to the grocery store together with our daughter, or we would take time to just...to read books and instead of, you know, cellphones....I came [back] in August and that’s nice weather. And I don’t think we turned on the TV for a really long time. We would just sit outside while she would play and, you know, whether it was sidewalk chalk or...crafts or something like that. We really didn’t do as much, what I would say is, things that are not as important, I guess. (Sara, lines 264-282)
- “Uhm...when I come home, I just want to do a lot of things with, you know, with the family. So like I want to take them to the park all the time, and uh...you know, take them to the movies and that kind of stuff. So that’s always good, fun family time....So it’s, um, you know, I just want to be selfish and spend all my time with my kids [*laughs*]. I want them to sleep in my bed a couple nights and, you know, things like snuggle them and smell them. Things I didn’t get to do for ages [*laughs*].” (Isabella, lines 353-362)
- “So i-it’s just doing something to get the family back together. And you try to do it when you’re away from all the hustle and bustle—all of the

distractions of their friends and other jobs and all that stuff. So you get that family bonding back.” (Betsy, lines 541-544)

Sub-theme 4.3: Self-reflection. When faced with an emotionally impactful life event, all nine women experienced moments of self-reflection during the long-term separation. Some of the internalized positive feelings included increase in self-confidence, learning about her true inner self, learning to live with herself, personal growth, and professional growth.

- “I guess I-I learned a lot about myself in that sometimes when things seem impossible or um...like you just can’t do it, I think I learned that I can do things, and that there are separation of work and home and I think that with the right support system at home as well as at work, I think they can actually both fold really well together. But I think that’s something that you have to want to do. And I think going into that deployment, I questioned if I could do something like that and how I was going to do it. Um, so I guess I learned more about myself in that time and what I could do. (Sara, lines 285-293)
- “You have to learn how to live with yourself, which can be challenging at times [*chuckles*].” (Isabella, line 422-423)
- “Um...deployment for me was a positive experience. Um...I felt that it was my opportunity to find myself, my opportunity to find out who I was and what I had to offer. Um...and it is a...is and – was a time of reflection.” (Ashleigh, lines 190-193)

Sub-theme 4.4: Satisfaction of Personal Decisions. This was a sub-theme that was common across all the participants. Though some cited some minor things they may have done differently like write more letters or send more care packages, each one of the participants expressed satisfaction with the choices they made during their deployment period.

- “I always look at life like everything you do is a stepping stone to the next level. And...if I would go – I-I-I’m very happy in my life right now, both with my career and my marriage and my children – so if I would go back and change anything, it would change the outcome I have now. So I-I-I really can’t think of anything that I would change. Have I made mistakes? Yes. But I would still make those same mistakes so I could learn the same lessons, so I could apply it to my life and have my life the way it is now.” (Betsy, lines 678-686)
- “So I don’t think I would change things.” (Wendy, line 831)
- “I don’t, I actually don’t know that I would do much differently.” (Sara, line 375)
- “I don’t – you know, I don’t know that there was a whole lot to improve upon.” (Faith, lines 768-769)

Cross-cutting Themes

There were three superordinate themes that did not align under a single RO, but rather emerged as recurring themes supporting multiple ROs to include RO2, RO3, and RO4. The cross-cutting themes characterized successful

strategies of the pre-deployment preparation phase, the deployment phase, and the post-deployment reintegration phase. The cross-cutting superordinate themes and the associated sub-themes included (a) the importance of communicating (b), work-life balance - success in job and home, and (c) deployment stress mitigation strategies.

Theme 5: The Importance of Communicating

Communicating with family and friends was an important element in every stage of the deployment phase. The importance of communication is discussed in depth and often by all nine participants. This superordinate theme comprises three sub-themes: (a) open and honest, (b) frequency, and (c) various types.

Sub-theme 5.1: Open and Honest Communications. All but one participant described the importance of having open and honest communications with connections such as family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. In particular, open and honest discussions with their children were especially important.

- “Don’t leave everything a mystery. I know we have to leave a lot of things a mystery, but...there are ways that you can-you can keep your kids involved in your work life without giving up state secrets, you know. So just try to get them involved in the whole process as much as you can, because if there are no mysteries for them then they’re not worried about you, and I think that helps. Yeah, um...just be as-as open with communication as you can be.” (Isabella, lines 581-589)

- “So...it’s, um...communication is important. Being open and honest is important.” (Betsy, lines 738-739)

In contrast, two of the participants who spoke strongly for open and honest communications, also shared that communications need to be limited or curtailed in certain situations. Ashleigh and Danelle both referenced their experience with deploying on combat missions.

- “So we would call once a week and-and communicate that way....Um...to be honest with you, at the...about three months into it, um, [my daughter] really kind of shut down. Um, and so the phone calls diminished, um, because she was really not wanting to engage as she was going through the deployment. And so we actually honored that....So it was easier for her just to shut everything down. And my mom, who was taking care of her, finally communicated that one of the counsellors at the school said she’s doing great; however, she just wants you home. So you guys may-- what you think is positive in communicating--maybe dredging up things that [the child is] just not capable of dealing with.” (Ashleigh, lines 280-281)
- “I will tell you, when I went to Iraq, I did not tell [my daughter] the truth about where I was going and I’m never dishonest with her, ever, ever, ever. Except Santa Clause and Easter Bunny, I lied. You know, that big lie. But other than that, I’m – I’ve never ever been dishonest with her and, um, I told her I was going on a ship because I knew if I told

her where I was going – ‘cause at the time it was when the war first broke out so there’s like a lot of, you know, um, you know, people getting killed on-on TV. Even when I got there, you know, people getting killed, you know, like we had a mortar attack...somebody gets killed in a trailer right in front of me. So I can’t – if I told her that kind of stuff, she at that age would have not coped with that well. It would’ve been – she would’ve struggled in school and it’s stressful and...uh...wouldn’t have– it would’ve been really hurt. Now my husband knew where I was going, but she did not.” (Danelle, lines 391-406)

Open and honest communications with neighbors, the community, and co-workers helped in garnering support and understanding. This support was realized through support networks on the home front and on the ship or on the battlefield.

- “I-I let everybody know. Everybody knew, you know, everybody at school, all of our friends, um, they knew that I was going to deploy, um, and that I was going to be gone, um, you know, for at least six months. Um...and so I found that, you know, the...the community was so supportive. Um, it-it-that part made me feel better.” (Molly, lines 111-116)
- “Um...well I guess...talking to my roommate. Talking to the other people in the ready room. I mean, everybody knew that, um...it was

a...being the first deployment with kids, I think people knew that it was obviously a harder time for me than in the past. Um...and I think just being honest with people that sometimes you just...you miss home or – which I think everybody does – um, so I think just open communication with people.” (Sara, lines 242-247)

Sub-theme 5.2: Frequency of Communicating. Two-thirds of the participants mentioned the importance of frequent communications. Modern day technology and connectivity generally lends to the support of frequent and often daily communications with family, friends, and neighbors while on deployment.

- “Um, so we bought prepaid cards and paid the 50-cents-a-minute to be able to call home. I tried to call home once a week, um...to know that – then I could talk to [daughter] and then [husband] as well.” (Sara, lines 102-104)
- “Um, I think just-just the regularity or being able to communicate on a semi-regular basis through those mechanisms -- um, email, um VTCs, the occasional phone calls, was helpful.” (Molly, lines 409-412)
- “So when I was on deployment...he would send me something at least once a month from him and the kids and I would do the same. I would send something back.” (Betsy, lines 310-312)

Sub-theme 5.3: Various Types of Communication Means. All participants mentioned the importance of communicating using various means and media available, though not all used every method. Some found emails the best means

of communicating, where others preferred traditional letters and care packages. Phone calls and recorded videos seemed to be best for those with children who were too young to read or write. And all but one participant found the dynamic of real-time video (video conferencing, Facetime, etc.) as helpful in maintaining connections with family and friends. Most used multiple means of communicating.

- “And I’d send [daughter] a note – a letter every single day. So it’s old school, e-mail or letter. I mean to this day I send her an email every day from work....But she loves it, you know what I mean? It’s just a way to stay connected, so. Um, but I would make a point of both emailing, calling and writing a letter every single day to her when I was on deployment. So one, she could have something to look forward to in the mail and she knew I was thinking about her. And the same with my husband, too, you know dropped him notes.” (Danelle, lines 68-77)
- “I think having a phone line and being able to talk to him and comfort him over the phone, while it’s not ideal, um, it worked for us. Um...it was before he could read, so it’s not like I can send him an email. I could send an email to my husband and pass him a message, but I think the phone line was, um, more key than that. Um, and I-I felt that, you know, putting letters in the mail was, here again, he couldn’t read them but he could look at the pretty stickers and, um – those stickers, I tried to buy boy stickers – but um, but-but, you know, something that

would interest him so he knew I was thinking about him.” (Faith, lines 362-371)

- “About half-way through, everybody got a chance to do...have their, like their husband and their kids could come to the base and go in this little room and then they could [video-teleconference] with us. And that was a big thing. That was a big thing for my oldest son. So that was, I think that was a big boost to him. I just got to see him....I got to see [my youngest son] squirming around and how much bigger he was and stuff. Um...and yeah, you know, you got to see [husband] and you know, he’s kind of see things, hey, you know, he’s getting his haircut or did he grow a beard or did he shave his beard. You know, whatever.” (Wendy, lines 292-312)
- “Um, they really didn’t email. They were still too young to do that. We would Facetime but only in port, ‘cause you – now in Afghanistan we would Facetime in my barrack’s room, which was great, but on a carrier I can’t....I would try to get a hotel room for a night, at least one night in a port call....But for me it was worth paying a couple of hundred dollars to get a hotel room but, really, I was buying wi-fi and my ability to Facetime.” (Ann, lines 309-317)
- “Um, but [husband] always sends, whether they’re packages or just little one-line emails saying, you know, ‘We’re okay. It’s fine. She eats chicken, but she’s fine.’” (Sara, lines 192-194)

Theme 6: Work-life Balance - Success in Job and Home

Four sub-themes emerged from balancing work and life: (a) positive experience of military service and deployment, (b) purposeful feelings associated with deploying, (c) dual working parent aspects, and (d) internal conflicts in deciding to stay in the service or resign.

Sub-theme 6.1: Positive Experience of Military Service and Deployment.

All participants spoke very strongly of their overall positive experiences as a member of the active duty military and being in the Navy citing professional achievements, educational benefits, personal growth opportunities, and general pride and enjoyment of serving their country. Each also described deployment as a professional chance to expand their career and promotion opportunities. Though challenging at times, deployment resonated with clear expressions of enjoyment.

- “I love being underway and I love my job, but at the same time it was...it’s always fun to go on deployment...” (Sara, lines 121-123)
- “Um...to this point it’s been extremely positive. Um...I always say that I will stay in it until it’s no longer fun and for 13.5 years it’s been...a blast. So, um...I keep threatening to stay in 30. My husband is not sure if I should do that [*laughs*]. Um...I’ve gotten to do a variety of different jobs that have been challenging and again, each one has been fun. And...and...honestly, when it comes to leadership that I’ve

received and um, commands that I've worked at, overwhelmingly positive experience with all of the above." (Isabella, lines 10-17)

- "So, um, I've had a lot of good experience. I've met a lot of wonderful people, both other members of the military, other members of other military and military in other countries, and the NATO command, um, even meeting a lot of individuals from other countries that are working for NATO. And I've had a lot of good experience. A lot of good travels. A couple of nice deployments. So I've-I've really enjoyed it." (Betsy, lines 14-20)

Sub-theme 6.2: Purposeful Feelings Associated with Deploying. All but two mothers expressed great satisfaction of being a part of something important and making a difference referencing examples in their jobs while on deployment. It helped the participants focus on the positive, knowing that the work being done was purposeful and that they were part of something bigger than themselves. Pride of being a part of accomplishing an important mission was evident.

