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LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMPANY OFFICERS AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY: THE MIDSHIPMEN PERSPECTIVE

by

Eric R. Kyle

June 2000

Thesis Co-Advisors: Alice Crawford
Gail Fann Thomas

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This thesis provides the reader with insight into what leadership traits and characteristics Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy desire in an effective Company Officer. The author interviewed 40 Midshipmen in eight separate focus group sessions comprised of five Midshipmen in each group. The data from the focus group sessions were analyzed to produce a list of desired leadership traits and characteristics. This list was presented back to 1,392 Midshipmen in survey format. The top seven traits and characteristics Midshipmen admire most in effective Company Officers are: (1) Approachable, (2) Trusting, (3) Not a Form-2 Leader, (4) Fair, (5) Understanding, (6) Respected, and (7) Knowledgeable about his/her people. Each of the top seven traits is discussed in detail, and quotes from the focus group interviews are provided to give the reader deeper insight. The results of the USNA study are different than those found in other studies on leadership. The author discusses these differences. The author's conclusion is that leading Midshipmen is different than leading in both military and non-military environments. Small changes in leadership style will make a Company Officer more effective in the eyes of Midshipmen.

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LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMPANY OFFICERS AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY: THE MIDSHIPMEN PERSPECTIVE

Eric R. Kyle
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1986

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June 2000

Author: _____
Eric R. Kyle

Approved by: _____
Alice Crawford, Thesis Co-Advisor

_____
Gail F. Thomas, Thesis Co-Advisor

_____ for
Reuben T. Harris, Chairman
Department of Systems Management

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This thesis provides the reader with insight into what leadership traits and characteristics Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy desire in an effective Company Officer. The author interviewed 40 Midshipmen in eight separate focus group sessions comprised of five Midshipmen in each group. The data from the focus group sessions were analyzed to produce a list of desired leadership traits and characteristics. This list was presented back to 1,392 Midshipmen in survey format. The top seven traits and characteristics Midshipmen admire most in effective Company Officers are: (1) Approachable, (2) Trusting, (3) Not a Form-2 Leader, (4) Fair, (5) Understanding, (6) Respected, and (7) Knowledgeable about his/her people. Each of the top seven traits is discussed in detail, and quotes from the focus group interviews are provided to give the reader deeper insight. The results of the USNA study are different than those found in other studies on leadership. The author discusses these differences. The author's conclusion is that leading Midshipmen is different than leading in both military and non-military environments. Small changes in leadership style will make a Company Officer more effective in the eyes of Midshipmen.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> The mission of the Naval Academy is to develop Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty in order to provide graduates who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government. (*Reef Points*, 1999)

A. BACKGROUND

According to the *United States Naval Academy Organization Manual* (1996), the Naval Academy is the Navy's primary undergraduate educational institution. The Superintendent is charged by the Chief of Naval Operations with accomplishing the objectives of the institution as stated in the CNO's policy statement of 3 November, 1975:

> The mission of the Superintendent of the Naval Academy is to serve as the senior officer at the United States Naval Academy and to develop, modify, and enforce policy to accomplish the goals and mission of the Naval Academy *(Organization Manual*, 1996).

The Superintendent has numerous assistants to support him in the execution of his mission, but his primary executive in the pursuit of the Naval Academy's mission is the Commandant of Midshipmen.

> The mission of the Commandant of Midshipmen is to provide primary oversight, under the direction of the Superintendent, for the military/professional development programs of Midshipmen with emphasis on practical application and personal examples of leadership and their principles by staff and Midshipman officers on a day-to-day basis, supplemented by more formal training as required by higher authority; but the basic tenet of leadership training at the Naval Academy will be the creation of a realistic military environment by precept and example (*Organization Manual*, 1996).

As primary assistants, the Commandant has six Battalion Officers who provide oversight for training, counseling, and guiding Midshipmen through their four years of development. Each Battalion Officer has five Company Officers who provide training, counseling, and guidance for Midshipmen in their development into superior Naval leaders (*Organization Manual*, 1996).

The Company Officer is the first officer in a Midshipman's chain of command and is the officer with whom most Midshipmen interact on a daily basis. Because the Company Officer is so visible and so close to the Midshipmen, he or she has the most potential to influence their leadership development. That is not to say that Midshipmen do not interact with any other officers. On the contrary, Midshipmen interact with other officers at the Naval Academy quite often, but that interaction is limited in scope. For example, Midshipmen have military officers as professors, but this relationship is limited to the professor-student interaction. On the other hand, the interaction between the Company Officer and Midshipmen is focused on leadership development.

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify leadership characteristics of Company Officers that are most important to Midshipmen. The results of the study can be used by Company Officers to assist them in the execution of their primary responsibility, which is to guide Midshipmen in their development into superior Naval leaders.

Since the Company Officer is a leadership role model, Midshipmen observe their leadership techniques first hand. Some of these techniques are effective and some are not. It is the contention of the researcher that Midshipmen emulate the leadership

techniques of Company Officers they admire. This study will provide insight into what characteristics Midshipmen admire and dislike in a Company Officer. These data should provide valuable feedback for the Company Officers at the Naval Academy.

C. RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on a single research question: What leadership traits and characteristics do Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy admire most in an effective Company Officer?

The data were obtained in a series of steps. The first step involved interviewing 40 Midshipmen to gain an appreciation for the qualities they think are important in an effective Company Officer. In the second step, the data were analyzed to produce a list of leadership traits and characteristics. Next, the list of characteristics was organized into a survey that was administered to 1,392 Midshipmen.

Using the results of the survey, the researcher provides the reader with an in-depth explanation of the top seven desired leadership characteristics. Quotes from the focus group interviews are used to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of what leadership characteristics Midshipmen desire in an effective Company Officer and why they desire those characteristics.

D. LIMITATION: A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

When evaluating someone on his or her leadership capabilities, the results will depend on the perspective of the person conducting the evaluation. For example, an evaluation of leadership abilities by a superior may be based on a measured performance indicator of the group being lead and may have little to do with the actual leadership

abilities of the leader. However, an evaluation of leadership abilities by the subordinates in the group being lead may be based on the charisma and the motivational abilities of the leader. The results of each evaluation will be different depending upon the perspective of the person conducting the evaluation.

As indicated in the previous paragraph, there are at least two perspectives in which a leader can be evaluated on his or her leadership capabilities. Those perspectives are that of the superior and that of the subordinate. Another possible perspective is evaluation by one's peer group. It follows, then that leadership can be studied from several different perspectives. This study is done from the perspective of the subordinate; specifically, from the perspective of Midshipmen. Since the research uses a single perspective, it is not intended to comprehensively explain, from all perspectives, the leadership characteristics of an effective Company Officer. Rather, this study highlights the perspective of the Midshipmen on the subject. It is the contention of the researcher that every prospective Company Officer should at least be aware of this perspective.

E. POTENTIAL BENEFIT

It is the intention of Naval Academy Administration that every prospective Company Officer be a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School Masters Program in which graduates receive a master's degree in Leadership and Human Resource Development. However, to date, there have not been enough graduates to meet the requirements. Because of this shortfall in Company Officers, some Company Officers do not have formal academic training in good leadership development. The Company Officer is in one of the most visible leadership positions at the Naval Academy. The

leadership style of Company Officers will effect the leadership development of every graduate from the United States Naval Academy. Therefore, it is imperative that every Company Officer understand the principles of good leadership. To that end, this study is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of the leadership characteristics desired by Midshipmen. Understanding the expectations of Midshipmen alone will not make one an effective Company Officer. However, Company Officers can consider this information as they determine the most appropriate leadership style to use with the Midshipmen.

F. THESIS ORGANIZATION

This study is organized into five chapters. Following the introduction, limitations, and background contained in Chapter I, Chapter II reviews previous studies and literature related to this area of research. Chapter III describes the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of data for the study. The data were collected in two different stages, the focus group interviews and the electronic survey. Chapter IV presents the results of the survey. The top seven characteristics of effective Company Officers that were chosen by USNA students are described and discussed in detail. Excerpts from the focus group sessions are provided to further explain the findings. Chapter V offers conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the data.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

To study the topic of leadership properly, one must first understand the different prisms in which leadership can be viewed. Ancient philosophers and modern theorists alike have developed numerous models to explain the leadership phenomenon. In general, modern theorists have built upon the studies conducted by earlier researchers to develop new models. The purpose of this chapter is to conduct an historical review of leadership theories. A review of these theories is presented to give the reader a sense of the numerous leadership models that have been developed over the past century.

For the purposes of this literature review, "early" is roughly defined as studies conducted prior to 1950, and "modern" as studies conducted after 1940. According to Wren (1995), early discussions of leadership were predominantly focused on (1) the importance of leadership, (2) the recruitment of leadership, and (3) the process of leadership. Modern views of leadership recognize the importance of these topics, but as identified by both Stogdill (1948) and Wren (1995), modern views also study the situation and the relationship between leaders and followers. According to Chemers (1984), in the twentieth century the study of leadership falls into three periods: (1) the trait period, from 1910 to World War II, (2) the behavior period, from World War II to the late 1960s, and (3) the contingency period, from the late 1960s to the present. These three distinct periods provide a good frame from which to review the study of leadership.

B. OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the first section provides a brief summary of how people from ancient philosophers to modern theorists have realized the importance of leadership. With this as a base, the second section focuses on modern leadership research and the three periods of study. Specifically, the discussion shows how these three periods have evolved over the past century. This process is important because it demonstrates the difficulties that researchers encountered in explaining leadership. Early researchers attempted to explain leadership using single dimension tactics, such as trait or behavior theory. As the complexity of leadership began to be understood, researchers started to use multi-dimension theories to explain this cumbersome topic. Today, leadership is better understood as researchers have honed in on many of the most important issues. In the third section, renewed interest in trait theory is discussed to show that trait theory is still accepted by researchers today. In the last section, a detailed description of a study by Kouzes and Posner (1993) is provided to set the stage for discussion of the methodology employed in this study of leadership at the Naval Academy.

C. LEADERSHIP RESEARCH PRIOR TO 1900

Generations have been on a quest to understand leadership. According to Bass (1990), the writings of ancient philosophers and teachers, such as Confucius in the sixth century B. C., address the importance of leadership. Wren (1995) conducted a review of writings by great figures of the past such as Carlyle, Tolstoy, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Lao-Tzu, Gandhi, and Du Bois and concluded that there are specific leadership issues that are timeless. Identified by Spitzberg (1987), these issues are (1) the

importance of leadership, (2) the recruitment of leadership, (3) the process of leadership, and (4) the relationship between the leader and the follower. These four topics have been studied by numerous researchers and continue to be the basis for academic study in disciplines such as psychology, counseling, management, and human resource development today. According to Spitzberg (1987), just prior to his publication, the study of leadership was present in 500-600 universities and colleges in the United States. Considering the explosion of books and articles written on the topic of leadership in the past 15 years, and the emphasis on the importance of leadership in both public and private corporations, this number has most definitely grown.

D. LEADERSHIP RESEARCH AFTER 1900

1. Overview

As stated in the introduction, the recent study of leadership can be divided into three periods, the trait period, the behavior period, and the contingency period. In this section, an explanation of each period is presented with examples of models developed by researchers from those times. The work of these researchers demonstrates that the study of leadership is complex and not easily explained.

2. The Trait Period (1910 to World War II)

Many early researchers pondered the question, "What makes an effective leader?" According to Tannenbaum (1961, p.22), "Early leadership research focused on the leader himself, to the virtual exclusion of other variables." In agreement, Wren (1995, p.125) says, "The most obvious component of any leadership scenario is the leader himself or

herself" and then explains that since the leader is the most obvious component of the leadership scenario, most early research centered on the leader.

According to Chemers (1984), early research during this period proceeded from the premise that leaders were somehow different from followers. The objective of a great deal of research during this period was to identify the unique features of effective leaders. The mental testing movement in the early part of the century allowed researchers to conduct personality tests in which leaders and followers were compared. The results of these tests indicated that leaders were different from followers--that leaders possessed certain traits that followers did not. The investigators did not always agree on which leadership traits were most significant, but it seemed that researchers were on the right path to defining successful leadership.