- "...you have a purpose and, um, you have the ability to affect change or do goodness for not just your crew, but whatever mission you're given. Um, that...that is phenomenal." (Faith, lines 317-320)
- "I think as with anything in life, if you just have a positive attitude and...I really felt like I was doing something important on my deployment and so just having that, um...sense of mission, helped with that sense of accomplishment..." (Isabella, lines 267-270)

- “And part of it is just you’re part of something bigger. And that is very hard to describe to somebody.” (Ann, lines 463-465)
- “Yeah, so I loved being on deployment. The piece I didn’t like was missing my family. But um...you grow professionally in that you feel like you’re contributing to the mission more than just sitting at a desk job. And so the work you’re doing feels more tangible and real and rewarding.” (Danelle, lines 698-701)

Sub-theme 6.3: Dual-working Parent Aspects. All but two participants had experience with being married to a husband who was either still on active-duty, had prior military service experience, or was retired from the military. This was both challenging and helpful to the family unit. It was challenging because with a dual military relationship, both parents are thus managing two sets of military orders, relocations not necessarily supporting co-location, family planning, and the fact they are both world-wide deployable.

- “I think, as most people do with a career in the Navy, we opted to have children later so that we could meet – I could meet some of my wickets within my community as well as, um, him also.” (Sara, lines 33-36)
- “We told them Mom’s going away again. And I – they didn’t understand what that was two deployments ago. When my husband was deployed...” (Ann, lines 90-92)

Having a spouse who was familiar with the commitments of military service was beneficial in the sense the participants thought their military

husbands better understood why each as a service member needed to deploy. Thus the participants felt their military husbands were more inclined to provide them with the support and encouragement each needed.

- “...the one thing that’s-that’s stressful, um...or can be stressful is when both of you work. So when both of you are-are active-duty military and as us, um, can often be the case, um, there’s – you’ve got to, you know, you’ve got to...compromise on each other’s career. And he had done a deployment, and I think that was the helpful thing. He had deployed before me, so I knew, you know, what it was gonna be...for him [to remain home].” (Molly, lines 737-745)
- “...[husband] being deployed in OIF I and OIF II, um, he had experienced some pretty gruesome things that he still hadn’t gotten through. So as a husband, he in OIF III was then able to see me and in his mind, he helped me go through them, and to be honest with you, my biggest concern was not of me. It was for him. Because I know that he would not have been able to handle mentally the load of me being out there.” (Ashleigh, lines 491-497)

Whether or not the spouse had previous or current military experience, a spouse who also had his own career added to the challenges in maintaining an adequate work-life balance.

- “My husband is always 100% supportive of my career since day one. And...you know, I tried to, but-but by the same token I make a big

effort to support what he wants to do. So he wanted to finish college and he's a physical therapist, so he wanted to finish college. So I got orders to Puerto Rico so he could study his medical stuff in his own language." (Danelle, lines 275-280)

- "Um, so...you start to put together plans, um, with being married to a [service member], who at the time worked at [military base], so he was driving an hour from our home to his work. Um, you start putting together how we're going to get your kid to daycare. How...what-what is your game plan on the back end if something happens and you're late." (Ashleigh, lines 126-132)

Sub-theme 6.4: Internal Conflicts in Deciding to Stay in the Service or Resign. Two-thirds of the participants indicated that they battled with making a decision to stay in the Navy or to get out. Four of them never intended on staying in the service from the onset of their career. Over half of the participants expressed concerns or fear of deploying as a reason to consider resigning their commission. Ann in particular was strongly opposed to being separated from her children when they were infants.

- "I joined the Navy not necessarily intending to stay for 20 years and beyond...just being able to continue the upward progression, um, and when it not only just made sense but just became something I really wanted to do." (Faith, lines 22-26)

- "...my future was uncertain on whether or not I was gonna stay in or get out, just because I didn't want to put the brunt on him, to have to do things or take care of everything while I was gone." (Sara, lines 320-323)
- "And if I look back on my career and I think just in general what's the one biggest thing that influenced me – or maybe influence is the wrong word – but allowed me to stay in as a mother, it was that I didn't have to deploy when they were infants. I think my heart would've broken." (Ann, lines 724-729)

In citing why these officers decided to stay, four of them reasoned that the reward must outweigh the time away from family. More than half of the mothers justified it in terms of deployments and other challenging moments lasting only a finite time. For example, although leaving family was going to be hard, they reasoned that it was only for a set period of time and they would return. And a smaller one-third said that retirement was a strong consideration for remaining in the Navy.

- "At the end of the day, the job you're doing has to be worth what you left behind." (Ann, lines 833-834)
- "Nothing lasts forever and you know, you're going to come home eventually." (Betsy, lines 653-654)
- "Knowing that there was going to be an end to it. You know, you-you sort of had a sad day of when you're gonna pull anchor and head back

home. So...um...just knowing that there's a goal in sight." (Isabella, lines 295-297)

Though striking a balance between work and family was a continuous focus, a third of the mothers clearly indicated that family must come first.

- I want to be successful in my job, but at the end of the day I really want to come home to my family put together. So I don't want to give up my marriage or family for the Navy, in the same way that I don't want to give up the Navy for that. But if I have to prioritize, and the end of 20 years, I want my husband there...[cries] and my kids, so...so I think it's...wanting them to know who you are [sniffs] and not have so much regret against you for leaving." (Sara, lines 554-562)

Theme 7: Deployment Stress Mitigation Strategies

Stressful aspects impacting the three phases of deployment were mentioned by all participants throughout the interviews. Focusing towards positive strategies, the researcher encouraged the participants to discuss how each overcame or mitigated the stressful challenges. Deployment stress mitigation strategies had three reoccurring sub-themes which anchored around (a) support for the husband or guardian, (b) support for the child, and (c) strong support network at home. Often the mitigation strategies crossed more than one and sometimes all three deployment phases. Elements that were identified to provide the mitigation strategy for the participant were not generally isolated to a particular sub-theme, but rather occurred in other sub-themes. For example, the

support provided by a nanny or au pair not only provided solid support for the child, but the nanny served in a support role to the husband and was a foundational element in the establishment of the support network at home.

Sub-theme 7.1: Support for the Husband or Guardian. General support for the husband or guardian included assistance with childcare, help with household chores, and assistance from neighbors and extended family. Though seven of the participants said they trusted their husbands or guardian to run things at home and care for the children, seven also said that support that was arranged to assist the husband or guardian in reducing his or her stress also reduced the participant's level of stress.

- “I don't want [husband] to be burdened with [things], 'cause it stresses him out. I just want him to take care of my daughter – our daughter when-when I'm gone....You know, um, so...so I tried to make sure it's set up for life to be as easy for him just to take care of our daughter.” (Danelle, lines 53-60)
- “I think at night, almost every night, it's a struggle because I think you're realizing that you're not at home and maybe you have ideas of what should be going on at home but you really can't inject yourself into that because you know that there's a very capable person at home taking care of your kids.” (Sara, lines 116-120) “...the things that we had put in place to um...I think to reduce what we could on his end,

and ...reduce the work or the stresses that he had.” (Sara, lines 331-334)

- [Part-time help] didn't do all of it 'cause my husband definitely did a lot of that stuff. But um...she might help things, you know, with like the baby stuff. You know, with diapers or, you know, or...I don't even know, 'cause I wasn't there. I just knew that it made me feel more comfortable to know that there was someone to come in in there and to help sometimes with that.” (Wendy, lines 191-196)

Sub-theme 7.2: Support for the Child. Support for the child included having trust in the husband's or guardian's ability to care for the child which was a common feeling of all but one participant. Having a nanny or childcare provider that not only focused on the child's needs but could also serve as a constant for the child was a mitigating stress strategy for two-thirds of the participants. All participants expressed the importance of the role that extended family played in supporting the child. As mentioned previously in the sub-theme of support for the husband or guardian, the participants' feelings of comfort that the child had a good support system also eased the participants' stress.

- “My husband does a fantastic job of taking care of our son and, um, everything to do with our son.” (Faith, lines 280-282)
- “[Nanny] was a constant in the house also for my daughter. Um, and she was...um...and I think that having the nanny kind of helped put myself at ease because there was a constant in addition to [daughter's]

father and my husband, um, at that time.” (Sara, lines 43-47) “The nanny did a lot, actually....She helped with, um, meal prep and also while it was only her job to take care of our daughter, she did a lot more around the house to kinda help with that.” (Sara, lines 55-60)

- “I always tell my junior sailors to me the biggest stress as parents is childcare. Childcare is expensive and you’re leaving the person you love the most in someone else’s care. If you can figure that out, what causes you the least amount of stress – and often people don’t have a choice ‘cause they don’t make a lot of money....I mean, daycare is really, really expensive....So if you can figure that out, that you’re comfortable and happy leaving your child with whoever they are, and the stress is okay on you.” (Ann, lines 766-775)
- “I would make sure my mom or my dad or someone else could come to [daughter’s] shows with my husband. You know, so she had more family in her shows when – on the ones that I couldn’t be.” (Danelle, lines 119-121)

Sub-theme 7.3: Strong Support Network at Home. As presented in the previous two sub-themes, the importance of the support role exhibited by extended family, friends, neighbors, community, and child care providers was foundational to providing a strong support network at home for the participants and their family units. The positive role of friends, neighbors, and community were especially impactful to six of the participants.

- “I have a very supportive family. My immediate family, and my husband, and my kids and my parents. But people crawl out of the woodwork on deployments. People...I have like a step-aunt that I’ve met 3-4 times in my life and she just sent me huge boxes every deployment I went on. So people wanna support you and they do.”
(Ann, lines 295-300)
- So there were lots of family to support my husband and, um, they...um, often interacted at least...uh, once or twice a week with my dad. And, um...and usually once or twice a month with other extended family, whether it was my brother or my aunt and uncle. Um, and so...I don’t think my son, while he missed out on time with me, he was still getting family time. And I think that that was very...um, important and key.” (Faith, lines 290-295) “You also need to have your network of friends and family that keep you positive and they don’t have to be Navy people. They can be friends and family, um, or supporters that aren’t even, you know, family. (Faith, lines 861-864)
- Our neighbors would also on Saturday or Sunday would call and say, ‘Can I take [daughter] for two hours?’ And [husband] would say, ‘Yes, you can take her for two hours.’ He would do his schoolwork in that time. And then sometimes he would just call the neighbors too and they would take her so she could play with other kids and...the joke of a village – that it takes a village [to raise a child], but [*cries*] it didn’t.

Just because it was nice to see everybody [*cries*] trying to help. (Sara, lines 359-370)

- “But it was the fact that the community that said, ‘Hey, really, you know, we’ve got your back. We’re gonna-we’re gonna look out for your kids in school. Um, you know, we’ll make sure they’re taken care of.’” (Molly, lines 123-125)
- “So it was nice having an au pair that can kind of...help out with that kind of stuff and think about some of that stuff as well.” (Isabelle, lines 54-56)

Research Objective and Theme Correlation

The previous sections highlight demographics and emergent themes resulting from the analysis of the data. The demographics of the study group satisfy RO1. The identified positive strategies and four of the superordinate emergent themes support RO2, RO3, RO4, and RO5. Three superordinate themes did not align under a single RO, but rather emerged as recurring themes supporting multiple ROs. The cross-cutting themes characterize successful strategies of the preparation phase, the separation phase, and the reintegration phase and align under all three RO2, RO3, and RO4. Table 8 correlates the seven superordinate themes to the ROs. Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the superordinate themes and associated subthemes.

Table 8

Research Objective and Superordinate Theme Correlation

Research Objective (RO)	Themes	Cross-cutting Themes
RO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic discussion 	
RO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1: Preparedness provided a sense of control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 5: The importance of communicating • Theme 6: Work-life balance - success in job and home • Theme 7: Deployment stress mitigation strategies
RO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 2: Coping mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 5: The importance of communicating • Theme 6: Work-life balance - success in job and home • Theme 7: Deployment stress mitigation strategies
RO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 3: Reintegration requires acceptance of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 5: The importance of communicating • Theme 6: Work-life balance - success in job and home • Theme 7: Deployment stress mitigation strategies
RO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 4: Long-term positive realizations of deployment 	

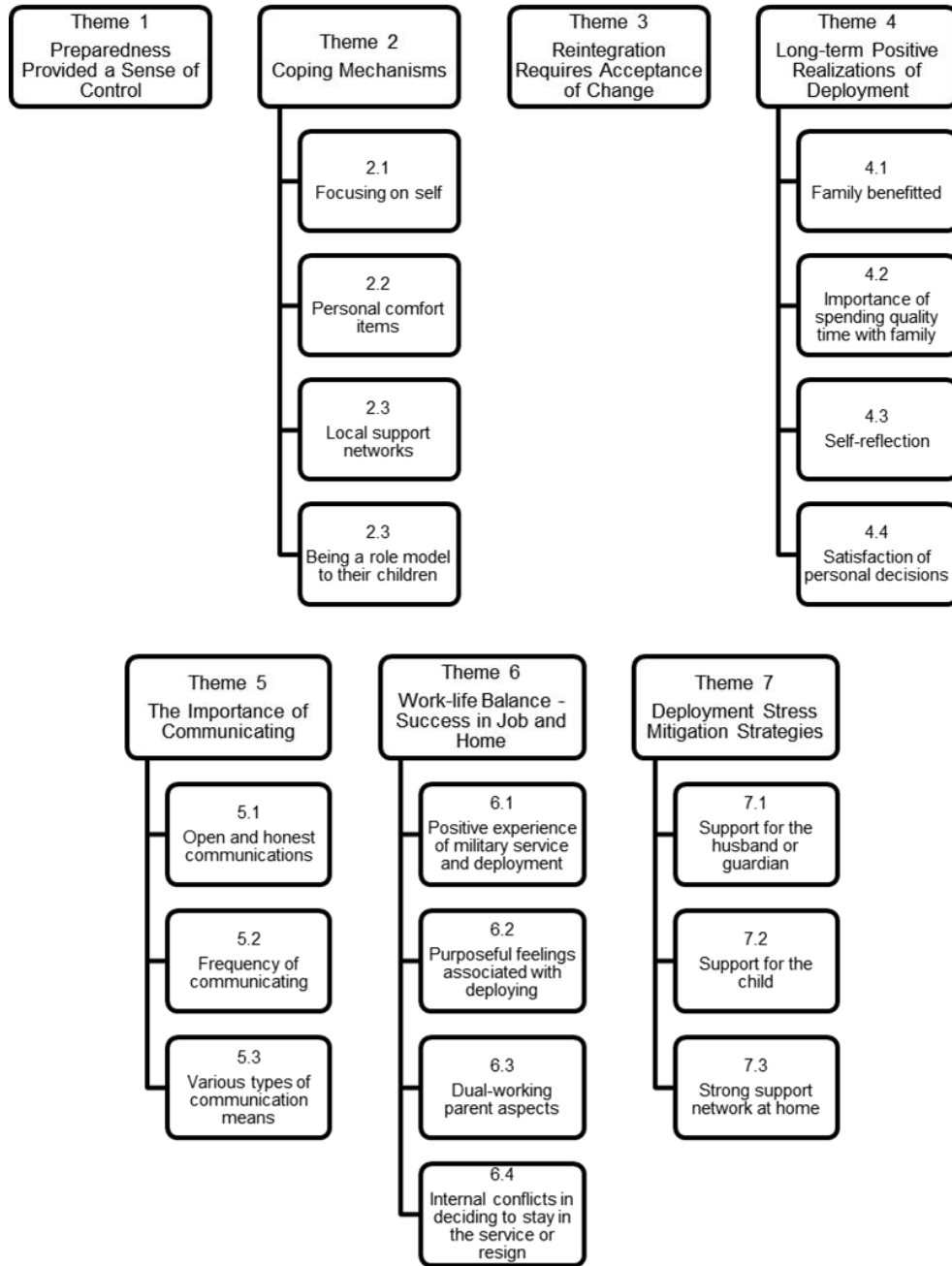


Figure 5. Organizational Chart of Themes

Validation of Findings

Richards (2009) defines validity as “the quality of being well-founded and applicable to the case or circumstances; soundness and strength (of argument,

proof, authority, etc.)” (p. 148). Validity involves verifiable truth and the statement of facts that are drawn from the truth. Highlighting the academic arguments for and against the proper role of validity in qualitative inquiry, literature offers new and various means of equivalent validity concepts in the terms of credibility, applicability, dependability, transferability, confirmability, and trustworthiness (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Given, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Richards, 2009; Richards & Morse, 2007).

Although Creswell (2003) also argues validity does not convey the same inferences in qualitative research in comparison to quantitative research, eight strategies offer means to verify finding accuracy. The strategies include: triangulation, member checking, use of rich, thick description, clarification of bias, presentation of discrepant information, prolong time in the field, use of peer debriefing, and use of an external auditor. In this IPA inquiry, the researcher used many of these strategies to show the results accurately reflected the phenomenon studied.

Triangulation

Triangulation allows a researcher to view the participant’s experience from multiple perspectives aiding to credibility of the study design (Given, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Richards, 2009). In this IPA process, triangulation included the gathering of unobtrusive data or *nonreactive research* by researcher observation during the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Additionally, a variety of participants were selected such that the sample included a range of

ranks (junior, mid-grade, and senior), ages of children at the time of the deployment (infant and toddler, school age, and teenager), and time since the last deployment (recent, mid-term, and past), consequently offering a range of perspectives for analysis (Given, 2016).

Member Checking

Member checking, or respondent validation, represents a technique researchers use to gather feedback from the participants regarding the accuracy of collected data and interpretations (Creswell, 2003; Richards, 2009). After the interviews were returned from the transcription service, the researcher forwarded a copy of the transcribed interview via email to the participant and requested verification of accuracy (Appendix U). Though the request included a caveat that a non-response signified concurrence from the participant, six of the participants provided validation with two of them actually providing changes to the transcribed interview document. The member corrected versions were used during the analysis.

Rich Description

The use of thick, rich description in articulating the results aids readers in grasping the complete scene of the experience, thus adding to the level of understanding (Creswell, 2003). Since IPA focuses on detailed lived experience, how the researcher's interpreted results are communicated to the reader is therefore a critical element (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The researcher made deliberate use of transcript excerpts paired with detailed

interpretation to clearly communicate the data collected and properly convey the shared experiences of the participant.

Bias Clarification and Field Experience

By merging two strategies recommended by Creswell (2003), bias clarification and prolong time in the field, the importance of self-reflection of the researcher becomes evident. As previously revealed, the current active duty status and past experience of deploying as a mother was used effectively yet sensitively by the researcher during this IPA study. Accordingly, by leveraging double hermeneutic, a more deep understanding of the experience lends to a *reflective engagement* interpretation of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

Summary

This chapter offers an explanation of the data analysis process and a review of the study results. Excerpts of the verbatim transcripts were offered to support the seven superordinate and associated sub-themes that emerged during analysis. Resultant themes were presented and aligned under the respective RO or multiple ROs in the case of cross-cutting themes. A list of positive strategies was offered for each phase of the deployment cycle and for the positive outcomes and benefits of a long-term deployment. The chapter concludes with the approach used to validate the study findings. The remaining chapter comprises findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as suggestions for further research. The study concludes with a list of references and appendixes.

CHAPTER V – FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapters I through IV discussed the need for increasing female officer retention in the U.S Navy in an effort to increase female representation at senior levels of military leadership thereby increasing talent and critical thinking across the U. S. armed forces. This chapter presents a summary of the study and the results and discusses findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Additionally implications for study limitations are offered as well as recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe effective and successful strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces. The research used a qualitative, constructionist approach informed by hermeneutics and idiography called IPA. The IPA served as the method to interpret the individual lived experiences of female Navy officers who deployed as a mother. The participants of the purposive sample included a range of ranks (junior, mid-grade, and senior), ages of children at the time of the deployment (infant and toddler, school age, and teenager), and time since the last deployment (recent, mid-term, and past) in exploring an array of strategies and personal experiences.

In keeping with the positive spirit of appreciative inquiry, the interview schedule and research questions were designed with an affirmative construct.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with nine participants using thirteen open-ended questions. Information offered by the participants prior to selection using the Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form and verbatim transcripts from the actual interviews provided the rich data used to address the research objectives of the study.

Summary of Results

There were seven superordinate themes and 18 associated sub-themes that emerged during analysis. Resultant themes were presented and aligned under the respective RO or multiple ROs in the case of cross-cutting themes. Excerpts of the verbatim transcripts were offered to support the superordinate themes and sub-themes. A list of positive strategies was offered for each phase of the deployment cycle and for the positive outcomes and benefits of a long-term deployment. The identified emergent themes included:

- Theme 1: Preparedness provided a sense of control
- Theme 2: Coping mechanisms
 - Sub-theme 2.1: Focusing on self
 - Sub-theme 2.2: Personal comfort items
 - Sub-theme 2.3: Local support networks
 - Sub-theme 2.4: Being a role model to their children
- Theme 3: Reintegration requires acceptance of change
- Theme 4: Long-term positive realizations of deployment
 - Sub-theme 4.1: Family benefitted

- Sub-theme 4.2: Importance of spending quality time with family
- Sub-theme 4.3: Self-reflection
- Sub-theme 4.4: Satisfaction of personal decisions
- Theme 5: The importance of communicating
 - Sub-theme 5.1: Open and honest communications
 - Sub-theme 5.2: Frequency of communicating
 - Sub-theme 5.3: Various types of communication means
- Theme 6: Work-life balance - success in job and home
 - Sub-theme 6.1: Positive experience of military service and deployment
 - Sub-theme 6.2: Purposeful feelings associated with deploying
 - Sub-theme 6.3: Dual-working parent aspects
 - Sub-theme 6.4: Internal conflicts in deciding to stay in the service or resign
- Theme 7: Deployment stress mitigation strategies
 - Sub-theme 7.1: Support for the husband or guardian
 - Sub-theme 7.2: Support for the child
 - Sub-theme 7.3: Strong support network at home

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The following sections relate the findings to the problem of increasing female officer retention and link to the theoretical framework and existing literature. The findings were developed by using both the analyzed data, the

explicit requests and recommendations of the participants, and the intrinsic double hermeneutics process of IPA . The findings are also influenced by the themes that emerged as part of this study. Strongly influential themes include the cross-cutting themes: the importance of communicating, work-life balance - success in job and home, and deployment stress mitigation strategies.

Finding 1: Role Issues Reveal Conflict for Deploying Military Mothers

All but one participant expressed conflicts associated with the various roles a deploying mother fulfills in the course of her responsibilities and routine. These conflicts included but were not limited to the roles of wife, mother, primary caregiver, household maintainer, military officer, leader, and mentor. Many of these impact the ability to effectively maintain a satisfiable and sustainable work-life balance.

Conclusion for Finding 1. This study supports social role theory which distinguishes gender roles in defining acceptable social behavior and stresses that individuals often act in manners and behaviors that align with expectations of various gender roles (Eagly, 1987). Further confirmation of the finding of Biddle's (1986) understanding of role theory considers society's aspect in defining how humans behave in ways which are expected and dependent on respective social identities (e.g. husband, mother, or teacher). A woman's social identity to her self-understanding as a woman, wife, or mother can constrain her behavior as a military member and leader (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ely, 1995).

This study supports the common gender stereotype which describes women as commonly exhibiting communal qualities such as: empathetic, expressive, nurturing, caring, cooperative, and mentoring (Eagly, 1987, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007b; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Most of the participants in this study expressed guilt in not fulfilling their roles as a mother, primary caregiver, and maintainer of the household during the deployment period. Many attempt to compensate for these shortfalls by continuing to maintain as many responsibilities as possible while deployed. Others chose to outsource the work so that the husband was not burdened with the added stress of responsibilities.