In 1948, Stogdill conducted a review of research on trait theories in which he examined over 120 leadership studies. Similar to many of the researchers of that period, Stogdill was in search of a pattern of traits that reliably produced an effective leader. He found many inconsistent and contradictory results in the previous studies and concluded that traits alone do not identify leadership. In the end, he challenged the simplicity of trait theory, explaining that the traits of an effective leader could only be assessed in conjunction with the leadership environment.

Although Stogdill (1948) challenged the simplistic notion of trait theory, he did acknowledge that evidence exists to support the idea that, in general terms, leaders exceed their peers in the certain categories. Specifically, Stogdill acknowledged that according to at least 10 studies that he reviewed, leaders exceed their peers in such qualities as

intelligence, sociability, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, adaptability, and verbal faculty, to name a few. Additionally, in his conclusions Stogdill stated that the following broad qualities are associated with leadership: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, and status.

Based on his review of the research, Stogdill (1948) identified the missing ingredient in the explanation of the leadership process as the "situation." Specifically, Stogdill suggested that the success of leadership is "situation" dependent. In Stogdill's words, "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers...an adequate analysis of leadership involves not only a study of leaders, but also of situations." For example, the leadership situation of a field military officer is much different than that of CEO of a prominent company or the coach of sports team. In the wake of his findings, trait theory declined in popularity because this simplistic approach to leadership only seemed to be a piece of the puzzle.

3. The Behavior Period (World War II to the late 1960s)

After Stogdill denounced trait theory and his ideas were embraced by other scholars, researchers began to explore other avenues in search of a useful formula for effective leadership. In the late 1940s, psychologists were actively involved in research and clinical work dominated by behaviorism. This emphasis created a context for leadership researchers who then started to ask the question, "What do effective leaders actually do?"

According to Chemers (1984), shortly before World War II the most comprehensive study of leader behavior used a scale labeled the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). This first study was conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and White in 1939. In this study, the researchers observed military and industrial managers and determined that they exhibited two types of behavior. First, behavior that demonstrated interpersonal warmth, concern for subordinates, and two-way communications was termed "relationship-oriented." Second, behavior that demonstrated goal facilitation, directiveness, and task-related activities was termed "task oriented." Different researchers used different terms for a leader's behavior, but essentially they were explaining the same two dimensions. The exact terms for the types of behavior are not particularly important. Of primary importance is the fact that two reliable dimensions of a leader's behavior had been identified. Additionally, it was believed that leaders who used these behaviors would be effective.

According to Chemers (1984), attempts to demonstrate that certain behaviors of leaders were linked to specific group outcomes were not successful. For the most part, relationship-oriented behavior was associated with subordinate satisfaction, but this was not always the case. Equally as important, a positive and good-working relationship between leader and constituents did not consistently produce successful outcomes. At the same time, task-oriented behavior was associated with subordinate dissatisfaction, but this was not always the case. And, task-oriented behavior did not always produce successful results either. Since neither behavior could reliably predict successful

outcomes, many scholars dismissed these theories and began to look in other places for the solution.

Hersey and Blanchard (1979) revisited the idea of behavior theory. Citing studies conducted at Ohio State University by Stogdill and Coons (1957), they criticize early behaviorists for believing that the behavior of leaders fell into either one category or the other along a single dimension. Rather, their review of the Ohio State studies concludes that each behavior is one axis on a two-dimensional scale. Therefore, a leader did not have to be either task oriented or relationship oriented. Instead, a leader can have weak or strong task orientation and weak or strong relationship orientation. In this manner of description, the various styles of leadership found in numerous studies are explained. The concept of task and relationship dimensions has been used extensively in organizations and management development programs, thus popularizing its understanding among leaders and managers. According to Hersey and Blanchard, one of the more popular models of managerial behavior is the Managerial Grid developed in the early 1960s by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1964). This model has been refined several times since 1964 and continues to be accepted and used extensively in organizational training and development (Northouse, 1997).

4. The Contingency Period (Late 1960s to present)

In the trait and behavior periods, researchers were searching for the single best formula for effective leadership. As Chemers (1984) states, "They had not yet recognized that no single style of leadership is universally best across all situations and

environments." The contingency period reflects a time in which the concept of leadership was broadened by theories that addressed the situation in which the leader operates.

a. The Contingency Model (1964)

The first researcher to develop a model that diverged from theories of the behavioral period was Fred Fiedler (1967). Fiedler's theory came to be called The Contingency Model. Fiedler (1967, p.15) postulates that, "the effectiveness of a group is contingent upon the relationship between leadership style and the degree to which the situation enables the leader to exert influence." Fiedler's model closely followed the ideas presented by Stogdill (1948) in which each particular leadership situation had to be assessed to determine the amount of control the leader had in the decision making process. "In short, contingency theory is concerned with styles and situations. It provides the framework for effectively matching the leader and the situation." (Northouse, 1997, p.75)

The terms "task oriented" and "relationship oriented" from behavior theory are also used in the Contingency Model. According to Fiedler and Chemers (1984), high-control situations, in which there is a clear task and a cooperative group of subordinates, are ideal for the task-oriented leader. In this situation, the task-oriented leader is calm and remains focused on task completion. But, the relationship-oriented leader realizes that he/she is not needed to support the group and becomes bored. Moderate-control situations, which involve an ambiguous task or an uncooperative group of subordinates, are ideal for the relationship-oriented leader. In this case, the relationship-oriented leader's open and participative style of leadership can create an

environment conducive to successful problem solving. But, the task-oriented leader finds these situations stressful and difficult to handle and is therefore less effective. Low-control situations, which involve no clear task or an antagonistic group of subordinates, are better suited for the task-oriented leader. In this case, a firm and directive style of leadership, provided by the task-oriented leader, gives the group much-needed direction. On the other hand, the relationship-oriented leader focuses on the needs of the group instead of the task and therefore is less effective.

Essentially, the Contingency Model added situational parameters to the leadership equation. According to Northouse (1997), since the early 1980s a great deal of empirical research has been conducted on contingency theory, which has found that it reliably predicts leadership effectiveness. Using the theory, one can determine the probability of success of a leadership situation. According to Northouse, contingency theory's ability to provide this probability of success is not available in other models and therefore makes contingency theory very useful to managers.

b. Situational Leadership (1969)

In 1969, Hersey and Blanchard developed the Situational Leadership model. Since then, the model has been refined several times by Hersey and Blanchard, and then by Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Nelson in 1993. The Situational Leadership model is similar to the Contingency Model in that both address the leadership situation. The difference between the two is that the Situational Leadership approach is prescriptive; it prescribes which leadership behavior to employ in various contexts.

According to Hersey and Blanchard (n.d.), Situational Leadership is an attempt to balance the leader's behavior with the readiness level of the followers. This balance is dependent upon two factors (1) the follower's ability and willingness to perform a task, and (2) the leader's behavior in response to the follower's level of ability and willingness.

"Ability" is a function of the follower's skill and knowledge of the task to be performed. And, "willingness" is a function of the follower's commitment, confidence, and motivation to perform the task. The combination of these two factors results in one of four readiness levels, R1 to R4. For example, readiness level R1 means that a follower is low in ability and low in willingness. As the readiness level of the follower increases from R1 to R4, the follower's ability and willingness increase from low to high.

The leader's response to followers is broken into two related behaviors--task and relationship. Task behavior is the amount of one-way communication that is given to subordinates; the amount of telling subordinates what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Relationship behavior is the amount of two-way communication between leader and subordinates; the amount of interaction between leader and subordinate in the decision-making process. The amount of these two behaviors is broken into four levels, S1 to S4. In level S1, the leader is primarily engaged in "task" behavior. In level S4, the leader is primarily engaged in "relationship" behavior. As the level increases from S1 to S4, the leader slowly shifts from "task" behavior to "relationship" behavior.

The four levels of the leader's behavior coincide with the four levels of the follower's ability and willingness. As the follower's ability and willingness change from R1 to R4, the behavior of the leader must also change from S1 to S4. As a subordinate increases in ability and willingness, the leader's response will change from "telling" and providing specific instructions to "delegating" and turning over responsibility to the subordinate. In this manner, the leader determines the amount of direction or support to give a subordinate depending upon his/her abilities.

According to Northouse (1997), the Situational Leadership model is a practical approach to leadership that is easily taught, understood, and applied. For those reasons, it continues to be used extensively in training and development programs throughout the United States.

c. Path Goal Theory (1970)

Another contingency theory is the Path Goal theory, which was primarily developed by Robert House in the early 1970s. According to House and Mitchell's (1974) theory, leaders enhance subordinates' performance and satisfaction by concentrating on subordinates' motivation. Path Goal theory is similar to both Contingency theory and Situational Leadership because it requires the leader to evaluate the situation and apply the appropriate leadership behavior. However, Path Goal differs from the other two contingency theories because it primarily focuses on the motivation of the subordinate to accomplish the task. The three major components of Path Goal are the leader's behavior, subordinate characteristics, and task characteristics. Each component is discussed next.

The first component of Path Goal theory is the leader's behavior. According to House and Mitchell (1974), each type of leader behavior has a different impact on subordinate motivation. If subordinates are confident that they are capable of performing a task and accomplishment of that task is worthwhile, they will be properly motivated to perform the task. House and Mitchell use four types of leadership behaviors (1) directive, (2) supportive, (3) participative, and (4) achievement-oriented. A brief description of these behaviors is provided next.

A directive leader is one who gives his/her subordinates specific instructions about the assigned task. A supportive leader is one who is friendly, approachable and catering to the needs of his/her subordinates. A participative leader is one who receives inputs from subordinates and involves them in the decision-making process. And last, an achievement-oriented leader is one who challenges his/her subordinates to perform at extremely high levels.

The second component of Path Goal theory is subordinate characteristics. Primarily this component addresses a subordinate's response to a particular leadership behavior. According to the model, subordinates will accept certain behavior if they feel it will provide either immediate or future satisfaction. For example, subordinates who have strong needs for affiliation will accept a supportive leadership style. Subordinates who have strong needs for guidance will accept a directive or achievement-oriented leadership style.

The last component of Path Goal theory is task characteristics. If tasks are relatively simple and straightforward, subordinates will consider leadership direction as

unnecessary. However, if tasks are ambiguous, subordinate will desire directive or achievement-oriented leadership to provide the path to task accomplishment. Some situations will involve multiple tasks, and each task will have its own characteristic. The challenge for the leader is to provide the appropriate leadership style for each task to facilitate proper motivation.

d. Transactional and Transformational Leadership (1978-Present)

As ideas about leadership shifted focus from the leader to both the leader and the constituent, theories to explain this shift began to follow. In the late 1970s, James McGregor Burns suggested two broad styles of leadership, "transactional" and "transforming." According to Wren (1995), his thinking has been highly influential in contemporary leadership thought and practice.

According to Burns (1978), a transaction occurs when one person approaches another for the exchange of something of value to each. In the case of leadership, this exchange occurs between the leader and the subordinate. For example, the leader needs a task to be accomplished and the subordinate agrees to accomplish the task in return for money, favor, or power. Often this bargaining is unspoken, but each party understands the power resources and attitudes of the other. The shortcoming of transactional leadership is that the relationship between the leader and the subordinate is contingent upon the bargaining process. Outside of the bargain, the participants do not have anything binding them together. A leadership act may have occurred, but the process did not bind the leader and the follower together. This is in sharp contrast to transformational leadership, which is discussed next.

According to Wren (1995, p.81), transformational leadership has become a driving force in leadership thought and practice. The concept as originated by Burns (1978), was called Transforming Leadership. Burns' states that Transforming Leadership "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality." (Burns, 1978, p.20) As an example of this type of leadership, Burns (1978, p.20) uses Gandhi, "who aroused and elevated the hopes and demands of millions of Indians and whose life and personality were enhanced in the process." However, according to Couto (1993, p.104), the original transforming concept is limited in executive or military application because Burns' specifically states that transforming leadership is neither heroic nor executive leadership. This was not the case with another well-known proponent of transformational leadership, Bernard M. Bass, who first published his theory in 1985.

Although he made changes to Burns' ideas of transforming leadership, Bass (1985) embraced both of Burns' concepts of transactional and transformational leadership and has used them in his own model to describe the full range of leadership. According to Bass (1985), the transformational leader is one who motivates subordinates to perform beyond that which they had originally expected to perform. The original performance expectation is based on the subordinate's original level of confidence. The new performance is based on a higher level of confidence inspired by the leader.

According to Bass (1985), this transformational process can be achieved by (1) altering the need level on Maslow's hierarchy, (2) transcending one's own self-

interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (3) raising the level of awareness about the importance and value of certain outcomes.

In the 1990s, Bass revisited his ideas about transactional and transformational leadership. In his first model, Bass did not discuss transactional leadership in detail, however in his second model he does. The following is an in-depth discussion of his most recent ideas about transactional and transformational leadership. Many of the ideas presented in the original transactional-transformational model are the same. This most recent revision to his model is more concise and more easily understood.

According to Bass (1998, p.4), "Transformational leadership is an expansion of transactional leadership....Transformational leaders do more with colleagues and followers than set up simple exchanges or agreements....They achieve superior results by employing one or more of the components of transformational leadership." The components of transformational leadership are (1) charismatic leadership, (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individualized consideration. Charismatic leaders are admired, respected, trusted, and their followers want to emulate them. Inspirational leaders motivate and inspire their followers by providing meaning and challenge to their work. Leaders who stimulate innovative and creative thought achieve intellectual stimulation. Leaders who pay special attention to the needs of individual followers achieve individualized consideration (Bass, 1998, p.5). According to Bass, successful transformational leaders do not have to employ

all of these components in a particular leadership situation, but success increases with the number of components used.

Bass also recognizes the transactional leadership style. The components of Bass' transactional leadership model are (1) contingent reward, (2) management-by-exception, and (3) laissez-faire leadership. Contingent reward occurs when the leader achieves agreement on what needs to be accomplished and promises a reward when the assignment is carried out. Management-by-exception occurs when the leader actively or passively waits for subordinates to make mistakes and then takes corrective action. Laissez-faire leadership occurs when decisions are not made, actions are delayed, and leadership responsibilities are ignored (Bass, 1998, p.6)

Bass (1998) suggests that transactional leaders are at one end of a continuum with transformational leaders at the other end. Most leaders do not fall into one category or the other, most leaders use a mix of both leadership styles depending upon the situation and the experience of the leader. The results of Bass' (1998) studies show that transformational leaders are far more effective than transactional leaders and that transformational leadership is particularly important in times of change. The more a leader uses the components of transformational theory, the more effective that leader will be.

In general terms, Burns and Bass agreed on the concept of transactional and transformational leadership, but they disagreed on several points. Three of these points are presented in this review.

The first disagreement was that Burns believed the transformation of subordinates to be one that was elevating, contributing only to good and not to evil. On the other hand, Bass believed that transformational leadership could be used for evil as well as good. For example, Bass believed that Hitler transformed Germany, although the outcome was immoral, brutal, and extremely costly in life for both his victims and to his cause. Burns would have never considered the Hitler case to be transformational leadership.

The second way in which Bass and Burns differ is that Burns believed that a leader could only employ either transactional leadership or transformational leadership, but not both. Bass, on the other hand, believed that leaders could employ varying amounts of each style depending upon the situation. According to Bass, the strength of the transactional-transformational model is the ability of the leader to properly employ the leadership style that is effective in a certain situation. As Bass states, "Most leaders do both but in different amounts." (Bass, 1985, p. 22)

A third disagreement was mentioned earlier in this section. According to Couto (1993, p.104), the Burns' transforming concept is limited in executive or military application because Burns' specifically states that transforming leadership is neither heroic nor executive leadership. Bass did not agree with this restriction. Because Bass' model of leadership did not restrict the use and connection with executives and military leaders, Bass' "transformational" leadership has become a more useful application.

E. RENEWED INTEREST IN LEADER TRAITS

As stated earlier, the aftermath of Stogdill's 1948 publication resulted in the decline of trait theory. However, recently there has been a resurgence of the idea that leaders have certain qualities. According to Locke et al. (1991), researchers such as Gary Yukl (1989) and Bass (1990) have stated that the past reviewers of trait theory overreacted to pessimistic reviews by researchers such as Stogdill (1948). According to Locke et al. (p.13), "It now seems clear that certain trait and motives do indeed influence a leader's effectiveness." They agree with Stogdill's conclusion that traits alone do not explain leadership, but there is evidence, including that which is provided in Stogdill's (1948) article, to show that traits do matter.

According to Northouse (1997), in 1974 Stogdill updated his 1948 review of research on trait theories. In this second review, he examined another 163 trait studies that had been completed between 1948 and 1970. As discussed earlier, in his first review, Stogdill argued that the success of leadership was predominantly determined by situational factors. However in his second review, Stogdill argued that the success of leadership depended upon both situational factors and personality traits. Essentially, in his second review, Stogdill acknowledged the importance of traits in the leadership equation. For example, Stogdill identified a set of 10 traits that were associated with effective leadership.

Bass (1998) revisited the idea of trait theory to determine if there is a relationship between the results of personality tests and the choice of a leadership style. Specifically, Bass investigated the results of the following personality tests: the Gordon Personal

Profile, the Gough and Heibrun Adjective Checklist, the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Epstein and Maier Constructive Thinking Inventory, and Cattell's 16PF Inventory. The subjects used in these tests were also evaluated and categorized according to leadership style. Personality types and leadership styles of the subjects were then compared. Bass concluded that a correlation exists between personality (traits and characteristics) and choice of leadership style. It is the conclusion of the researcher that, at some level, Bass acknowledges that leadership traits are important and at a minimum provide insight into the leadership styles that are employed by certain personalities.

Numerous studies of leadership exist and it is clear that the topic is very complex. This overview of the literature demonstrates that complexity and provides a context for the present study of leadership traits. As discussed earlier, trait theory does not completely explain all of the parameters surrounding leadership, it is only a partial explanation. According to Northouse (1997) and Locke et al. (1991), there is a renewed interest in trait theory. And, as discussed earlier, trait theory has been acknowledged by researchers such as Stogdill (1974) and Bass (1998). It is for this reason that the researcher chose to study the leadership traits of effective Company Officers at the United States Naval Academy. The methodology used by Kouzes and Posner (1993) provides a framework for this thesis.

F. THE KOUZES AND POSNER RESEARCH

Although Kouzes and Posner do not discuss the merits of trait theory in their books *The Leadership Challenge* and *Credibility*, it is obvious to the researcher that they support the theory. According to Kouzes and Posner (1993), they both have had career-

long interest in personal and leadership values. It is for this reason, that in 1980 they began research into the values held by both leaders and constituents. They began their research by asking both leaders and followers open-ended questions about the qualities people admire and sought in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow. In the beginning, their research was primarily conducted to develop instruments and materials to assist leaders in developing their leadership skills. However, in the process they discovered that their research uncovered what subordinates looked for and respected in their leaders.

According to Kouzes and Posner (1993), there was an extensive amount of literature and research about what leaders do to become successful, but little had been written about leadership from the subordinate point of view. For this reason, coupled with the information that they uncovered in previous research, they began to look at the leadership relationship from the prospective of the subordinate. In their books, they refer to subordinates as constituents because, unlike followers or subordinates, constituents have an active part in the leadership process. This is important because Kouzes and Posner feel that leadership is a relationship between the leader and the constituent, with each contributing equally to its success.

The goal of the Kouzes and Posner study was to gain an appreciation for the leader-constituent relationship and so they asked themselves, "What do we, as constituents, expect of our leaders?" After refining this idea, they asked more than 1,500 business and government executives the following open-ended question, "What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for and admire in your superiors?" In

response, the executives identified 225 different traits, values, and characteristics. Using content analysis, they reduced these items to 15 categories. As they continued to conduct the study, they used information obtained in earlier studies to refine the categories. This approach was designed to continually improve the categories. The end result was a 20-item survey questionnaire.

During an eight-year period, the researchers administered the survey to over 15,000 managers. The respondents were asked to choose seven qualities, from the list of 20, that they "most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would be willing to follow." By a large margin, the top four characteristics chosen were honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. The complete results of this study are provided in Table 3.1 of the next chapter. One would expect that subordinates in any organization would admire these same characteristics, but surprisingly these results were not duplicated in the USNA study. The specifics of the USNA study are now provided.

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III. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of data for the study. The framework for this study is based on the methodology used by Kouzes and Posner (1995) in their study of what constituents look for and admire in a leader. This chapter begins with a short description of the Kouzes and Posner study. Second, the reader is provided with a detailed description of the two stages of data collection. The first stage is the focus group interviews and the second stage is the electronic survey.

B. THE KOUZES AND POSNER STUDY

As discussed earlier in the literature review, the following is a brief synopsis of the Kouzes and Posner study. In 1980, Kouzes and Posner (1993) began research into the values held by both leaders and constituents. The researchers asked more than 1,500 business and government executives the following open-ended question, "What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for and admire in your superiors?" In response, the executives identified 225 different traits, values, and characteristics. A board consisting of researchers and managers analyzed the traits. Over a series of editions, the board reduced the 225 different traits to 20 categories. This list of 20 characteristics was then presented in a questionnaire format to over 15,000 managers. Participants were asked to choose seven qualities, from the list of 20, that they "most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would be willing to follow."

The results of this study are provided in Table 3.1. In summary, by a large margin the top four characteristics chosen were honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), generally speaking the results have not appreciably changed.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Admired Leaders

Characteristic	Percentage of People Selecting
HONEST	88
FORWARD-LOOKING	75
INSPIRING	68
COMPETENT	63
Fair-minded	49
Supportive	41
Broad-minded	40
Intelligent	40
Straightforward	33
Dependable	32
Courageous	29
Cooperative	28
Imaginative	28
Caring	23
Determined	17
Mature	13
Ambitious	13
Loyal	11
Self-Controlled	5
Independent	5

Source: Kouzes and Posner (1995)

C. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data for the USNA study were obtained in a series of steps. Each step is explained in depth, but is summarized in this paragraph. The first step involved interviewing Naval Academy Midshipmen, in focus group format, to gain an appreciation

for what leadership qualities they think are important in an effective Company Officer. The second step involved analyzing the focus group data and then compiling a list of leadership traits and characteristics. Using the list of traits and characteristics derived from the first two steps, the third step was to design a survey to quantify the findings from the focus group sessions. The forth step was to administer the survey to the brigade of Midshipmen.

1. Stage One: Focus Group Interviews

a. Focus Group Participants

Focus group interviews were conducted with 40 Naval Academy Midshipmen. The sample included an equal number of Midshipmen from all four-year groups. Each focus group consisted of five Midshipmen from the same year group. Two of the eight groups consisted solely of female Midshipmen. Three of the eight groups included only male Midshipmen. And, three of the eight groups were mixed gender. Minorities were included as participants.

Eight of thirty Naval Academy companies were selected to participate in the focus groups. The eight companies were chosen at random. The Company Officers of each company selected participants at random. The Company Officers were specifically instructed to select participants without regard to class standing, grade point average, physical fitness, moral character, or professional competence. A cross-section of the population was desired. The Company Officers did not use any objective criteria to select the participants. The only exception to this is that two groups were designed to be

all female and two groups were designed to be all male. (It should be mentioned that one additional group, by chance, happened to be all male.)

With respect to mixed-gender groups, the researcher believed that there might be bias in the data if women and men were not allowed to speak freely without the other gender present. In order to attack this possible bias, two groups were designed to be only female and two groups only male. In this manner, the environment of the focus groups permitted participants to speak openly about leadership issues that pertained to one gender. Due to this design, women were over-sampled. The Brigade of Midshipmen consists of 15 percent female, however the focus group sample consisted of 32 percent female.