Recommendation for Finding 1. Mentoring programs both formal and informal report successful outcomes but also experience challenges. Research shows women tend to be more communal, motivated as mentors, and inspired by learning how others have succeeded in the challenging work-life domain (Bensahel et al., 2015; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli 2003; Kraft, 2010; Parker & Kram, 1993; Phd in Parenting, 2012; Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). Establishing mentoring programs specifically designed for female military service members may prove helpful since research also supports demographic similarity documenting individuals more closely identify with other individuals who share the same demographics (e.g. gender) on the basis of mutual life experiences and principles (Foley et al., 2006; Ragins, 1997a, 1997b; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

To support the communal and expressive qualities often common in women, establishing mentoring programs that are supportive and take

advantages of these aspects may prove beneficial. Establishing supportive mentoring programs that attract mentors and mentees may allow women to build supportive relationships forming mentor-mentee associations which could aid in helping women to overcome internal social role conflicts. More informal mentoring programs could capitalize on the use of social media and online blogs providing a venue for women to post questions and share stories. For example, the current “Female Navy Officers” Facebook page could be expanded or others created to specifically accommodate discussions for deployment strategies and associated thread dialogues. Additionally, Academy Women (www.academywomen.org), a 501c3 non-profit global leadership and professional development organization, offers an online mentoring program called Military Women eMentor which could be expanded to include the posting of stories and successful strategies for overcoming deployment challenges.

Finding 2: Age and Personality of the Child Should be a Consideration in Creating Deployment Success

Over half of the participants expressed concerns of leaving young children behind on deployment. Five of the mothers mentioned it was particularly harder to leave the younger ones (infant and toddlers) citing fears that the child could not understand the deployment situation and did not have a good grasp of the passage of time. In contrast, two participants who had older children at the time of their last deployment expressed that though it felt harder as a mother to leave the younger child, in retrospect, these mothers felt it was the better time to

deploy citing the young child would not remember the separation. From a reintegration perspective, one participant felt that it was easier to reintegrate with a younger child who was generally more accepting than an older child. The age of a child matters in how the deploying military mother prepares for the deployment, endures the separation, and reintegrates back with the family.

Two of the participants referenced their experience with communicating with their child while deployed on combat missions. Both cited issues with the media covering the event and mostly reporting negative situations and televising dangerous and graphic aspects of the conflict and war events. Factors such as the age of the child, the child's ability to emotionally handle the situation (such as knowing the mother is in a dangerous environment), and the child's unique personality should be considered when determining the amount of information shared while preparing for and enduring a deployment.

Conclusion for Finding 2. This study supports the findings of Hock and Schirtzinger (1992) whose study reveals the age of the child may matter in terms of maternal separation anxiety. Results from this study also align with Ritchie's (2001) conclusions that separation from younger children causes women (and men) the most distress. Feelings of maternal stress anxiety are not fixed, but rather change over time as the child grows (DeMeis et al., 1986). Women must internally accept how they balance career and family responsibilities, especially separations from offspring (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992). One participant who

deployed with children 11-months-old and 5-years-old expresses this best in her interview when she stated:

You think that leaving the younger one would...be harder, but it's the older one that is harder, because...he knows what's going on and he knows what's missing....The baby, it's harder on me personally because I know what I'm missing. (Wendy, lines 704-709)

[When they are a baby] that's the time to [deploy]. Maybe it's harder on you, but it's easier on them. It's easier...for your 1-year-old to reintegrate with you...than when he's seven or ten....Those are harder ages because the kids are feeling more. (Wendy, lines 722-727)

Recommendation for Finding 2. Mentoring programs designed to allow women to discuss the difficulties associated with managing maternal guilt and the problems and challenges of dealing with and communicating with the various ages of children would be beneficial. Venues to allow mothers to share and document their success stories could prove helpful in supporting women during this difficult period as they navigate the challenges of their work-life balance. Books, videos, songs, and online games designed for the various ages of the military child could be helpful to the child and ease the stress of the military parent. Family support and engagement programs specifically designed for the various ages of the child and offered at critical times of the deployment cycle could ease the stress of the family unit.

Finding 3: Support Networks are Critical to Deployment Success

All participants attributed success of the deployment to the assistance they received from strong support networks for the husband or guardian, the child, and themselves. The importance of the support roles exhibited by extended family, friends, neighbors, community, and child care providers were reported as foundational to providing a strong support network at home for the participants and their family units. Each mother revealed these support networks are critical strategies for success in all three stages of the deployment cycle.

Conclusion for Finding 3. The literature review highlights the lack of pre- and post-deployment programs available to support non-traditional family configuration, such as female active duty or head of the household family structure (Goodman et al., 2013; Meadows et al., 2016). Since female officers indicate their decisions to remain in the service are powerfully influenced by the presence of a strong and supportive family network, mainly their spouse, any cause or increase in stress to the spouse or support system may jeopardize retention plans (Lince et al., 2011). This study supports the findings of Southwell and Wadsworth (2016) with respect to the need for tailored services and networks to meet the current specific needs of female service members and their families. Furthermore, the study results parallel suggestions that development of pre- and post-deployment programs and counseling designed to support members of the non-traditional family unit may prove beneficial to increasing the retention of female service members (Harris, 2009; Kelley et al., 2002; Meadows et al., 2016).

Recommendation for Finding 3. Again, customized mentoring programs could prove helpful in sharing successful strategies of strengthening support networks women have clearly defined as critical to reducing stress and adding to the success of overcoming the challenges of a deployment. The successful strategies collected during this study could be reproduced into a support pamphlet designed with the military mother in mind. Also development of pre- and post-deployment programs and counseling designed to support members of the non-traditional family unit may prove beneficial to increasing the retention of female service members.

Implications of Limitations

Various implications of limitations existed throughout this study. First, the IPA methodology introduced some unexpected encounters and challenges for the researcher that potentially limited the results of the analysis. These challenges may have introduced consequences experienced at various stages throughout the study process to include selection of the participants, collection of the data particularly while conducting the interviews, and analysis of the data. During the interview, the researcher's responsiveness to recognizing when it was appropriate to simply listen and when to prompt for deeper answers or ask follow-up questions to clarify the participants' thoughts was essential for interview success. Although, consistency and effectiveness of the researcher's technique is believed adequate for interviewing, familiarity with the process and refinement of interview skills continuously improved the researcher's effectiveness with each

subsequent interview. Therefore, the interview effectiveness might lack consistency for all participants. Many of these challenges were anticipated by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) for inexperienced IPA researchers. The research may have benefited from follow-up interviews of some participants.

Second, the quality of the data transcribed relates to the ability of the participants to recall experiences. Though all participants seemed comfortable relating experiences of the most recent deployment, the two participants whose deployment was more than 12 years ago had some difficulty recalling the specific strategies they used to prepare for the deployment, endure the separation, and reintegrate following the deployment. However, their comments were specifically rich and enlightening in describing the long-term benefits of the deployment to their children and family units. In contrast, the two participants whose last deployment occurred more recently (within the last four years) recalled easily the strategies they used; however, information to support the long-term benefit perspective of deployments was very limited or non-existent.

Finally, the researcher in this study is an active duty female Navy captain (O-6) with over 24 years of service who deployed as a mother and mid-grade officer in 2006. The researcher approached the analysis of the data from the viewpoint of her own lived experience which in turn may influence the way the data was viewed and analyzed. The researcher identified potential personal bias to better understand how it may have impacted the study design, data collection,

data analysis, and conclusions and then consciously made appropriate choices to embrace, neutralize, or minimize the bias per the employed IPA methodology.

Recommendations for Further Research

Race and ethnicity were not considerations in this study. In addition to women being identified as underrepresented among senior military officers, the MLDC (2011) reported low representation of racial and ethnic minorities and the need to increase the retention in this area of focus. It would therefore seem logical to also conduct research targeting the retention of these diverse demographics.

Southwell and Wadsworth (2016) reveal a more diverse, complex, and non-traditional structure of military women's families (e.g., dual-military, single-parent, and step-parent) as compared to men's that possibly leads to more attention required of a woman to attend to family responsibilities. Marital status was among the data collected but not part of the criteria for inclusion in this study. All participants were married at the time of the referenced deployment with all but one participant having the husband care for the children during the separation. The remaining participant had her mother care for the child since both the participant and the husband were deployed during the same time period. Godwin (1996) suggests deployments particularly impact single parent families. Since the importance of childcare was an important and recurring issue among all of the participants, a follow-on study might consider retention of single mothers. The strategies single mothers would identify for preparing for and

enduring long-term deployments might be focused differently in light of the additional challenge of not automatically having a spouse to care for the children.

Though the military status of the participants' spouses was not among the data originally collected nor criteria for inclusion in this study, each participant that had a husband who was either prior service or still serving in the military services spoke voluntarily of the challenges associated with the dual-military life of their family unit. A follow-on study focusing on the retention challenges of mothers in a dual-military relationship should also be considered. Furthermore, same sex marriages and civil unions may also be a consideration for future research.

Further research should be considered from the male perspective. Future research might include a study of the experiences and viewpoint of the female service member's spouse. In particular, the husbands or same sex spouses of the female service members may also add to the literature of positive benefits of long-term deployments to the family unit. Additionally, separate studies from the perspective of the single father service member may also be warranted.

The current study used an appreciative inquiry approach to provide detailed insights into the positive experiences and strategies of mothers for increasing retention among female Navy officers. Consequently, a study exploring both the positive and the negative viewpoints of deployments would offer a more balanced perspective for women service members when considering retention decisions. Further research should also expand to the

enlisted ranks of women in an effort to increase the retention and representation among senior enlisted female leaders. Additionally, since this study focused on female retention challenges associated with Navy sea duty and deployments, further research should investigate the perspective of the remaining military service branches.

Discussion

The positive response from women officers requesting participation in this initiative was awe-inspiring. All of the participants as well as the non-selected candidates were very interested in the results of this research, which indicates a desire for improvement with regards to women retention in the Navy. The women interviewed in this study were very open to sharing and talking about experiences. Often the researcher was deeply and emotionally affected by the lived experiences shared and expressed by the participants. The researcher was both professionally and personally heartened by the trust imparted by the participants to openly share very private and emotional experiences in an effort to help fellow and future women in the Navy experience success and continue a military career.

Through the use of IPA and the double hermeneutic experience, the researcher was afforded the opportunity to reflect on self-experiences and the knowledge that derived from the role as the researcher of this study. At times the researcher was quite overwhelmed by the depth of participants' shared experiences. The researcher endeavored to adequately capture the participants'

views and sentiments by authentically interpreting and annotating the participants' experiences.

Having personally experienced the challenges of deploying and leaving children behind, this researcher was particularly motivated to capture the positives of the experience. Yes, deploying is hard, and it's even harder when loved ones such as children are involved, but a military mother can successfully complete deployments and foster a family unit that becomes stronger from the overall experience. By acknowledging the difficulties and documenting and sharing the successes, the researcher hopes that when faced with the impending decision of challenging sea duty and long deployment separations compared to resignation, more women will make the choice to navigate the harder path and elect to stay in the naval service.

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the study and the interpretive phenomenal results. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were presented and related to the theoretical framework and existing literature. Next, suggestions for further research and the researcher's discussion are offered. Finally, the study concludes with a list of references and appendixes.

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe effective strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces and thereby increasing female officer retention. Human capital theory (Becker, 1962, 1993), diversity management

theory (Thomas,1991), and social role theory (Eagly, 1987) form the theoretical framework of this study explained the importance of investing in people, effectively managing diversity and inclusion, and exploring gender roles and associated stresses respectively. This study utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis to reveal mothers' experience of leaving a child due to a military deployment. Appreciative inquiry formed the basis of assembling positive perspectives and strategies. Analysis identified themes and strategies to improve female officer retention. The study results support the researcher's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. By implementing customized mentoring programs and focused family services for Navy women, the knowledge that these resources are available to women as they begin to contemplate career retention or resignation may prove helpful in decreasing the fears and challenges of deployment separations. With these additional tools and resources, more women might choose the harder path of staying in the armed forces.