With respect to minorities, due to the small number of participants, no special arrangements were made to ensure that the sample included a representative number from each ethnic group. African Americans and Hispanics were slightly under-sampled. The Brigade of Midshipmen consists of 6 percent African Americans and 7 percent Hispanics, however the focus group sample consisted of 5 percent for each group. Asian Americans make up 4 percent of the Brigade, but were not represented in the focus group sample.

b. Focus Group Protocol

The researcher conducted the focus group interviews using Patton's (1990) standardized open-ended interview. According to Patton, the objective of the interview process is to gain knowledge about things that cannot be directly observed. Therefore, the interview should proceed such that the researcher has the opportunity to enter the

world of the interviewee and to see things from his/her prospective. The use of open-ended questions will allow the researcher to accomplish this goal and allow the interviewees the opportunity to explain their responses in their own words and terms.

The focus group protocol was relatively simple. There was only one question. Participants were asked for the leadership traits that they admire in effective Company Officers. The specific directions that the researcher gave to each group at the beginning of each session is:

> Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. The purpose of this interview is to study the personal traits and characteristics of the Company Officers. The goal is to determine what leadership characteristics that Midshipmen consider most important. This group is one of eight groups that will be interviewed. Before we begin, I want to lay some groundwork. I want you to leave your reputation at the door. Everybody in here is an equal. Some of you may have been in leadership positions before and because of that you may feel that one person is more knowledgeable than the others. I don't want one person to be more outspoken than the others. I want everyone's opinion. During the interview you will develop your ideas. You may think of something while someone else is talking. You may make comments on other people's opinions. I want you to feel like you can update anything you have said before. As the focus group progresses, you may want to refine your responses. Go ahead. Additionally, I want you to spell out the meanings of words, don't just give me one-word responses. Feel free to comment on other people's opinions. Once again please don't let one-person dominate the conversation.

The researcher mainly kept the group focused on the topic and asked probing questions when details of a specific idea were desired. In this manner, the researcher was able to get a deeper response and increase the richness of the data that were obtained. Interruptions to responses were kept to a minimum.

In general terms, Midshipmen are cautious when they are speaking to a senior officer. In the case of the focus groups, they were speaking to a senior officer

about other senior officers. This problem was addressed by using three different but supportive measures. First, the researcher engaged the Midshipmen in casual conversation prior to the interview. This was done to promote a comfortable atmosphere. Second, confidentiality of responses was promised to the participants. And third, the importance of the data and the benefit of the study were explained to the Midshipmen. All three of these measures were intended to quickly gain the trust of the interviewees. Based upon the candor of the responses, it is the opinion of the researcher that these measures were effective at achieving their goal.

c. Focus Group Data Analysis

The focus group interviews were recorded on audiocassettes. Upon completion of the interviews, the audiocassettes were transcribed verbatim to facilitate data analysis. The audiocassettes were not transcribed verbatim in all cases due to various reasons. For example, some people did not speak in complete sentences. The spirit and intent of the words spoken by the interviewee were captured in the transcription. As much as possible the exact words spoken were transcribed.

Analysis of the transcriptions was then accomplished. The purpose of the focus groups was to determine which leadership traits and characteristics Midshipmen find effective in their Company Officers. With this in mind, the researcher studied the transcriptions for traits and characteristics that were spoken by the interviewees. If a specific trait or characteristic was spoken by an interviewee, then that trait was placed on a list. The words of all the interviewees were analyzed in this manner. A list of these traits was compiled for use in the electronic survey. In a few cases, the interviewee did

not speak of a specific trait or characteristic in his/her description of the leadership quality. If this occurred, the researcher gave careful consideration to whether a new trait or characteristic should be derived that captured the intent of the interviewee's words, to include the description of the leadership quality in a leadership trait that had already been established. If a specific trait was spoken more than once, a tally was kept. This popularity of each response was used to determine the order of the traits in the survey.

2. Stage Two: The Electronic Survey

a. Survey Design

The next step in the data collection process was the survey design. A copy of the final Company Officers Survey is included as Appendix A. The researcher used the *SPSS Training Guide* (1998) to guide survey design. The objective of the Company Officer Survey was to quantify the findings discovered in the focus group interviews. With this relatively simple objective, the survey had a relatively simple design.

The list of traits and characteristics that were compiled during the focus group data analysis were used in the survey. Careful consideration was given to the order of the traits and characteristics in the survey. As each trait was established, a tally was kept on how many participants mentioned that particular trait. This tally was used by the researcher to formulate an hypothesis about which qualities would then be the most popular responses. After the qualities were ranked by popularity, those that were hypothesized to be very popular were placed at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the survey. The same process was used to rank the least popular responses, and they were spread throughout the survey as well.

According to the *SPSS Training Guide* (1998), in general, the shorter the survey the better the results. The amount of "free time" Midshipmen have is very minimal. Taking this into consideration, the researcher wanted to keep the survey as short as possible. Analysis of the interview data yielded a list of 26 traits and characteristics of effective Company Officers. This number of traits could have easily fit into a one-page survey. However, the list of adjectives did not adequately capture the richness of the words used by Midshipmen. To accomplish this, the researcher referred back to the transcripts from the focus group interviews and included a series of adjectives and short descriptions after each trait. These short descriptions help to further define and differentiate the traits from each other. In the end, each trait and the short description were no more than two lines in length and the total length of the survey was less than two pages.

b. Web Site Management and Electronic Data Collection

The Company Officer Survey was administered on the Naval Academy's web site. Since anyone could visit the web site and take the survey, special considerations had to be made to ensure that only those in the desired population sample participate in the survey. This problem was addressed with the following four controls. First, due to the restrictions placed on the Naval Academy's web site, only Naval Academy personnel could access the survey. Second, the web site manager required participates to enter their alpha code and password. (An alpha code is a 6 digit number that identifies each Midshipman.) Since only Midshipmen have an alpha code, participation was limited to Midshipmen. Third, the researcher requested the assistance

of the chain of command to ensure participation in the survey. The chain of command announced the survey at daily musters and requested the participation of each Midshipman. Not only was the survey announced, but also the importance of the survey was expressed. In addition, using electronic mail the researcher provided participants with specific instructions on how to take the survey. And last, the web site manager restricted participation in the survey to one-time only.

Participants began by reading a short paragraph explaining the significance of the survey and were informed that the survey should take approximately five minutes to complete. Participants were then asked to imagine that they were creating the ideal Company Officer, and that they had the ability to choose seven qualities that would dominate that Company Officer's behavior. Given the list of 26 traits and the short descriptions, they were instructed to check the box, with the computer mouse, next to the seven qualities they felt were most important. The survey's instructions included specific directions to read all the qualities first and then to choose the seven most important qualities. The main quality was bolded with the short description in normal print. After all seven traits had been marked, the participant was then asked to provide the following demographic data: class year group, ethnicity, and gender.

c. Survey Participants

Each Midshipman is a member of one company. Naval Academy administration carefully considers the placement of Midshipmen within each company. The goal of this placement is to have "balanced" companies. The word "balanced" means to have equal amounts personnel in categories like of gender, race, athletic abilities,

intellect, and so on. Generally speaking, each company has a representative sample of each minority group at the Naval Academy. It is for this reason that the researcher chose to administer the Company Officer survey to the Brigade of Midshipmen by company.

According to the *SPSS Training Guide* (1998), there are no set criteria that allow a computation of optimum survey sample size. The fundamental question to ask in determining sample size is, "How much error is the researcher willing to tolerate?" The sampling error decreases as the sample size increases from 100 to 1000 respondents. After 1000, the error is reduced slowly. It is for this reason that the researcher wanted to have a sample greater than 1000. Institutional Research conducts surveys on Midshipmen on a routine basis. According to Institutional Research, the response rate for a survey of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy is about 67 percent, depending upon the involvement of the chain of command and whether or not the survey is mandatory. For this reason, 13 of 30 companies were chosen to participate in the Company Office survey. A sample of 13 companies yields 1710 possible participants and 67 percent of 1710 yields a sample size of 1145.

With this in mind, Chapter IV presents a detailed discussion of the survey results. The data analysis includes data collected during the focus groups as well as the Company Officer survey.

IV. RESULTS

A. OVERVIEW

The results of the survey are discussed in this chapter. The Kouzes and Posner (1993) study is used as a benchmark for comparison to the USNA study. In this manner, the differences are easily highlighted, and the reasons for the differences can be explained. Further, the top seven characteristics of effective Company Officers that were chosen by USNA students are described and discussed in detail. Excerpts from the focus group sessions are provided to further explain the findings. The objective of this chapter is to provide the reader with an in-depth discussion of the leadership traits and characteristics that Midshipmen admire in Company Officers.

A survey was given to 13 of 30 companies at the Naval Academy. A sample of 13 companies with 1710 possible participants yielded 1,392 responses (81.4 percent). In the survey, the participants were asked to imagine that they are creating the ideal Company Officer, and that they had the ability to choose seven qualities that will dominate a Company Officer's behavior. Given the list of 26 traits and the short descriptions, they were instructed to choose seven qualities they felt were most important. The results of the survey are presented in Table 4.1. Although not discussed in this chapter, the results of the survey are also broken down by gender and by USNA year group in Appendix B and C respectively.

Table 4.1 Admired Leadership Traits of a Company Officer
Total Sample

Characteristic	Number of Responses	Percentage
Approachable	966	69.4
Trusting	833	59.8
Not a "Form-2 Leader"	726	52.2
Fair	605	43.5
Understanding	570	40.9
Respected	510	36.6
Knowledgeable about people	489	35.1
Practical	480	34.5
Honest	401	28.8
Fun	365	26.2
Consistent	364	26.1
Caring	362	26.0
Role Model	353	25.4
Involved	342	24.6
Motivational	321	23.1
Forgiving	289	20.8
Positive	280	20.1
Knows his/her profession	242	17.4
Courageous	238	17.1
Supportive	210	15.1
Mentor	198	14.2
Informative	166	11.9
Confident	141	10.1
Loyal	117	8.4
Tactful	89	6.4
Decisive	87	6.3

B. THE SEVEN MOST POPULAR LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF USNA COMPANY OFFICERS

As Table 4.1 suggests, Midshipmen are looking for a wide range of traits and characteristics in an effective Company Officer. Some traits were extremely popular and others were not. Since the survey asked Midshipmen to choose the top seven traits and characteristics of an effective Company Officer, the seven most popular characteristics chosen are discussed in detail next.

1. Approachable

Of the 1,392 Midshipmen who took the survey, 966 (69.4 percent) chose being approachable as the most desirable leadership trait of Company Officers. To illustrate the popularity of this trait, during each of the eight separate focus group interview sessions, one or more of the interviewees specifically addressed the "approachable" trait. Almost 70 percent of Midshipmen who took the survey want a Company Officer to be approachable.

What is an approachable Company Officer? In the survey, an approachable Company Officer was characterized as being friendly, open, easy to talk to, a good listener, and one that promotes a comfortable atmosphere. This short definition was very useful in the administration of the survey, but it does not fully capture everything that encompasses an approachable Company Officer. An examination of the focus group interviews does, however, provide the reader with a deeper understanding of what Midshipmen desire in an approachable Company Officer.

In the first quote from the focus groups, a Midshipman talks about feeling comfortable with the Company Officer. Recognizing that the relationship between the Company Officer and Midshipmen is different for each class, this Midshipman feels that the relationship between the Company Officer and the senior class should be more like fellow officers in the fleet. He believes that this type of relationship will better prepare seniors for life after graduation. Additionally, the Midshipman describes a relationship that is more "friendly" and conducive to job completion.

> When you come talk to the Company Officer about something, you shouldn't have to worry about throwing in a "sir" at the beginning and end of every sentence. By the time you make first class, I think you should feel comfortable enough with the Company Officer that you can talk with him like a fellow officer. If the relationship is too formal, then you're always concentrating on unimportant things, like if you said enough "sirs," instead of conducting business. I think it just gets in the way of getting the job done. That is something that the Company Officer can teach Midshipman. You know, how to work with your superiors on a friendly, but professional level, and still be able to get the job done.

During the focus group interviews, there were numerous instances of Midshipmen wanting to work with a Company Officer who is comfortable to be around. The following quote is a good example of the comments made by a Midshipman addressing the need to be comfortable with the Company Officer.

> The Company Officer relies heavily on the work of the first and second class, especially the first class. The first class really have to trust the Company Officer. They should feel like they can come talk to him anytime, there should not have to be an emergency or something like that. They need to be friendly with him. They shouldn't feel intimidated talk to him. I think that it is very important for them to feel comfortable around him.

In the next quote, a different Midshipman again addresses being comfortable with the Company Officer. However, in this quote the Midshipman specifically discusses the

importance of feeling comfortable with the Company Officer and the impact that relationship can have on the ability of the Midshipman to gain information about his or her future. Again, the Midshipman did acknowledge that there is a different relationship between the Company Officer and each Midshipmen class. Of great importance to this Midshipman is that the relationship between Company Officer and first class Midshipmen should mirror the relationship between mentor and student. The Company Officer is a valuable resource to the first class Midshipmen who are trying to determine which branch of service to join. If the Company Officer is not approachable, then he or she risks alienating him or herself from the Midshipmen and, therefore, will be available as a resource. It is very important to Midshipmen, especially the senior class, to be able to explore the different warfare specialties.

> I think the Company Officer should serve as a mentor. He is representing his warfare specialty and therefore is a great source of information. If the Company Officer is not approachable, then as Midshipmen we lose out on that resource. When Midshipmen come to see him, they need to feel comfortable enough to ask questions. Otherwise, all you learn is how to sit at attention and to throw in a lot of "sirs" in your sentences.

In the next quote, another Midshipman addresses the possible ramifications when a Company Officer is unapproachable. According to this Midshipman, extremely unapproachable Company Officers are intimidating and cause Midshipmen to be reluctant to discuss things with that Company Officer. This places a communication barrier between the Midshipmen and the Company Officer. Some problems can be resolved before they result in a conduct infraction. But, in order to investigate these problems the Company Officer must hear about them. By being too intimidating, the Company Officer

may be alienating him or herself from this communication path and, therefore may not be aware of approaching problems.

> Some Company Officer officers are unapproachable, almost intimidating. I don't think that's good because it doesn't build confidence in the chain of command. I think the Company Officer needs to be approachable so when something goes wrong you don't feel intimidated by the person and you can go talk to him. I think you want information to flow freely both up and down the chain of command.

2. Trusting

Among Midshipmen, the second most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is trusting. Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 833 (59.8 percent) chose trusting as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. Like approachable, trusting is a very popular trait; being a trusting Company Officer was mentioned in each of the eight separate focus group interview sessions by at least one of the interviewees. In four of the eight focus group sessions, more than one Midshipman in the group commented on the importance of being trusting.

What is a Trusting Company Officer? In the survey, a trusting Company Officer was characterized as one who lets the Midshipmen run the company as much as possible; an officer who avoids micro-management and allows the Midshipmen to make leadership decisions; and an officer who feels comfortable giving Midshipmen responsibility. This definition is fairly straightforward and self-explanatory, however an examination of the focus group interviews provides the reader with a much richer description of a "trusting" Company Officer.

In the first quote, the Midshipman begins by commenting on the importance of the first class being comfortable with the Company Officer, and then extends that

relationship to the trust that is developed between the Company Officer and the first class leadership. Trust between the Company Officer and the first class is important because if the Company Officer trusts the first class then he or she will be more willing to give important tasks to the Midshipmen. These important tasks are at the core of operating the company. The Midshipmen want a Company Officer who is willing to let the Midshipmen run the company. If the Naval Academy is a "leadership laboratory," then the Midshipmen want the opportunity to try different techniques as any student would try in a laboratory. If a leadership technique is not effective, then the Midshipmen will learn from this failure just as they will learn from techniques that are effective. It is very important to Midshipmen that the Company Officer be willing to allow the Midshipmen the opportunity to exercise different leadership styles.

> I think it is important for (the first class) to feel comfortable around (the Company Officer). In turn, the Company Officer should also be comfortable with the first class. He should feel comfortable giving them responsibility. That is something I look for in a Company Officer. One who is willing to trust the Midshipmen to run the company as much as they can...within reason, of course, on their own. I think that is the whole point, you know, this place is called a leadership laboratory. It doesn't do us (Midshipmen) much good if we have the Company Officer that is micro-managing us. I think Company Officers need to avoid micro management.

During the focus group interviews, numerous Midshipmen mentioned wanting a Company Officer who lets the Midshipmen chain of command run the company. Most Midshipmen referred to a Company Officer who keeps close control of the company as a micro-manager. The data suggest that Midshipmen do not want to have their boss looking over their shoulder observing their every move. Midshipmen want the opportunity to solve problems before being told how to solve them by the Company

Officer. In the next quote, the Midshipman first talks about the development of trust between the Company Officer and the Midshipman leadership and then explains that a strong trust will result in a bigger effort on the part of the Midshipmen to maintain that trust. Second, the Midshipman talks about having the autonomy to operate the company. Midshipmen feel this autonomy comes from the trust that the Company Officer has in the Midshipmen leadership. Finally, the Midshipman explains that if they feel trusted by the Company Officer, then they will have the confidence to make decisions and that process is a better learning environment.

> One thing that I like to see the Company Officer do more of is to allow the Midshipman chain of command to work. Sometimes the Company Officer is really quick to micro-manage the Midshipman chain of command. I think that if the Company Officer allows the Midshipman chain of command to work then (the Company Officer and the first class chain of command) will build some trust. If the Company Officer trusts (Midshipmen) to handle a situation then we will work harder to maintain that trust. Also, if he doesn't micro manage, then we will be more inclined to come and ask him for help when we need it. Instead of him asking us questions, we would have the opportunity to come to him first. As things progress, we would be able to tell the Company Officer what we are going to do about things instead of asking for his permission to take action. Once the trust is there between him and us, we will take proper action and we will learn more at the same time.

In the next three quotes, the Midshipmen again mention, either directly or indirectly, that they do not want to be micro-managed. In the first quote, he or she alludes to the idea that the process of allowing the Midshipmen to make decisions without direction from the Company Officer will result in greater learning on the part of Midshipmen. This Midshipman acknowledges that he or she will need help making the decision, but wants the opportunity to ask for help when needed rather than being

providing that help right from the start. He or she feels that learning will not take place without the freedom to make independent decisions.

> I don't think the Company Officer should micro-manage. I think the Company Officer should let the Midshipman learn how to lead. If the Company Commander really makes a mistake then the Company Officer can step in and help out. But, the Company Officer should respect the Company Commander and allow him to do is job. (The Company Officer) should let the Midshipmen lead a little. Our Company Officer does a pretty good job with that. For example, he lets the Mids run things and only steps in when he thinks they need a little guidance. He holds the first class accountable too.

In the second quote, the Midshipman agrees and supports the idea that the Company Officer's job is to provide guidance to the Midshipmen instead of actually making all the decisions.

> They call this place a "leadership laboratory." So, I see the Company Officer as someone that is overseeing the laboratory. A lot of the Company Officers cross that line, in that they are trying to take control of the Company. They are trying to control every little aspect. As a laboratory, the Midshipman should have the "hands-on" training of the leadership. And the Company Officer should be like a teacher providing experience. You know, 'This is what you're doing wrong and here's what I would do' or something like that. The Company Officer should set specific goals; then he should just monitor to see that these goals are being met.

In the last quote, the Midshipman is in agreement with the last two interviewees. Of note, this Midshipman thinks that the Company Officer should only provide guidance when the first class leadership needs or asks for assistance.

> I think it's important for the Company Officer not to micro-manage. Since we're supposed to be developing leadership in Midshipman, I think it's important to have the Company Officer that is "hands off." Kind of, give the reigns and guidance to the first class Midshipman and then let them delegate down the chain of command. If the first class leadership needs guidance, then the Company Officer can step in. Instead of having the Company Officer running the company and the first class acting as

3. "Not a Form–2 Leader"

The third most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is "Not a Form-2 Leader." Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 726 (52.2 percent) chose this as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. Like both approachable and trusting, this trait was important enough to be mentioned in each of the eight separate focus group interview sessions by at least one of the interviewees. And, in three of the eight focus group sessions, more than one Midshipman in the group commented on the importance of not being a Form-2 Leader.

What is a "Form-2 Leader" and why don't Midshipmen want to have this type of leader? First, an explanation of the "Form-2" is provided. At the Naval Academy, a Form-2 is the method of notifying a Midshipman that he or she is suspected of violating a Naval Academy rule or regulation. It is similar to being charged with breaking the law. For example, when a police officer observes you violating the speeding laws, then he or she will issue you a speeding ticket, notifying you and the court system that a law has been broken. At the Naval Academy, these "laws" are written in a document called *Midshipmen Regulations Manual* (1998). These regulations govern the conduct of Midshipmen while at the Naval Academy.

The Form-2 system is used when a Midshipman is suspected of violating the regulations. A Form-2 is issued and punishment is administered in accordance with the *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998). Through due process of an investigation, a Midshipman determined to be guilty of violating Midshipman regulations is punished in

accordance with the rules delineated in the *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998). Although the *Midshipmen Regulations Manual* is very thorough, it does not include everything that a Midshipman is required to do. Other directives promulgated by the Commandant's staff also govern the conduct of Midshipmen. A Midshipman can be issued a Form-2 when he or she is suspected of violating any directive.

A "Form-2 Leader" is a slang term used by Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy for a particular leadership style. The mechanics of this leadership style are very similar to the Bass (1998) transactional leadership style discussed in the literature review. Bass' transactional leader can use one or more of the following three styles of leadership (1) contingent reward, (2) management-by-exception, and (3) laissez-faire leadership. Form-2 Leadership is very similar to the second style in Bass' model, management-by-exception. In management-by-exception the leader actively or passively waits for subordinates to make mistakes and then takes corrective action. In Form-2 Leadership, the Company Officer waits for the Midshipmen to violate a directive and then issues a Form-2 and punishment normally results. Therefore, Form-2 Leadership is a slang term for management-by-exception under Bass' definition. As discussed in the literature review, Bass contends that the most effective leader uses the full spectrum of both transactional and transformational leadership styles. Bass also contends that transformational leaders are more effective than transactional leaders. The results of the survey show that Midshipmen do not desire Form-2 Leadership. Form-2 Leadership is not using the full spectrum of transactional and transformational leadership. Furthermore, Form-2 Leadership is only one component of transactional leadership.

Therefore, the results of the USNA survey also support Bass' contention concerning the effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership. Like other subordinates, Midshipmen want to follow a leader that uses both transactional and transformational leadership.

The *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998) gives the Company Officer formal authority to act as judge, jury and executioner in all cases involving minor conduct offenses. This is the Company Officer's role as a "Police Officer." This role as a "Police Officer" may be one of the reasons why Midshipmen differ from the respondents in the Kouzes and Posner study on the leadership traits they desire. This contention will be discussed in detail in the discussion section at the end of this chapter. The adjudication of conduct offenses is often the subject of conversation among Midshipmen. Because of the central role as police officer, Midshipmen often characterize the Company Officer's leadership style based on how conduct offenses are handled.

At the Naval Academy, a Company Officer who uses the Form-2 as his or her sole method of motivating his Midshipmen to accomplish a task is called a Form-2 Leader. Midshipmen use the term, Form-2 Leader, in a very derogatory manner. Midshipmen consider the use of the Form-2 to be a lazy way for a leader to motive Midshipmen and Form-2 Leaders are considered the weakest leaders at the Naval Academy. When discussing the matter, Midshipmen only use the term with those officers and Midshipmen who are not well respected, admired, or liked.

During the focus group interviews, two issues concerning Form-2 Leadership were mentioned numerous times. The first issue is that Midshipmen feel that some

conduct infractions can be handled within the company instead of using the Form-2 system. The second issue is that Midshipmen feel that company-administered punishment is more effective than punishment via the Form-2 system. The next two quotes from the focus group interviews are used to illustrate these points.