The global environment is complex and requires a globally dominant fighting force, one that is innovative and diverse in thought. The moral and business case for gender diversity supports the advantages that female leadership brings to improving military operational effectiveness. With females underrepresented among the senior military leadership, a focus on increasing female retention remains imperative. Barriers to female retention include actual and anticipated maternal separation anxiety linked to children and general

stresses linked to separation from children, family, and household. The U.S. National Military Strategy calls for the integration of women across the force as a critical component towards enhancing innovation and the country's warfighting capability (CJCS, 2015). Expansion of the United States' full range of talent to include women proves critical to developing a diversified and inclusive defense force capable of fronting new challenges and threats in an increasingly complex and global world.

APPENDIX A – Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group’s Permission to Reprint Figure

From: Alison VanDerVolgen <AlisonVanDerVolgen@kjcg.com>
Sent: Monday, July 11, 2016 2:26 PM
To: Walker, Angie (CAPT USN NDU/CASL)
Cc: angela.h.walker@usm.edu
Subject: RE: Request permission to use material in a dissertation

Hello Angie,

KJCG give you permission to use the information and the Figure from the article referenced below for the purposes of your dissertation.

As for the citation, please cite to The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc. 518-271-7000 and if possible include the information regarding adaptation from the footnote on the article. In previous situations, a format was used of: Judith H. Katz and Frederick A. Miller. Copyright © 1991-2007. The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Adapted from an article in *The 1995 Annual: Volume 2, Consulting*. Wiley: Hoboken, NJ.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Alison VanDerVolgen, Project Manager and Legal Counsel

The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc.
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Troy, NY 12180
Main: 518.271.7000
Fax: 518.271.4400
www.kjcg.com

Creating Inclusive Collaborative Workplaces

Achieving Higher Performance Accelerating
Results



From: Walker, Angie (CAPT USN NDU/CASL)
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2016 05:26 PM
To: 'kjcg411@kjcg.com' <kjcg411@kjcg.com>
Cc: angela.h.walker@usm.edu <angela.h.walker@usm.edu>
Subject: Request permission to use material in a dissertation

The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc.--

I am a doctoral candidate in the University of Southern Mississippi’s Human Capital Development Executive PhD Program. I’m writing my dissertation on increasing female officer retention in the U.S. Navy and I would like to include some information I found in an article titled, “The Path from Exclusive Club to Inclusive Organization: A Developmental Process.” Specifically, I am interested in re-producing, “Figure 1. The Path from Exclusive Club to Inclusive Organization” from page 2 of the article in my literature review.

Link to referenced article:

<https://articles.extension.org/sites/default/files/The%20Path%20from%20Exclusive%20Club.pdf>

If you grant permission for this to be reproduced, could you also provide guidance on the preferred citation for this reference.

If you do not control copyright of the requested material, I would appreciate any information you can provide about whom I should contact including an email address or phone number if available.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via this or my university email address (cc'd here) or my work phone (below).

Sincerely,

Angie Walker

USM HCD Doctoral Candidate

<https://www.usm.edu/gulfcoast/departments/human-capital-development/student/angie-walker>

angela.h.walker@usm.edu

Captain Angie Walker, USN

Director

Center for Applied Strategic Learning, Wargaming Center

National Defense University

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Comm: 202-685-2876

DSN: 312-325-2876

<http://casl.ndu.edu/>

APPENDIX B – RAND Corporation's Permission to Reprint Figure

From: Bernstein, Beth <bethb@rand.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 06, 2016 12:07 PM
To: Walker, Angie (CAPT USN NDU/CASL)
Cc: angela.h.walker@usm.edu
Subject: Re: Request permission to use material in a dissertation

Dear Angie,

Permission is granted to use the figure from RAND document RR-1388-A/OSD, per your email below. You are also welcome to link directly to the product page of the report (or any of our reports) without the need for permission.

For immediate permission for future requests, please visit the Copyright Clearance Center at www.copyright.com. RAND's updated automated permission system is programmed to grant gratis permission to military requestors (select "Government Agency" from the "Requestor Type" menu). Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the system.

Many thanks,

Beth

Beth Bernstein
Permissions
Office of External Affairs
RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street
PO Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Email: bethb@rand.org
Ph: 310.393.0411 x7423

From: "Walker, Angie (CAPT USN NDU/CASL)" <angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu>
Date: Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at 3:32 PM
To: "[Beth Bernstein@rand.org](mailto:Beth_Bernstein@rand.org)" <Beth_Bernstein@rand.org>
Cc: "angela.h.walker@usm.edu" <angela.h.walker@usm.edu>
Subject: Request permission to use material in a dissertation

Ms. Bernstein, RAND Corporation—

I am a doctoral candidate in the University of Southern Mississippi's Human Capital Development Executive PhD Program. I'm writing my dissertation on increasing female officer retention in the U.S. Navy and I would like to include some information I found in a RAND report titled, "The Deployment Life Study: Longitudinal Analysis of Military Families Across the Deployment Cycle." Specifically, I am interested in re-producing, "Figure 7.1 The Military Family Integration Model" from chapter 7 page 266 of the report in my literature review.

Link to referenced report:

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1388.html

If you grant permission for this to be reproduced, could you also provide guidance on the preferred citation for this reference.

If you do not control copyright of the requested material, I would appreciate any information you can provide about whom I should contact including an email address or phone number if available.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via this or my university email address (cc'd here) or my work phone (below).

Sincerely,

Angie Walker

USM HCD Doctoral Candidate

<https://www.usm.edu/gulfcoast/departments/human-capital-development/student/angie-walker>

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APPENDIX C – Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form

Can you answer yes to all 4 eligibility questions? Please indicate yes or no: _____

- Are you an active duty female Navy officer from the rank of ensign to admiral?
- Have you completed at least one Navy deployment of at least 4 months in length within the last 6 months to 25 years?
- Were you the mother of a minor child during the deployment where your minor child must have been either naturally born to you or adopted as an infant by you and you had full care or custody of the child (i.e., minor step-children are excluded)?
- Do you have access to the commutable D.C. area for a 45-90 minute interview?

Today's date (MM/DD/YYYY)	
First and last name	
Current USN rank/grade	
Total years of active duty service as:	Officer _____ Enlisted _____
Your age today in years	
Type and location of your most recent deployment (e.g., ship to Western Pacific, Individual Augmentee to Afghanistan, squadron to Djibouti, etc.)	
Length of your most recent deployment in months	
Time since the start of your most recent deployment in years and months	Years _____ Months _____
Your rank at the start of your most recent deployment	
Ages of each child at start of your most recent deployment	
Marital status at start of your most recent deployment	
Relationship of guardian during your most recent deployment (e.g., father, step-father, spouse, grandparent, sister or brother, neighbor, friend, etc.)	Relationship to you: _____ Relationship to child: _____
Total # of deployments (> 4 months) made as a mother	

Your contact information:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

APPENDIX D – Invitational Email and Social Media Post by SSLA

Calling active duty Navy officers who deployed as a mother!

Looking back on the experience, you probably learned much that could be shared with other Navy women.

As a former Surface Warfare Officer who deployed twice prior to having children, Angie Walker is an active duty Navy Meteorologist and Oceanographer (METOC) who completed an Individual Augmentee (IA) deployment as a mother of two. Angie is a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi in the Human Capital Development Program and is focusing her post-graduate research on increasing female officer retention in the Navy. She is looking for Navy officers who have deployed as a mother and are interested in participating in a study of successful strategies for preparing for and completing a deployment from a mother's perspective.

Eligibility criteria includes:

- Active duty female Navy officers from the rank of ensign to admiral.
- Completed at least one Navy deployment of at least 4 months in length within the last 6 months to 25 years.
- Mother of a minor child during the deployment time period; minor child must have been either naturally born to the participant or adopted as an infant by the participant and the participant must have had full care or full custody of the minor child (i.e., minor step-children are excluded).
- Access to the commutable D.C. area for a 45-90 minute interview (she can come to you).

If you are interested in participating or have questions regarding the study, please contact Angie at angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu or 202-685-2876. Feel free to forward this invitation to others you think may qualify and be interested in participating. Thank you in advance for your support of this worthy initiative. Angie looks forward to hearing from you.

Yours in service,
Rosie A. Goscinski, LCDR, USN
President, Sea Service Leadership Association
sslapresident@gmail.com
www.sealeader.org

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX E – Invitational Social Media Post by Researcher

Calling active duty Navy officers who deployed as a mother!

Looking back on the experience, you probably learned much that could be shared with other Navy women.

As a former Surface Warfare Officer who deployed twice prior to having children, I am an active duty Navy Meteorologist and Oceanographer (METOC) who completed an Individual Augmentee (IA) deployment as a mother of two. As a current doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi in the Human Capital Development Program, I am focusing my post-graduate research on increasing female officer retention in the Navy. I am looking for Navy officers who have deployed as a mother and are interested in participating in a study of successful strategies for preparing for and completing a deployment from a mother's perspective.

Eligibility criteria includes:

- Active duty female Navy officers from the rank of ensign to admiral.
- Completed at least one Navy deployment of at least 4 months in length within the last 6 months to 25 years.
- Mother of a minor child during the deployment time period; minor child must have been either naturally born to the participant or adopted as an infant by the participant and the participant must have had full care or full custody of the minor child (i.e., minor step-children are excluded).
- Access to the commutable D.C. area for a 45-90 minute interview (I can come to you).

If you are interested in participating or have questions regarding the study, please contact me directly. Feel free to forward this invitation to others you think may qualify and be interested in participating. Thank you in advance for your support. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in service,
Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX F – Invitational Email to Complete Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form

Dear rank and name of interested participant,

Thank you for your interest in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives.***

I am an active duty Navy officer and current Director of the Center for Applied Strategic Learning at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. As a former Surface Warfare Officer who deployed twice prior to having children, I am a current Oceanographer who completed an Individual Augmentee (IA) deployment as a mother of two.

As a current doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi in the Human Capital Development Program, I am focusing my post-graduate research on increasing female officer retention in the Navy. I am looking for Navy officers who have deployed as a mother and who are interested in participating in a study of successful strategies for preparing for and completing a deployment from a mother's perspective.

If you can answer "yes" to all four criteria questions on the enclosed form and are interested in participating in the research project, please complete the attached "Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form" and return it to me via email, or call me so I can take your information via phone. Should you be selected for participation, anonymity will be strictly adhered. I will be in further contact with you in the next few weeks.

Thank you again for your interest in the project. Any input you provide will hopefully help fellow and future Navy officer mothers as they navigate the challenges of deploying with children.

Yours in service,
Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX G – Invitational Email to Selected Participant

Dear rank and name of selected participant,

Thank you for your interest in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. Based on the information you provided in the "Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form," you meet the study criteria and have been selected as a potential participant in the research project. The next step is for us to coordinate a place to meet for a face-to-face interview of 45-90 minutes. The location should be somewhere safe and quiet that offers privacy and where you would feel relaxed to share your experiences of deploying as a mother.

As an option, my office is located at the National Defense University on Ft. McNair in Washington DC. But I am more than willing to meet you wherever would be most convenient Monday-Sunday (e.g., your office, your home, a local library meeting room, etc.).

During the meeting, I will address the University of Southern Mississippi's policy of informed consent, the purpose of the research in further detail, and your right to withdraw from the study at any time. Prior to starting the interview we will discuss the format of the interview. To protect your anonymity, you will be asked to provide a feminine pseudonym first name which will be correlated to the information you provide and throughout the study. If you don't have a preference, I can provide a name for you. The interview will be digitally recorded (audio only) and I anticipate it lasting between 45-90 minutes in length. The recorded interview will be transcribed by a contracting service. Once the transcribed interview is available, I will email you the document so you can read through it and verify the accuracy of the transcription.

At the conclusion of the interview I can answer any questions you may have. The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board assesses this research project to have minimal risks to you, the participant; however, if you find that sensitive feelings arise as a result of the interview and dialogue, I will provide you a handout at the end of our meeting with a list of resources in obtaining assistance. Again, this is believed to be highly improbable.

Thank you again for your interest in contributing to the project. In appreciation of your participation, I will ensure you receive a copy of the study results once they are finalized and approved by my university. Please contact me directly or provide me a phone number and email (if different from the one on the Demographics Collection Form) where I can reach you so we can arrange a meeting date, time and location.