In the first quote, the Midshipman mentions a "wheel of misfortune." Similar to the television program "The Wheel of Fortune," this is a big wheel with punishments distributed around it instead of dollar amounts. After a conduct infraction, each Midshipman is given the opportunity to spin the wheel to determine his or her penance. The reputation of the wheel has spread throughout the Brigade as it was mentioned in three different focus group sessions. Exactly why Midshipmen prefer this form of punishment is pure speculation by the researcher. Two theories are provided, (1) Form-2 punishment is mundane, and (2) Form-2 punishment does not provide any benefit to the Midshipmen, it is purely punitive in nature. The use of the "wheel of misfortune" seems to solve this problem by being a very creative and fun way to administer punishment.

> I think a lot of things can be handled 'in Company.' Some of the smaller offenses don't need to be sent to the Battalion Officer. I think the Company Officer should be able to handle some things himself. One of the other companies used to have a 'wheel of misfortune.' On this wheel there were different punishments, mostly related to PT, and when Midshipmen were caught doing something wrong, (the Company Officer) had them spin the 'wheel of misfortune.' It was a very good idea and their Company ran very well. I think it was very effective. Everybody was treated fair, everyone had a chance to spin the wheel. Of course this doesn't work for everything, but it was different and because of that I think it was effective.

In the next quote, like the previous, the Midshipman mentions that he desires to have minor conduct infractions handled "in company." Handling minor conduct

infractions "in company" implies that a Form-2 is not issued and therefore a formal record of the incident is not kept. Like anyone, Midshipmen would like to keep their records as clean as possible. The researcher believes that this could be one of the reasons that most Midshipmen do not want to use the Form-2 system.

> I know an officer that was really respected by his people. (The Company Officer) was a SEAL and his company really loved him. He let his company run itself and when someone got into trouble he did not run to the Midshipman Regulations (Manual) to see what it says. He added logic to the punishment. He controlled his company himself. When someone got into trouble, he would PT (physical training) them. I think if you handle things within the Company and without turning Midshipman over to the (Form-2) system, then that is better leadership. Because, when Midshipmen get turned over to the (Form-2) system, they get hammered. As long as the punishment fits the crime, and it is handled at the company level then I think Midshipman learn more. Obviously some things have to be turned over to the conduct system, but if it is not a major offense and if it is not an issue of you hiding something from your superiors, then keeping it within the Company is a good idea. When a Company Officer uses the Form-2 too much, then Midshipmen get the impression that you don't know how else to handle situations. I think it kind of makes you look dumb as the Company Officer.

In the next quote, the Midshipman gives an opinion why Form-2 Leadership is ineffective. Although this Midshipman uses incorrect terms, he or she uses a theory of learning, operant conditioning, to explain the ineffectiveness of the Form-2 system. In the terms of behavioral learning theory, the Form-2 system is punishment. When a Midshipman receives restriction for failing to follow a regulation, he or she is getting something that is not desired. Essentially, punishment is used to deter the subject from an undesired behavior. The use of punishment is only effective if the subject believes the punishment will be received. So, as the Midshipman explains, if a lenient Company Officer follows a strict Company Officer there may be an increase in conduct incidents.

The Midshipman's point is that the Naval Academy should encourage Midshipmen to make correct moral, ethical, and professional decisions rather than threatening to punish them if they do not.

> The Form-2 is negative reinforcement (Author's note: this is incorrect it is positive punishment). (Midshipmen) only act that certain way when that threat is present. Let's say you are trying to get people to show up at formation on time, and the only way you know how to get them there is to hold a Form-2 over their heads. After that Company Officer, the disciplinarian, leaves and a new Company Officer comes in that is a nice guy. Some people will not understand why they have to go to formation because the new guy won't put them on report (use the Form-2 system). So, (Company Officers) have to realize that (Midshipmen) are motivated by different things. So, if you tell people why they have to be at formation then they will go on their own. Negative reinforcement only works as long as the threat is there. Once that threat disappears then people will not be motivated to do the behavior. It's just a short-term solution.

4. Fair

The fourth most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is to be fair. Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 605 (43.5 percent) chose this as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. It is interesting that being fair follows not being a Form-2 Leader in popularity, but remains significantly more popular than the other available traits. One possible explanation is that Midshipmen realize that the Company Officer will inevitably use the Form-2 system and when that happens, the Midshipmen would like to have a Company Officer that is fair to everyone.

What does it mean to be a fair Company Officer and why do Midshipmen desire this trait in a Company Officer? In the survey, a fair Company Officer was described as an officer who has no favorites and treats everyone as equals. When deciding

punishment, the fair Company Officer assigns equal punishment for comparable offenses, and he or she also ensures that everyone is held accountable, not just a select few.

During the focus group interview sessions, the Midshipmen expressed a desire for the Company Officer to give each conduct infraction the same consideration and due process. As discussed earlier, the *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998) gives the Company Officer formal authority to act as judge, jury, and executioner in all cases involving minor conduct offenses. With this authority comes the responsibility to conduct a thorough investigation into incidents surrounding the conduct infraction. Although each incident is different, when possible, the Company Officer also has the responsibility to ensure that similar punishments are awarded for similar conduct infractions. Because so many Midshipmen discussed the importance of this trait, the researcher believes that, at a minimum, there is inconsistency among Company Officers with meeting this responsibility.

In the first quote, the Midshipman gives an example where two Midshipmen violate Naval Academy regulations, but one is not punished and one is punished rather harshly. There are several possible reasons for the big disparity between the two. First, the conduct infractions are different and should not be compared. And second, the mitigating circumstances surrounding the incidents are not provided; therefore, to criticize the punishment would be inappropriate. Even though there may be a good reason to have this large disparity in punishment, the Midshipmen are unaware of these reasons. The result is a perception, among Midshipmen, of preferential treatment for good performers.

> Another trait that I think is important is fairness. The Company Officer shouldn't play favorites. I can provide a good example. Last semester I missed a class. I never miss class, so it was unusual for me to do this. I told my Company Officer that I had missed class. He said OK, and then didn't do anything about it. (No conduct action was initiated.) Another guy rode the elevator once and ended up getting 30 days restriction for it. It didn't seem fair. I am a pretty good student and the other guy wasn't and so that's why he was punished more harshly than I was. Sometimes people get hammered for really minor things. You can always find a reason to hammer a Midshipman, but that doesn't mean you should.

Practically everything a Midshipman does is graded and tracked. Using a complex formula, all these grades are used to determine the order of merit (ranking) of each Midshipman. This order of merit is used for various reasons, but most visibly it is used to determine class rank and the order in which Midshipmen choose their service after graduation. One factor in determining overall order of merit is a Midshipman's performance grade. Performance grades carry a significant weight in the formula that determines a Midshipman's overall order of merit and therefore are very important.

How are performance grades determined? Performance grades are assigned by the Company Officer. Different companies use different methods to determine performance grades, but for the most part the Midshipman chain of command makes a recommendation for the Company Officer's review. After review, the Company Officer assigns the grades. There is no test or paper used to assign grades therefore, performance grades are very subjective and predominantly based on the leadership abilities and effort that an individual expends on company business. Considering the importance of performance grades and the fact that they are very subjective, the assignment of performance grades is vulnerable to criticism.

In the next quote, the Midshipman addresses the importance of being fair during the assignment of performance grades and the situation where a poor reputation follows a Midshipman from semester to semester.

> With respect to performance grades, this is definitely a (situation) where the Company Officer needs to be fair. I haven't seen a good example of being fair by Company Officer lately when it comes to performance grades. If someone gets a C, then the next semester he should be able start out at ground zero. This doesn't happen very often, it's very hard to shake a reputation like that. If we are suppose to model (the Naval Academy) after the fleet, then (we should do business the same). You know, officer Fitreps are not kept on file so, why are Midshipmen Fitreps kept on file? When an Officer leaves one command then his next command has no idea what his last Fitreps said. I think it should be that way with Midshipmen. A previous Fitrep should not have an effect on a future Fitrep. We (Midshipmen) should have a clean slate. You know, we should get a fresh start.

5. Understanding

The fifth most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is to be understanding. Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 570 (40.9 percent) chose this as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. Unlike the first four traits discussed, understanding was only mentioned in four of the eight separate focus group interview sessions. While the specific use of the word "understanding" was limited during the focus group sessions, many of the Midshipmen used phrases to describe behavior normally associated with an understanding person. In one of those four focus group sessions, the topic was discussed for approximately 20 minutes by all the Midshipmen in the group.

What is an understanding Company Officer? In the survey, an understanding Company Officer was characterized as one who knows the stresses and needs of Midshipmen, that the Naval Academy is not the Fleet. Also, an understanding Company

Officer is one who realizes that Midshipmen will make mistakes and the time to make those mistakes and learn from them is in a training environment like the Naval Academy. An examination of the focus group interview sessions provides the reader with a more comprehensive understanding of this trait.

In the next two quotes, the Midshipmen describe some Company Officer behaviors related to this trait and the effect it had on the Midshipmen. In general, during the focus group interviews the Midshipman said they wanted their Company Officer to establish a more personal relationship with them. This relationship would allow the Midshipmen to get to know the Company Officer better. This relationship would be more personal but at the same time it would remain professional. The Midshipmen feel that a closer relationship with the Company Officer would lead to a better understanding of their stresses and needs.

> During plebe year, my Company Officer called us by our first name. It was kind of different. It was definitely something that we didn't expect, but we maintained a professional relationship. You know, we never tried to call him by his first name. It seemed like he knew us a little bit better though. And, it seemed like he cared a little bit more. I think it's important to present yourself in (a professional) way. But, when you present yourself in a way that's (too professional and) not normal, I don't think that's smart. It's kind of like saying that you don't have the same problems that everybody else does. By letting your human side show, every once in awhile, it makes people realize that maybe you understand what they're going through as well.

> We just had our brigade championship soccer game and (our Company Officer) was out there cheering us on. In fact, he (jokingly) threatened to (put us on report) if we didn't win. We all laughed and thought that was great. He also a joked with us by saying if things get real bad on the soccer field then he will get into a wrestling match with the other Company Officer. It seems like he can really relate to Midshipman. He's more personal, he not always (strictly) professional.

In the next quote, the Midshipman relays a story about how one Company Officer at the Naval Academy is more tolerant to mistakes made by Midshipmen than another. The Midshipman's argument is that the Naval Academy is no different than any other college and Midshipmen, like all college students, are going to test the limits of the rules and regulations. The result is that some Midshipmen will be caught breaking rules. This does not mean that all Midshipmen are troublemakers, rather that Midshipmen are no different than any other person of college age. This is not to say that Company Officers should set different standards or hold Midshipmen less accountable. According to the survey and the focus group interviews, Midshipmen want a Company Officer who holds them accountable, but understands that their behavior is normal for people their age. And, they want a Company Officer who does not become cynical when a few Midshipmen decide to push the limits and violate regulations.

> Something I'd like to comment about is understanding Midshipmen. One of my instructors in Luce Hall is a Company Officer. Occasionally in class he would talk very cynical about Midshipmen. It seems like he doesn't have a very high opinion of Midshipmen. I think he thinks we were very immature. However, when I talked to my Company Officer, I asked him his opinion about the Naval Academy because I wanted to compare the two. He thinks that the Naval Academy is a great place. I asked him about (Midshipmen) and all our shortcomings; the conduct offenses and academic problems and such. He said that occasional infractions like that are to be expected. He understood that we were between the ages of 18 and 22 and most of us have just left home, and we're trying to find ourselves. You know, were still experimenting on who our friends are going to be and how we are going to dress and things like that. He said that during this experimenting, (mistakes) are going to happen, not that it is ok or anything, just that (Midshipmen) are going to get into trouble and that is to be expected. He is just a lot more understanding than some of the other Company Officers.

In the next quote, the Midshipman discusses the importance of being a graduate of the Naval Academy before becoming a Company Officer. According to this Midshipman, Naval Academy alumni understand the life of a Midshipman better than non-alumni. The topic of being alumni versus not being alumni is important to Midshipmen as evidenced by the fact that it was discussed during three focus group sessions. In general, the Midshipmen felt that alumni were more knowledgeable and more understanding than non-alumni.

> At least if you're a non-graduate, then they should try to learn what it's like to be a Midshipman and what our life is like. For example, our Battalion Officer is a non-graduate and when he arrived, he started laying down a law. At battalion meetings he said things like, "No matter what you have been doing so far it is wrong, I have 20 years of leadership experience and things are going to be done my way. " Everybody left that initial meeting saying things like, " What's going through that guy's head? Where is he coming from? Why is he saying all that stuff?" He doesn't even know what the problems are, what the concerns are, and what's going (well). He just came in and said this is how things and going to be. And, it didn't seem like he had a base knowledge to make all those statements. I think it's good to know who we are and where we are coming from before you start laying down the law like that.

6. Respected

The sixth most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is to be respected. Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 510 (36.6 percent) chose this as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. Like understanding, respected was not mentioned very often during the focus group interview sessions, but was considerably more popular than other traits on the survey. The interviewees did not frequently use the actual word "respect," but they used synonyms to indicate that an officer was held in high esteem or regard.

Counting these synonyms, in four of the eight focus group interviews, the Midshipmen mentioned that being respected is an important leadership trait in a Company Officer.

What is a respected Company Officer? In the survey, a respected Company Officer was described as one who earns respect from his or her subordinates. The respected Company Officer does not rely on rank to get respect. And, the respected Company Officer practices mutual respect with his or her subordinates. Quotes taken from the focus group interviews are provided to give the reader a better understanding of exactly how Midshipmen view a respected Company Officer.

Every service member recites the Oath of Office at commissioning or enlistment. According to the requirements of the Oath of Office, every service member must obey the lawful orders of the officers appointed over them. Therefore, all Midshipmen know that they have to obey the lawful orders of their Company Officers. Some officers confuse this power to give orders with the respect that is normally given to people in positions of leadership. Often, the respect that subordinates have for their leaders goes beyond the respect that is required to carry out orders as promised in the Oath of Office. In general, subordinates know that the Oath of Office obligates them to pay respect to members more senior in rank than themselves, but that does not mean that they have to respect the person. Essentially, they are required to respect the *position* of seniors, but not the *person*.

In the next two quotes, the comments of the Midshipmen are very similar as they discuss the importance of earning respect. In the first quote, the Midshipman uses the unapproachable Company Officer as a reference to discuss the issue of respect. To this

Midshipman, getting to know the Company Officer is an important component of being approachable and subsequently being respected. The Company Officers who are unapproachable act in a way that makes this Midshipman believe that the Company Officer is relying on the formal authority to issue orders and have them carried out. However, for approachable and respected Company Officers, their Midshipmen will carry out orders because they respect and admire the officer who gave them that order, and the Midshipmen want to carry out the order. The difference between the two is that one is carrying out the order because he or she is required to, as opposed to wanting to, carry it out. This Midshipman ends the comment with the statement that respect must be earned by the Company Officer.

> Something that I noticed. The officers that act unapproachable. They tend to view the issue of respect as something that comes with the rank. You know, "I'm a LT and you should respect me without any questions." The way I see the issue of respect, respect is something I give to your rank, but I won't respect you until I get to know you as person and as leader. I won't respect you as a person. I think the officers that are unapproachable expect you to give them respect beyond the rank without earning it. People, like our Company Officer, realize that respect is earned not just given to them because of their rank.

In the second quote, the Midshipman seems to agree, in theory, with the comments of the first Midshipman. Although the specific details of how a Company Officer earns respect from his or her Midshipman is not discussed, there seems to be an element of devotion that is reserved for those officers who care to earn the respect of their subordinates. Once the Company Officer has earned this element of devotion, he or she is considered a respected Company Officer.

> I agree with that. When I graduate, that's one of my goals. I want my people to respect me and follow me because of me and not just because of

> my rank. I don't want them to follow me because I'm an Ensign and they have to. I want them to follow me because they want to.

The next quote is similar to the first two, however this Midshipman explains that there are two levels of respect. Similar to the first two Midshipmen, this Midshipman feels that the first level of respect is given to the position of authority or the rank. The second level of respect is given to the person. This second level of respect must be earned. Exactly how this respect is earned is not specifically discussed.

> I think the word respect has two meanings. I respect the bars or your rank. But also, I think that respect has to be earned. For me to respect you have to do something to earn my respect. I mean I can say that I respect you because I have to. But, deep down inside I don't really care what you say. The only reason I am doing it is because I am in the military and if I don't then I will get into trouble. I think that there are two levels of respect. The good officers have attained that higher level of respect. They have earned our respect.

In the last quote, a Midshipman describes a Company Officer who was well respected by his company. This Midshipman explains that those Midshipmen outside the company did not like this Company Officer. It is possible he was disliked because he had high standards and because he held Midshipmen to those same standards. However, the Midshipmen in this company liked and respected the Company Officer. The researcher speculates that there are two possible reasons for this respect, one reason is related to the high standards the Company Officer held and the other is related to taking care of your people. First, maybe the Midshipmen in the company admired the Company Officer's standards and by being held to a higher standard, they felt that they were being better trained. Second, in the quote the Midshipman says, "He stuck his neck out for us" and "He took care of us in the company." The act of using your rank to take care of your

people is a leadership trait that is also held in high regard and one that leads to respect. It is clear from this quote that the Midshipman respected this Company Officer.

> My first experience, when I was a plebe, with our Company Officer was a positive one. He was a Marine Corps Captain. He stuck his neck out for us. He took care of us in the Company. Those outside the company did not like him because they were not in the company, and he didn't look out for them. He enforced the rules on them, and they didn't like it. But, he took care of our company. He wasn't always liked, but you knew where he was coming from. Everybody respected him.

7. Knowledgeable about his/her people

The seventh most popular desired trait in a Company Officer is to be knowledgeable about his or her people. Of the 1,392 Midshipmen surveyed, 489 (35.1 percent) chose this as an important leadership trait of Company Officers. It is surprising to the researcher that this trait was not more popular during the survey because this trait was the single most talked about trait during the focus group interview sessions. This trait was discussed by at least one Midshipman during each of the focus group sessions. And, in four of the eight focus group sessions, three or more Midshipmen discussed the importance of this trait.

What does it mean for a Company Officer to be knowledgeable about his or her people? In the survey, a Company Officer with this trait was described as an officer who knows both professional and personal information, such as grades and family events, about his or her people. By being familiar with the people in the company, this Company Officer knows when the Midshipmen are behaving uncharacteristically. An examination of the focus group interview sessions provides the reader with a more comprehensive understanding of this trait.

In this first group of quotes, the Midshipmen express a desire for the Company Officer to become more familiar with the Midshipmen in the company. Specifically, the Midshipmen want to be known in a way that is more personal than just knowing their grades or performance-related statistics. The Midshipmen not only want the Company Officer to get to know them, but also they want to be treated as special. They do not want to be treated as a "number," as in "He's just another Midshipman." To Midshipmen, having a professional, but more personal relationship with the Company Officer gives the Midshipmen the feeling that the Company Officer cares about them. They feel that the Company Officer is looking out for their well being.

> I think it's important for the Company Officer to know his people. It must be hard to know 130 plus people, but certain things stand out about people and if the Company Officer can remember just one thing about everyone then you think to yourself, "Oh, he cares about me."
>
> I like it when the Company Officer gives me personal attention. I remember one time my name was on a bulletin board and my Company Officer saw me and commented about it. I didn't even think he read the bulletin boards much less connect me and a bulletin board together.
>
> When our new Company Officer arrived last year, he knew of my name before I even introduced myself. He also knew that I was on the volleyball team. The fact that he took the time to try and know something about us was impressive to me.
>
> I see my Company Officer in hall and he'll ask me personal questions. By doing that, he makes you feel like he really does care about you. He is not like one of those people that thinks that you are just one of his subordinates. He actually cares about the job that you are doing.

In the next series of quotes, the Midshipmen explain how important it is for the Company Officer to be able to place the face with the name. The researcher speculates that one reason is for this desired recognition has to do with the considerable power that

Company Officers have over Midshipmen. For example, the Company Officer has the power to grant or deny special liberty and the power to veto any decisions made by the Midshipmen chain of command. This power also includes the assignment of performance grades, which ultimately results in class rank at the Naval Academy. Like anyone, Midshipmen want to be recognized for their accomplishments and sometimes this recognition includes extra benefits. Without knowing your people, how can a Company Officer properly assign performance grades? At a minimum, the Midshipmen do not want to be mistaken for someone who is a below-average or poor performer. So, getting to know the Company Officer is one way of ensuring that they are properly and correctly recognized. Of course, this is not the only reason that Midshipmen want their Company Officer to recognize them.

> It's also nice when the Company Officer knows what's going on in your life. For example, my Company Officer didn't realize that I was on the swim team. He kept seeing me with a wet hair all the time. One time he asked me if I took a lot of showers or something. And, I had to tell him that my hair was wet because I was on the swim team. He felt kind of dumb after that, but there was no way for me to let him know what was going on without just coming right out and saying that. I felt bad about it, but it was his fault.
>
> My last Company Officer, nobody liked him because he stayed in his office, secluded. He didn't even know I was in his company. One time I was going into the barber shop and he was coming out. He looked at me, like "I know that guy" but didn't say anything to me and then just walked out. That drove me nuts.
>
> I only saw my old Company Officer, during my plebe year, every once in awhile. I'm pretty sure he didn't even know my name. He only went to about one are two formations during the year and spoke. It seemed like he just stayed in his office.

In this last group of quotes, the Midshipmen explain that getting to know each other is better for both the Company Officer and the Midshipmen. According to these Midshipmen, by getting to know each other, they understand the needs and desires of the other. This results in better communication and better understanding. For example, when a Midshipman wants special permission to do something. If the Company Officer knows the Midshipman personally then he or she is more likely to make an informed decision based on a better understanding of the Midshipman rather than making the decision based on the information available in the Midshipman's record. The reciprocal benefit is also true. For example, when the Company Officer is promulgating the latest policy, the Midshipmen are going to understand the Company Officer better and therefore they would be more inclined to support the new policy rather than fight it. Of course, an element of trust is involved, but that, too, is part of getting to know someone. Essentially, by getting to know each other there is a better understanding about the other person's stresses and pressures.

> The last Company Officer we had, the people in this company really loved him. I think a lot of that had the do with the fact that he really knew his people. He allowed a relationship to develop with his people. They were able to relax around each other. They didn't always have to call him "Sir," but they still respected him.

> I know that when I go into counseling with our Company Officer, he doesn't just stick to the script. You know, he asks you questions about your family and where you're from, what you like to do, what you want to do after you graduate and some non-traditional questions. He finds out about you as a person and not just the standard Navy questionnaire stuff. And it makes it a lot easier to relate to a man who knows a little bit more about you. He knows your name, he's looking out for you, and those kinds of things. If he knows you like that then when maybe your grades slip a little, he'll be a little more understanding.

> With my previous Company Officer, he seemed to be behind the desk a lot. Instead of getting out in the hall, meeting people, getting to know them and being able to connect someone's name with a face. When he started to come around and do that, it really improved the whole company morale and also the way we look at him. Some of the agendas that were coming down through the Company Officer, by knowing him, it really helped a lot. Getting to know your people is important.

C. DISCUSSION

The top seven desired characteristics have been presented. The complete results of the survey are presented in Table 4.1 (Chapter IV). The results of the USNA study are significantly different than those found in the Kouzes and Posner (1993) study. The most popular characteristics chosen in the Kouzes and Posner study were honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. The most popular characteristics chosen in the USNA study were approachable, trusting, not a "Form-2" leader, fair, understanding, respected, and knowledgeable about his/her people. The difference in traits chosen may be attributed to the difference between the respondents in the two studies. The respondents in the Kouzes and Posner study were business executives and managers, and the respondents of the USNA study were Midshipmen. Obviously, these two groups of people expect different traits in their leadership. So, the natural question is, *what* influenced or caused these two groups to be dramatically different in their leadership preference?