Yours in service,
Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX H – Explanation Email to Non-Selected Participants

Dear rank and name of non-selected participant,

Thank you for your interest in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. Thank you also for promptly returning the “Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form.”

I want to personally inform you that although you may have met the study criteria, at this time you were not selected as a potential participant in the research project. I offer my deepest appreciation for your interest in the project and the time you spent in completing the demographics form. Should availability in the study emerge, I will contact you in the near future for further interest.

Thank you again for your interest in participating in the project. The study hopes to help fellow and future Navy officer mothers as they navigate the challenges of deploying with children. If you would like to be informed of the outcomes, please let me know via email and I will ensure you receive a copy of the study results once they are finalized and approved by my university. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours in service,
Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX I – IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional_review_board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 16112205

PROJECT TITLE: Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Angela Walker

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Science and Technology

DEPARTMENT: Human Capital Development

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 12/05/2016 to 12/04/2017

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX J – Interview Questions

The following semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were utilized in this study:

1. Please tell me about your experience as an active-duty military member.

Possible prompts: How do you feel about the time you've spent in uniform? Describe some accomplishments.

2. Recall the last time you deployed. Think about a time when you were preparing for your deployment that you believed you were doing the right things to get your children, family, and home upkeep as ready as you possibly could for your absence. What things seemed to work? How did you personally experience this preparation?

Possible prompts: What things did you do to help reduce the stress to you and your family unit?

3. Think of a time when you felt good about being on the deployment.

Please describe your experience of adjustment while on the deployment. What things come to mind that made you feel good and helped ease the change?

Possible prompts: How did you feel once you were settled compared to when you first arrived? What things helped get you more settled? What helped you cope with being away from your children?

4. While deployed, what caused you to feel good about the support you received from and gave to home? When did you feel good about the way you communicated to and from home?

Possible prompts: What worked for you? What worked for your family and kids?

5. Think of a time when the deployment was going well for you, a time when you felt comfortable or confident in your new temporarily deployed life. What things made the separation easier to endure? What was it that made you feel comfortable?

Possible prompts: What made it a good situation?

6. What, if any, adjustments did you make to your own coping mechanisms to ensure you experienced a positive deployment (professional and personal successes)?

Possible prompts: What helped you stay focused on the positive? What did you do to help yourself have good days on deployment?

7. Think about what worked well when you returned home. What things did you do regarding your children, family, and home upkeep to prepare for your return home? How did you experience the reintegration?

Possible prompts: What are some good memories you have with your family when you came home?

8. How did you personally and professionally grow from this experience?

What enabled your success?

Possible prompts: Describe your achievements or something of significance you accomplished.

9. How did your children and family personally grow from this experience? What enabled their success?

Possible prompts: Describe family achievements or significant accomplishments.

10. If you could go back in time and do things differently for you or your family, name some things you would do differently to improve and why?

Possible prompts: What might have worked better?

11. What would you tell other women how to overcome the challenges of preparing for deployment, getting through the deployment, and the reintegration phase?

Possible prompts: What advice would you offer them?

12. Now, fast forward from that last deployment to today. What are some of the benefits or positive aspects you experience in your family unit today that you might attribute to that period of separation?

Possible prompts: Describe the long-term positive impacts to you and your family. How did your family benefit?

13. Understanding the purpose of this study, is there anything else that you want to share?

The following *deeper* questions were sometimes used by the researcher to encourage a more in-depth response:

- Why?
- How?
- Can you tell me more about _____?
- How did you feel?
- Tell me what you were thinking.
- What was that like for you?

APPENDIX K – Interview Procedures

1. Prior to start of the meeting:
 - a. Review “Study Criteria and Demographics Collection Form” for specific situation.
 - b. Have 2 copies of “Long Form Consent” (Appendix L) and “Post-interview Support Services Handout” (Appendix M).
 - c. Check digital recorder for operation.
 - d. Ensure notepad and pen are available to capture non-verbal details.
2. After introductions between researcher and participant:
 - a. Offer thanks for time and participation.
 - b. Explain the purpose of the study.
 - c. Provide 2 copies of the “Long Form Consent” (Appendix L) and discuss study description, benefits, risks, confidentiality, assurance, and informed consent. Participant and Interviewer will sign both copies. Provide one copy to Participant and keep one copy for study records.
 - d. Explain the interview will last between 45 - 90 minutes, will be audio recorded, and that the researcher will be taking notes throughout the interview.
 - e. Explain the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

- f. Offer the opportunity for participant to select a feminine pseudonym first name or provide one.
 - g. Answer any questions from participant.
 - h. Conduct a quick test of the recording device to ensure both voices will be heard and understood during playback.
3. Start the interview:
- a. Start the recording.
 - b. Ask the 13 semi-structured, open-ended interview questions.
 - c. Use prompts and deeper questions as needed to assist the respondent in answering the questions and to help the discussion refocus should the conversation go astray.
 - d. If not already concluded before 90 minutes, end the interview and stop the recording.
4. After the interview:
- a. Provide a copy of the “Post-interview Support Services Handout.”
 - b. Ensure Participant has a copy of the Long Form Consent.
 - c. Explain that a contracting service will transcribe the interview and that the transcription will be emailed to the participant for validation.
 - d. Explain the importance of “member-checking.”

- e. Request the participant respond to the validation request within 3 days.
5. At the conclusion of the meeting:
- a. Again thank the participant for their support to the research project.
 - b. In appreciation to their participation, results of the study will be provided to them once they are finalized and approved by the university.
 - c. Answer any remaining questions

APPENDIX L – IRB Long Form Consent



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LONG FORM CONSENT

LONG FORM CONSENT PROCEDURES
<p>This completed document must be signed by each consenting research participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project Information and Research Description sections of this form should be completed by the Principal Investigator before submitting this form for IRB approval. Signed copies of the long form consent should be provided to all participants. <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Last Edited August 28th, 2014</p>

Today's date: <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>		
PROJECT INFORMATION		
Project Title: Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives		
Principal Investigator: Angela Walker	Phone: 202-685-2876	Email: angle.walker.mli@ndu.edu
College: Science and Technology	Department: Human Capital Development	
RESEARCH DESCRIPTION		
<p>1. Purpose:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The purpose of this study is to identify and describe effective strategies for Navy officer mothers to embrace a long-term deployment thus enabling the choice to remain in the armed forces.</p> <p>2. Description of Study:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The study entails in-depth, face-to-face interviews with each interview lasting between 45 to 90 minutes. The audio of the interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed by a contracting service. Once the transcribed interview is available, it will be e-mailed to the participant for verification of accuracy prior to analysis.</p> <p>3. Benefits:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In appreciation for participation in the study, participants will be provided a copy of the study results once they are finalized and approved by the university.</p> <p>4. Risks:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Participation in this study poses no known risks or hazards; however, if the participant find that sensitive feelings arise as a result of the interview and dialogue, the interviewer will provide a handout at the end of the meeting with a list of resources in obtaining assistance. Again, this is believed to be highly improbable.</p> <p>5. Confidentiality:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Aside from the contracted transcription service, only the Principal Investigator will have access to the collected interview transcription and annotated notes. All digital raw data will be saved in a password protected file. To protect the anonymity of the participant, a feminine pseudonym first name will be used and correlated to the information provided and used throughout the study analysis and results.</p> <p>6. Alternative Procedures:</p>		

There are no alternative procedures.

7. Participant's Assurance:

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at 601-266-5997. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Any questions about the research should be directed to the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided in Project Information Section above.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Participant's Name: _____

Consent is hereby given to participate in this research project. All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained to me. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to the Principal Investigator with the contact information provided above. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-5997.

Research Participant

Person Explaining the Study

Date

Date

APPENDIX M – Post-Interview Support Services Handout

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board assesses this research project to have minimal risks to the participants; however, if you find that sensitive feelings arise as a result of the interview and dialogue, please refer to the following resources in obtaining assistance:

- If you are in crisis, call the **Military Crisis Line** 800-273-8255 and press 1 for immediate support.
- **Military OneSource:**
 - Provides confidential, free non-medical counseling to service members
 - www.militaryonesource.mil or 1-800-342-9647
 - For live chat service, <https://livechat.militaryonesourceeap.org/chat/>
 - See Figures A1 and A2 for Non-medical Counseling brochure (“Military one source non-medical counseling,” n.d.)
- **Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers** in Naval District Washington:
 - http://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/regional_office_program_directory/naval_district_washington.html
 - Naval Support Activity – Washington, Washington, DC; 202-685-0229
 - Naval Support Activity – Annapolis, Annapolis, MD; 410-293-2641
 - National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD; 301-319-4088/4086
 - Naval Support Activity – South Potomac, Dahlgren, VA; 800-500-4947 or 540-653-1839
 - NIOC Ft. Meade, Ft. Meade, MD; 301-677-9014/9017/9018
 - NAS Patuxent River, MD, Patuxent River, MD; 301-342-4911

Researcher’s contact information:

Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876



Call. Click. Connect.



Need to Talk?
Toll free*
800-342-9647

Live chat
<http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil>

TTY/TDD
Dial 711 and give the toll-free number 800-342-9647

*United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands, Guam, Saipan (Northern Mariana Islands)

Visit <http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil> for special dialing information for overseas callers, simultaneous language interpretation and hearing impaired telephonic support.

Military OneSource offers:

- Referrals to professional counselors for non-medical counseling
- Specialty consultations
- Simultaneous language interpretation and document translation
- Interactive mobile solutions
- Financial counseling and online calculators
- Orderable materials like booklets, CDs and videos
- Articles on a wide range of topics
- Referrals to community-based services
- Referrals to installation-based programs
- Tax preparation and filing services

800-342-9647
<http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil>



Military OneSource Non-medical Counseling



Confidential
Private
Short term
Available for up to 12 sessions per issue
Free

Your trusted source for referral to a professional counselor

Call. Click. Connect.

Figure M1. Military OneSource Non-medical Counseling Brochure (Front)

Note. Since the brochure is located on the public domain, Military One Source authorizes reproduction, publication, and general use without obtaining separate permission ("Copyright status and citation," n.d.).



Who's eligible for non-medical counseling?

- Active duty (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force)
- National Guard
- Reserve
- Family members
- Coast Guard when activated under the Navy
- Survivors (nonremarried spouses and their children)

Not sure if you are eligible?
 Call the toll-free number for additional eligibility information.

800-342-9647

Non-medical counseling services are available for:

- Individuals
- Couples
- Families
- Children

Multiple delivery options to meet your needs:

- Face to face
- Telephone
- Online chat
- Video




Counselors can help you with non-medical counseling issues including:

- Coping with stress
- Family concerns
- Marital communication
- Dealing with family separations
- Parent and child communication
- Deployment and reunion
- Grief and loss
- Finding community resources

Our counselors are:

- Professional
- Licensed
- Knowledgeable about military life

Counseling is:

- Private
- Short term
- Available for up to 12 sessions per issue
- Free

"My counseling sessions really helped me with some strategies to get through this rough patch."
 — Marine

"The counseling is private so I didn't have to worry about my issues impacting my husband's career."
 — Army spouse

Call 800-342-9647 **Click MilitaryOneSource.mil** **Connect 24/7**

Figure M2. Military OneSource Non-medical Counseling Brochure (Back)

APPENDIX N – Post-Interview Thank You Email

Participant's rank and name,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. The input you provided will hopefully help fellow and future Navy officer mothers as they navigate the challenges of deploying with children.

As discussed previously, your digitally recorded interview will be transcribed by a contracting service. Once the transcribed interview is available, I will email you the document so you can read through it and verify the accuracy of the transcription. I anticipate having the transcription available for your review within the next xx days.

Your continued support and cooperation is greatly respected in this research project. In appreciation of your participation, I will ensure you receive a copy of the study results once they are finalized and approved by my university. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX O – Final Thank You and Results Email

Participant's rank and name,

Thank you for participating in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. The input you provided will hopefully help fellow and future Navy officer mothers as they navigate the challenges of deploying with children.

As discussed previously and in appreciation of your participation in the study, the finalized and university approved results and an executive summary are provided in the attachments (or in the following link). Your continued support and cooperation throughout the project was greatly valued. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

APPENDIX P – Sample Individual Case Analysis

13 **INTERVIEWER:** [0:07:36] Okay. Um...think of the time when you felt good about being
 14 on deployment. Now describe your experience of your adjustment while
 115 on that deployment. Uh, for example, what things come to mind that
 116 made you feel good and helped ease that transition or that change for
 117 you?

118 **ISABELLA:** [0:08:00] Um...so it was really nice not having to cook my own food, and
 119 trying to decide what to eat. [laughs] I would say that was um, probably
 120 the easiest thing about deployment. Uh...you know, being a mom you're
 121 constantly trying to figure out "What am I going to cook for the kids?" I
 122 didn't have to worry about trying to figure that part of it out.

123 Um...uhm...the busy days, working 12-18-hour days sometimes just
 124 helps the time pass. So being constantly busy was...was nice. I didn't
 125 feel like, you know, my six, seven-month deployment was actually that
 126 long because I was just constantly busy. I would work and I would sleep
 127 and that was basically it. So I didn't have a lot of time to sit and worry
 128 about what was going on with my kids.

129 **INTERVIEWER:** [0:09:00] So when you first got there, compared to when you feel like
 130 you were settled in, um...what things helped you to get more settled?

131 **ISABELLA:** Having pictures of my kids, um, setting up my schedule of when I was
 132 gonna read to them or when I was gonna make those CDs. Uhm...

133 **INTERVIEWER:** Those, the reading CDs?

134 **ISABELLA:** The reading CDs.

135 **INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

136 **ISABELLA:** Yeah...so I can't remember what the program is called, but they have it
 137 on board the ship. They have the camera, they have a little CD. And so I
 138 went right away to wherever that program is held and say okay, "I want
 139 to read to my kids every day at six o'clock," or whatever, I got time slot.
 140 Or not every day, but um, like every Tuesday, once a week or
 141 something. So I had time slots and I already had that scheduled out, so I
 142 knew it.

143 **INTERVIEWER:** So when you read to them...what did they give you before that?

144 **ISABELLA:** So they would just give me a little CD in an envelope and then...

145 **INTERVIEWER:** A video?

146 **ISABELLA:** A little video, yeah. A little CD with a video, sorry [0:10:00]. Um, and in
 147 an-in an envelope and...actually, I'm kind of, I feel like maybe they sent
 148 it. I don't even know that I had to send it. I think I just had to write my
 149 information and they sent it for me.

150 **INTERVIEWER:** They mailed it?

only self

copying
keep busy =
no time to worry

reduced
responsibilities

work passes
time -
keeps busy

no time to
worry

comfort items
control of
schedule

comms

Pictures +
Reading R03

Scheduling out
family interactions
game control

child
engagement

planned
communication
w/ kids

Planned
communications

video impt
communication
R03

Engaging children

151 ISABELLA: Yes.

152 INTERVIEWER: Okay.

153 ISABELLA: To my kids. So that was nice. Um...yeah.

154 INTERVIEWER: And then uh...what helped you cope being away from the kids?

155 ISABELLA: Hmm...[chuckles] well there was a lot of crying, there always is [laughs].
156 But um...I think just knowing that I had things set up before I left, things
157 that I felt were important that they would need, set up before I left and
158 um...knowing that, you know, my husband - being confident that my
159 husband was gonna do a good job taking care of them. And having a
160 good au pair, too, that of course helps, having good childcare.
161 Um...[0:11:00] yeah.

162 INTERVIEWER: So you-you said that there was a lot of crying.

163 ISABELLA: Yes [chuckles].

164 INTERVIEWER: Who-who did the crying?

165 ISABELLA: Well I probably cried more than they did [laughs]. So, yeah. They were
166 babies, you know?

167 INTERVIEWER: Okay.

168 ISABELLA: Those are my babies.

169 INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. Okay.

170 ISABELLA: [laughs]

171 INTERVIEWER: [0:11:20] So while deployed what caused you to feel good about the
172 support you received from and gave to home?

173 ISABELLA: Um, talking to them as much as I could, you know. Um...just getting
174 updates and how they're doing and um...you know, it's...getting updates
175 on even simple things like did [redacted] took them to the dentist or, you
176 know...[chuckles]. Just little things like that. Like did my youngest get
177 her well baby check-up. [0:12:00] And-and knowing that all of that stuff
178 is-is being handled.

179 Um...I have kind of a type A personality and I like to control that stuff. So
180 letting go of that control is...was probably one of the biggest challenges I
181 had, knowing that I had to just kinda fully give that up to somebody
182 else.

183 INTERVIEWER: [0:12:21] Anything help you to be able to give that up? Or things that
184 you did or things that they did?

185 ISABELLA: Um...well, planning a lot of that stuff ahead of time before I left, that
186 gave me that control. Now, whether or not some of that stuff got

Cry
things set up before
Au pair
RO2
RO3
Good childcare
Trust husband
of things

Those are my babies.

Talking to them
RO3

Reduce stress =
updates
know things
are being
handled

Letting
RO2
Giving up control

a lot of
crying
preparation
confident in
husband
childcare
impl

shed a little
crying

Her babies

communicating
updates
missing out
comfort
things are
being handled

Type A
Control =
give it up

planning =
control

Planning
gave
some
control
RO2

APPENDIX Q – Sample Cluster Table

Table Q1. Isabella Cluster Table

Themes	Line No.	Key Words
1. Work-life balance - success in job and at home		
-Positive experience of service	10 11 17	“it’s been extremely positive” “it’s been...a blast” “overwhelming positive experience”
-Deployment is good for your career	404-405 668	“no better way to gain naval experience than going on a deployment” “It’ll help your career.”
-Purposeful - doing something important	268	“I was doing something important”
-Satisfaction of directly supporting the mission	269-270 408-413	“sense of mission, helped with that sense of accomplishment” “meet a mission...direct impact”
-Making a difference	414,418	“I’m making a difference”
-Feels fortunate	18 194	“I feel very fortunate” “I’m lucky”
-Traditional household roles	58-59	“I was very much...the person ...taking care of the home”
-Deployment time is finite	293	“knowing that there was going to be an end to it”
-Military husband	502	“used to husband being gone”
-Dual working parents	504	“[family] used to being apart and coming back together”
2. Things that caused her stress		
-Worried about kids more than house	66-67	“didn’t really worry about that stuff as much as I felt like I had to worry about my kids a little bit more”
-Type A personality - letting go was challenging	180 179	“letting go of that control is...was probably one of the biggest challenges” “I have kind of a Type A personality”
-The young age of her children	168 498	“Those are my babies.” “They were so young at the

		time.”
-Reintegration - returning home is hard	312	“returning home is harder than leaving”
-Didn’t know how to prepare for returning home	333-334	“I don’t really know how to prepare for coming home”
-Reintegration - things are different: kids, routines	399-400	“incrementally get back into the swing of normal domestic life”
	400	“plan it out before”
-Must get used to changes	319	“it’s gonna be different”
	317	“they have their own schedule now”
-Conflict of wanting to be missed and kids missing her	221-222	“bittersweet...[kids] saying they miss you makes you feel good”
 3. Things that reduced her stress		
-Preparedness was important	400	“have a plan”
	567	“they were well prepared”
-Made lists for planning - reduced stress	90	“I’m definitely a list person”
-Planning gave her feelings of some control	94-95	“helped me to not be as stressed, ‘cause I had a plan”
	185-186	“planning...before I left, that gave me that control”
-Scheduling family interactions gave her feelings of control	131-132	“setting up my schedule of when I was gonna read to them”
-Having trust in others to do things at home	190-191	“nice having...somebody at home...taking care of things”
-Husband was capable	70-74	“he knows how to do it so I didn’t...worry...as much”
-Making things easier for husband reduced her stress	49	“he wouldn’t have to worry”
	548-549	“easier for him...and easier for me, ‘cause I don’t have to...stress”
	81-82	“I didn’t have to worry about...him having to worry”
-Good childcare is important	160	“having good childcare”
-Au pair was helpful	55	“nice having an au pair”
-Extended family involvement helped reduce stress on husband and kids thus reduced her stress	100	“my parents, my in-laws, my brothers and sisters”
-Engaging kids to feel included	579-584	“make your kids feel like they’re ...part of what you’re doing...get

-Reintegration plan- incremental adjustments	324-325	them involved” “getting used to the changes”
-Non-combat deployment	111	“I’m not going somewhere to die...they can relax”
4. Communication was important		
-Talked to kids in preparation	26-27	“I talked to my kids a lot ahead of time about...me being gone”
-Communicating with family and getting updates was good and reduced stress	173 174-175	“talking to [kids] as much as I could” “getting updates on even simple things”
	177-178	“knowing that...stuff is being handled”
-Appreciated good discussions with kids	232-233	“conversation with substance, that-that feels good”
-Transparency reduced kids’ worry	260-261	“[kids] felt like they were participating in the whole process”
-Videos were helpful	146	“a little CD with a video”
-Regular communications	200	“daily”
-Email	194	“usually it was just through email”
-Modern day communications	244-245	“you can communicate so readily back and forth”
-Open communications	534 589	“nice that we had the internet” “be as open with communications as you can be”
5. Personal coping mechanisms		
-Keep busy - no time to worry	123-124	“busy days, working 12-18 hour days sometimes just helps the time pass”
-Worked hard - satisfaction	289-290	“I get a lot of satisfaction out of putting in a full day’s work”
-Made an effort to socialize	280	“make an effort to, um, socialize”
-Took time off when possible	304	“get off the ship and kind of let your hair down”
-Pictures and photos of family were very important	243 131	“getting pictures from them” “having pictures of my kids”
-Personal comforts	249	“having things from home”
-Crying is okay - cleansing	574-575	“Cry as much as you can. It can

		be cleansing.”
	165	“I probably cried more than they”
-Be an example to her daughters	272-273	“I’m proud to be the type of woman that I am, for my girls to see”
	271	“my kids are going to be super proud of me”
-Only self on deployment	118-122	“nice not to have to cook...didn’t have to worry”
	421	“not taking care of somebody”
6. Long-term positive benefits to family unit		
-Better appreciation of family and friends	657	“appreciate the other people that are in your life”
-Husband learned to do domestic chores	646	“[Husband] learned how to do laundry. He cooks, he cleans.”
-Traditional household labor roles shift with parents now sharing responsibilities - good example to kids	650-651	“There’s not a man-woman thing going on. I think that’s good for the kids to see that.”
-Kids changed - more mature, stronger, more secure, developed coping skills, resilient	486 488 608-609	“girls got more mature” “they know how to adapt when a parent isn’t there” “helps them to learn coping skills
-Kids will be better as a result	609-610 631 430-440	“help them integrate into social settings...easier” “jump in with both feet” “girls are extremely independent very mature...for their age”
-Quality time with family	353-354 356	“wanted to do a lot of things with...the family” “fun family time”
-Self-reflection	422-423 656	“you have to learn how to live with yourself” “grow as an individual”
-Strengthened family	429	“a solid family”
-Would not have made big changes	559-562	“I’m happy with the way we communicated...with some of the stuff [in preparation]...we were pretty solid”

APPENDIX R – Sample Cross Case Master Theme Spreadsheet

p.3

		D	D	D	D	D	D	D		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
COPING MECHANISMS	Only self	X		X		X		X		
	Be example to kids (D=daughter)	X			X			X	X	X
Comfort Items	Crying is okay	X		X						
	Personal comfort items	X	X	X		X				X
	Pictures of family + Art	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Focus on Self	Time off - relax	X		X				O	X	
	Worked out	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
	Worked hard - goals/matches	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Kept busy	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Support Networks	Socialized	X							X	X
	Someone to talk to		X	X		X				X
	Camaraderie		X			X			X	X
	Focusing on others - helping		X		X		X			X
	Humor		X							
	Routine = comfort				X		X	X		X
	Ship = family = service				X	X			X	X
	Proud that she serves - kids understand				X	X	X			X
	Buying things for family - sends message					X		X	X	
	Sleeping	X						X	X	
Focus on positive		X					X		X	
Faith - Religion									X	

Figure R1. Cross Case Analysis - Coping Mechanisms

Note. 1 = Isabella, 2 = Sara, 3 = Ann, 4 = Faith, 5 = Molly, 6 = Betsy, 7 = Wendy, 8 = Danelle, 9 = Ashleigh. X = strong correlation, x = slight correlation, blank = no correlation, O = outlier or difference, D = daughter.

APPENDIX S – List of Strategies

Deployment Preparation Strategies List:

To Maintain Connection with Family

Prepare children by explaining the situation to them

Read books regarding deployments to children to prepare them

Prepare videos (i.e., film or record yourself reading a book)

Leave items for children about places you will visit before you depart

Set up e-mail accounts for children

Determine best internet connection and updated electronics for communication means - have appropriate and updated software and hardware in place

Prepare atlas, map, or globe and coordinate method to decipher your location

Pictures of family

Photo blanket

Purchase “Daddy Dolls” - one side of you in uniform and the other in civilian clothes

Use senses to stay connected - leave your lotion or perfume at the house to remind them of you

Leave child something personal of yours (i.e., pillow, shirt, jewelry)

Spend family time together: day trips, family activities or vacation

Have a special mommy-child day

Include your children in the process - have them help you move aboard the ship; let them see where you will sleep and work

Decide if family will watch you get underway or see you off at the airport

Make a deployment calendar or chain to help children keep track of time

Bowl of candy - children eat one for each day

Get the children excited about the cool, fun things you will send them

Pre-write notes for lunch box

Pre-address birthday cards

Pre-arrange scavenger hunt for hidden gifts

Write letters or notes ahead of time for daily surprise or special occasions

Take age-appropriate books to read to your children for the video-reading programs

Pre-purchase gifts for care packages

Establish a constant for child (caregiver, daycare, playgroup, sports, music, art, extracurricular activity, etc.)

Discuss the reintegration phase with your husband and/or child's guardian prior to leaving

To Keep Things Organized in the Household

Create planning lists for you and the family

Decide what if any household roles you will maintain

Discuss how to reduce stress for spouse at home

Coordinate as much as you can before leaving, including childcare (au pair, nanny, family, neighbors, daycare) and emergency transportation from daycare.

Walk your spouse, guardian, or child through the household chores and processes - e.g. laundry

Teach children to help out around house with chores (laundry, cooking)

Outsource household and home upkeep chores such as house cleaning, lawn service, etc.

Coordinate someone to care for your home or apartment if it will be empty

Consider prearranging food or meal delivery services

Buy clothes and shoes for growing children

If you anticipate having connectivity, consider maintaining electronic bills, financial accts, or set up auto-pay for recurring bills

Settle legal papers - power of attorney, last will and testament, insurance

Complete income tax filing in advance or request a filing extension

Take care of annual appointments (i.e., take the dog to the vet)

Put together binders with important information for family and friends and select emergency contacts

Coordinate a budget

Make arrangements for storing your vehicle - change your insurance

To Maintain Connection with Community

Communicate to family, friends, and neighbors about your deployment

Prearrange extended family support and assistance

Establish a neighborhood support network

Get involved at school (volunteer, career day, story time) to help daycare or school understand about military deployments

Connect with school moms - share contact information to stay informed

Reconnect with fellow Navy friends - they will understand what you are going through and can be there to help

Become familiar with services and programs offered by Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers, Military OneSource, and Morale Welfare and Recreation

Join the Family Readiness Group

Utilize the Ombudsman

Suggest spouse to join the fellow spouse support network

Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice

To Prepare Yourself

Pre-purchase personal items: bath items, books, music, etc.

Personal comfort items: pillows, blankets, photos, children' art, Bible

Take some time off for yourself; treat yourself to something special

Enduring Deployment Strategies List:

To Maintain Connection with the Family

Establish support from family

Be honest with others about missing children and home

Open communications

Consider bringing husband and child over for port visit (if safe)

Bring family photos - decorate your stateroom or office with them

Make phone calls or exchange emails as often as possible, even just for a quick hello or updates on simple daily things

Participate in the reading program or record reading books and sending the file back home

Sign up for video-teleconferencing opportunities, or if not applicable, video chat with family from hotel or library through Facetime, Skype, etc.

Ask the family to send you things (photos, voice recordings, videos, care packages, personal items) to give the children a purpose.

Communicate to family how much their letters and care packages mean to you

Mail SD cards containing digital content (photos, audio recordings, videos) back and forth with family

Send current pictures of you and what you are doing to your family

Write traditional letters - everyone likes to receive mail

Send fun stickers for children - especially good if children cannot read

Sent cards or gifts home to children, either pre-purchased or obtained from each country you visited

Create a deployment tradition which is repeated in each port (i.e., photograph you with a child's toy you brought with you at different locations)

Obtain and hang holiday decorations

To Create a Community Support System

Helping other sailors

Get involved on the ship; enjoy the Navy traditions (ceremonies, swim call, steel beach picnics, etc)

Talk with the chaplain

Talk to roommate or friend

Establish support from coworkers

Share comradery

Encourage family to be active in Family Readiness Group

Check in with the family's support networks

Communicate with the nanny, au pair, daycare, or school

Communicate with school moms

To Keep Things Organized in the Household

Coordinate with immediate and extended family

Get a nanny to help with basic upkeep

Create a chore chart at home so children can help, i.e., older child can cook one night a week

Ask for help from neighbors

To Sustain Yourself

Focus on professional qualifications

Volunteer to stand watches

Develop a routine

Stay busy

Socialize

Workout

Identify small things that may cheer you up each day (humor of the day)

Crying sometimes helps

Open and honest communications

Be prepared to hear from others about the children - try not to let it surprise you

Be prepared to get sad letters from children about them missing you

Trust that things are being taken care of at home

Having personal and comfort items (sheets, pillows, favorite soaps and lotions)

Be prepared that you will have good days and bad days

Take advantage of liberty

Enjoy period of no household chores

Sleep when you can

Take time for you to relax - workout, read a book, listen to music

Have a primary and back-up credit card

Surround yourself with positive people

Trust in your faith; attend religious services

Deployment Reintegration Strategies List:

To Maintain Connection with Family

Bring children onboard for a Tiger Cruise - allows one-on-one time with child before reuniting with spouse

Take post-overseas movement (POM) leave - decompress and spend time with family

Spend quality family time, such as doing simple things with children and family to enjoy the time together (go to grocery store, read books, watch children play in yard)

Establish rules that allow quality time with family, such as no TV time or no cell phone time in evenings

Go on a family vacation

Have children participate in selection of what they want to do

Create mommy-child time

Engage in what is important to the child (e.g. sports, school)

Give children gifts, such as money from different countries or things collected or purchased from overseas

Show children where you were on a globe

Celebrate special occasions late (birthdays, anniversary)

If you closed up the house for deployment, plan time to re-establish the home for child

To Maintain Connection with the Community

Visit friends and family that are familiar to your family unit

Host a neighborhood party to welcome you home and to meet new neighbors

Get involved at children' school (e.g., career day, school functions)

Take benefits of the Family Service Center, Military OneSource, and Morale Welfare, and Recreation services - return and reunion classes, adaptive programs

To Overcome Changes in the Household that Occurred During Deployment

Determine how you will fit back into the family unit - slow incremental process, immediate back to pre-deployment status, or a combination

Determine what new roles are within the home

Communicate a plan - discuss it with husband and caregiver

Be prepared that Mom is suddenly the center of attention again and dad is not

Be prepared for changes - change is neither right nor wrong, it is just different

Understand the family has been functioning with their own schedule

Respect the new family routine

Observe before making changes

Fit into family changes by making new process that included you

Give yourself time to recover, adjust, and fold yourself back into family life

Family counseling if needed

Au pair or nanny may give continuity to children and can assist in reintegration with children

Deployment Positive Outcomes and Benefits List:

For Self

Deployment helps your career - by performing well on deployment and qualifying in professional areas, received good performance marks which attributed to promotions, higher pay, and more challenging and rewarding jobs

Take advantage of military benefits

Job stability to support family

Self-satisfaction of being a part of something important

Self-reward of having a direct impact to the mission

Learn that you can do things

Learn that your happiness is important and you need to find a way to fit the Navy into the picture

Learn to give up some control

Learn to define your priority; sometimes family should come first and it cannot always be about work

Learn to appreciate time and not take time for granted

Appreciate other people in their lives more - family, friends, neighbors, support network

Learn the importance of spending time with children when you are home

For some, military retirement is goal

Better appreciate the relationship between spouse and child

Proved don't have to be present to impact child

You might learn that your spouse is more capable than you think

Deployment is just a snapshot

Realized children didn't hate her for leaving but grew more mature as a result

Self-reflection - learned about herself - wiser, capable, can accomplish things

Importance of being present - at work and at home

Learn the importance of effective and constant communication

Learn that constant for child is important

Put trust in her faith

Satisfied with decisions - would not have changed things

Better understanding of talking vs. listening

For Spouse

Husband learned to do household chores

Husband appreciated more what spouse does around the house

Husband grew as a parent

For Children

Previous traditional domestic household roles were eliminated - both now share responsibilities; good example for children to see

Setting the example for your children - being a good role model

Children were proud mother served

Child was considered "worldly"

Children become resilient and will be able to take on future challenges

Children learn how to handle stress

Children learn how to identify the important things in life instead of worrying about trivial things

Children are confident and better prepared for life when things are not considered fair

Children know how to help around house, i.e, how to how to cook, clean, laundry – this prepares them for college

Children less fearful of taking chances - more willing to take risks

Kid comfortable to be alone in house

Children handle being separated from parents well - overnight sleepovers, trips

Son realizes women are strong

Sees a continued benefit as child gets older

Child appreciates time with mom

Mature relationship with young adult children

Children learned to be successful in school, work, and their personal life

Children have a deeper appreciation for what they have – that their mother could have died in combat

Instilled a strong sense of family from child's perspective

Children understand sacrifice -- of service, of time with family

Child learned life lessons mom could never have taught

Structured military home is respected by children and their friends

Bonded with grandparents as guardian

For Family Unit as a Whole

Family members learned new household skills

Realization that family is the priority

Family grew closer and stronger together and can endure challenges

Children bonded with father

Stronger husband-wife relationship

Family accomplished something hard and grew from it

Sense of pride for accomplishing something difficult

Positive experience for family unit

For first time deployers: understanding on what to expect in the next deployment and how to prepare children

Realization on the importance of letting your children be part of decision process and have their say

For the Community or Others

Deployment brought neighborhood together - decorated neighborhood for Christmas early

Maintain close friendship with neighbors even after moving away

Maintained strong ties of relationship with extended family, or relationship grew stronger

Strong belief that women need to support one another - only another woman can understand

Participants become more comfortable to mentor other women

APPENDIX T – Member-Checking Email

Participant's rank and name,

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in the research project entitled ***Strategies for Increasing Female Navy Officer Retention: Deploying Mothers' Perspectives***. The input you provided will hopefully help fellow and future Navy officer mothers as they navigate the challenges of deploying with children.

As discussed previously, your digitally recorded interview was transcribed by a contracting service. Attached is the file of your transcribed interview. Please take some time to read through the document to verify the information is correct. This is a validation step in the study process called "member-checking" and it ensures the accuracy of the transcribed data. If you find the document an accurate transcription of our interview or should you have concerns or questions regarding the transcribed dialog, I'd ask that you please provide a response within 3 days so that I can make corrections and continue with the analysis phase of the study. I will consider a no response concurrence from you regarding the accuracy of the data.

Your support and cooperation is greatly respected in this research project. In appreciation of your participation, I will ensure you receive a copy of the study results once they are finalized and approved by my university. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Angie H. Walker
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
angie.walker.mil@ndu.edu
202-685-2876

[Note: The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board has approved this research.]

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