To determine a possible answer to this question, the researcher explores two issues that appear to be related to the differences. The first issue is the roles and responsibilities of the Company Officer. The second issue addresses how Midshipmen perceive the Company Officer's role and responsibilities. With these two issues as a

foundation, the researcher speculates about the difference between the Kouzes and Posner study and the USNA study.

1. Company Officer Role and Responsibilities

According to *The Company Officer's Handbook* (1996), Company Officers have the responsibility of preparing Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically to be professional officers in the Naval Service. It is essential that each graduating Midshipman possess not only the basic education for, and knowledge of, the naval profession, but also strong officer-like qualities, to include leadership skills. Exactly how these qualities are to be developed is not clearly defined. Each Company Officer is left to his or her own methods to develop these officer-like qualities. In some Midshipmen, these qualities do not have to be developed; they arrive at the Naval Academy with values that are consistent with strong officer-like qualities and good leadership skills. However, for the remainder, these qualities have to be taught or developed. It is the opinion of the researcher that Midshipmen learn these qualities in two ways, (1) through trial and error with different leadership techniques, and (2) through observation of leaders such as fellow Midshipmen in leadership positions, Company Officers, or Battalion Officers. In a study conducted by Kennedy (1998), data supports the theory that Midshipmen learn about leadership by reflecting on personal experiences and observation.

Midshipmen are told that the Naval Academy is a "leadership laboratory." The term comes from the premise that Midshipmen are placed in positions of leadership within the Brigade and given the opportunity to exercise different leadership techniques they have learned. The role of the Company Officer is to draw from a wealth of

leadership experience and knowledge gained during fleet experience and to provide that knowledge to the Midshipmen so they can lead themselves. In this manner, the Midshipmen develop and exercise their own leadership styles. From this perspective, the role of Company Officer is directly tied to the development of leaders and leadership. However, a fiduciary responsibility of Company Officers is to enforce the rules and policies established by the Commandant of Midshipmen. In this capacity, the role of Company Officer is better described as a "Police Officer." It is the role of police officer that may have caused Midshipmen to desire leadership traits that are different than those desired by constituents in the Kouzes and Posner study.

In the Kouzes and Posner study, business executives and managers do not have the responsibility of policing their employees. Most businesses do not regulate the behavior of their employees to the degree that a service academy does. If a business does establish policies, the enforcement of these policies does not necessarily reside with upper management. These duties would probably be delegated to an office manager or security. Therefore, because businesses enjoy a separation of these roles, constituents do not confuse the fiduciary role with the primary role. A closer examination of why these roles may be confusing to Midshipmen is discussed next.

2. Police Officer versus Leader: Midshipmen Perceptions of the Company Officer

According to the *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998), the Company Officer is given formal authority to act as judge, jury, and executioner in all cases involving minor conduct offenses. Given that minor offenses make up approximately 90 percent of all cases reported, this gives the Company Officer considerable power over the

Midshipmen. Midshipmen are well aware of this fact. This is the Company Officer's role as a "Police Officer."

Company Officers have the option of handling minor offenses either informally "in company" or formally in accordance with the *Administrative Conduct System Manual* (1998). Punishment in accordance with this manual is referred to as USNA's conduct system. The use of the conduct system is highly encouraged by the senior administration at the Naval Academy because it provides an official history of behavior, but again it is not mandatory. The decision to place a Midshipman on conduct report rests with the individual observing the conduct. In some cases, the offense is egregious enough that a decision not to use the conduct system would be considered poor judgment. Some Company Officers will use the conduct system when in doubt while others will not. The result is an inconsistent use of the conduct system by Company Officers.

Inconsistent use of the conduct system is one of the factors contributing to cynicism among the Midshipmen. Another contributing factor is the amount of punishment awarded for a particular conduct offense. When awarding punishment, some Company Officers will be harsher than others. The Naval Academy administration has published "standard punishments" for particular conduct offenses, but this is used as a guideline. Each case is adjudicated individually. The varying degrees of harshness exercised by different Company Officers has caused some Company Officers to be viewed as a "Drill Sergeant," with little understanding, and other Company Officers to be viewed as a "Chaplain," with a great deal of patience and understanding.

The role of a Company Officer as a police officer or judge is very visible. When compared to the Company Officer's role as a leader of the company, the police officer role may be much more visible. Why is this the case? As discussed earlier, the Naval Academy is a "leadership laboratory." As such, an accepted belief among the Naval Academy administration is that the job of leading the company is given to the Midshipmen within the company. If the Company Officer is doing his or her job correctly, the Midshipman should view the Midshipman Company Commander as the leader of the company, not the Company Officer. The Company Officer is regarded as a behind-the-scenes person, helping the Company Commander and others in the Midshipmen chain of command to develop their leadership skills.

So, typically, the Company Officer is leading the company, but he or she is using the Midshipmen to do it. And, when comparing the role of leader to that of police officer, Midshipmen generally regard the Company Officer as the police officer of the company not the leader of the company. This distinction in the role of the Company Officer may account for why Midshipmen are looking for traits such as approachable, trusting, not a form-2 leader, fair, understanding, respected, and knowledgeable about his or her people rather than traits normally associated with leadership such as those discussed in the Kouzes and Posner (1993) study.

D. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In summary, the seven most popular desired characteristics in a Company Officer are discussed and quotes from the focus group interview sessions are used to illustrate the points of view of the Midshipmen. The difference between the results of the USNA study

and the Kouzes and Posner (1993) study is explained as a perception issue that Midshipmen have about the responsibilities of the Company Officer. Essentially, to Midshipmen, the perceived responsibilities of a Company Officer are similar to those of a police officer and not those normally associated with a person in a leadership role. Therefore, Midshipmen desire different traits in a Company Officer than they normally would in a leader.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

A great deal of research has been completed on the topic of leadership. In much of the research, the researcher attempts to gain insight on how to become a successful leader by discussing the topic with successful leaders. Most of these leaders are very senior in their respective organizations. However, in the Kouzes and Posner (1993) study, the researchers examine leadership from the perspective of the subordinate. Valuable insight about what leadership traits motivate and inspire subordinates is gained from this study. The same valuable insight from subordinates is available at the Naval Academy. The results of this study can be used by Company Officers to assist them in the execution of their primary responsibilities—developing Midshipmen into superior Naval leaders.

In this thesis, the researcher focused on a single research question: What leadership traits and characteristics do Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy admire most in an effective Company Officer? The purpose of the study is to educate prospective Company Officers on the leadership characteristics that are important to Midshipmen. Company Officers can consider this information as they determine the most appropriate leadership style to use with the Midshipmen.

What leadership traits and characteristics do Midshipmen at the Naval Academy admire most in an effective Company Officer? The researcher posed this question to 40 Midshipmen in eight separate focus group sessions comprised of five Midshipmen in

each group. The data from the focus group sessions was analyzed to produce a list of desired leadership traits and characteristics. This list was presented back to 1,392 Midshipmen in survey format. In order of most popular to least popular, the top seven traits and characteristics Midshipmen admire most in effective Company Officers are: (1) Approachable, (2) Trusting, (3) Not a Form-2 Leader, (4) Fair, (5) Understanding, (6) Respected, and (7) Knowledgeable about his/her people. A short description of each of these traits and characteristics is provided.

1. Approachable

An approachable Company Officer is characterized as being friendly, open, easy to talk to, a good listener, and one that promotes a comfortable atmosphere.

2. Trusting

A trusting Company Officer is characterized as one who lets the Midshipmen run the company as much as possible; an officer who avoids micro-management and allows the Midshipmen to make leadership decisions; and an officer who feels comfortable giving Midshipmen responsibility.

3. Not a Form-2 Leader

A "Form-2 Leader" is a slang term used by Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy for a particular leadership style. This leadership style relies on punishment to deter Midshipmen from violating regulations. Midshipmen consider the use of the Form-2 to be a lazy way for a leader to motive his or her Midshipmen and Form-2 Leaders are considered the weakest leaders at the Naval Academy. When

discussing the matter, Midshipmen only use the term with those officers who are not well respected, admired, or liked.

4. Fair

A fair Company Officer is described as an officer who has no favorites and treats everyone as equals. When deciding punishment, the fair Company Officer assigns equal punishment for comparable offenses, and he or she also ensures that everyone is held accountable, not just a select few.

5. Understanding

An understanding Company Officer is characterized as one who knows the stresses and needs of Midshipmen and that the Naval Academy is not the Fleet. Also, an understanding Company Officer is one who realizes that Midshipmen will make mistakes and the time to make those mistakes and learn from them is in a training environment like the Naval Academy.

6. Respected

A respected Company Officer is described as one who earns respect from his or her subordinates. The respected Company Officer does not rely on rank to get respect. And, the respected Company Officer practices mutual respect with the Midshipmen.

7. Knowledgeable About His/Her People

A Company Officer with this trait is described as an officer who knows both professional and personal information, such as grades and family events, about his or her people. Additionally, by being familiar with the people in the company, this Company Officer knows when his or her people are behaving uncharacteristically.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the USNA study are different than those found in the Kouzes and Posner (1993) research. Why is there a difference? As discussed in the last chapter, the researcher presents two possible explanations for the difference. One, the difference may be attributed to the difference between the respondents in the two studies. The respondents in the Kouzes and Posner study were business executives and managers, and the respondents of the USNA study were strictly Midshipmen. And two, the difference may be explained as a perception issue that Midshipmen have about the responsibilities of the Company Officer. Essentially, to some Midshipmen, the perceived responsibilities of a Company Officer are similar to those of a police officer and not those normally associated with a person in a leadership role.

To explore the first explanation further, the researcher asks the following question. Why do Midshipmen want different leadership traits than business executives and managers? First, the large majority of Midshipmen are young adults between the ages of 18 and 22. Most Midshipmen come straight from living at home with their mother and father. Whenever they needed help with homework, a shoulder to cry on, or money for the movies, often their parents were there to provide assistance. After they arrive at the Naval Academy, there is a vacancy in this parental figure. The transition from living at home to living at the Naval Academy is very abrupt. The researcher is not suggesting that Midshipmen are looking for parental figure to coddle and guide their every move. No, most Midshipmen want to be treated as adults. An illustration of this point is contained in the USNA study results. Specifically, that Midshipmen want a

Company Officer who trusts them as adults and young leaders to run the company without assistance. But, because the transition from home life to USNA life is so sudden, the researcher is suggesting that during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, maybe Midshipmen are holding on to some of their adolescent needs. And therefore, some of the responses to the USNA study might be a product of this transition period. Some traits that fall into this category and illustrate this point are (1) Approachable, (2) Understanding, (3) Fun, (4) Caring, (5) Role model, (6) Supportive, and (7) Mentor.

If Midshipmen are confusing their adolescent needs and what is expected from them as adults, are the results of the USNA study valid? And, should Company Officers consider the needs of Midshipmen? As a Company Officer for more than a year, the researcher's opinion is that the answer to both questions is yes. Understanding what Midshipmen want in a Company Officer is the first step in gaining the trust of the Midshipmen in the company and establishing oneself as the leader. Once the Company Officer has the trust of Midshipmen, loyalty will follow next and then the bond between Company Officer and Midshipmen will become very strong. At that point, because of the bond established, Midshipmen will accept that the Company Officer must do his or her job. And, part of that job is to enforce rules, as a "police officer." Sometimes that role is not pleasant, but it is vital to the survival of the group and those decisions are in the best interest of the Naval Academy.

Should Company Officers care what leadership traits Midshipmen admire? Yes, according to the *Organization Manual* (1996), the mission of the Company Officer is to provide training, counseling, and guidance for Midshipmen in their development into

superior Naval leaders. According to Kennedy (1998), Midshipmen learn leadership by personal experience and observation. The author contends that Midshipmen will emulate the leadership techniques of Company Officers they admire. Therefore, if a Company Officer is to accomplish his or her goal, then he or she must first gain the admiration of the Midshipmen. After a Company Officer has the admiration of the Midshipmen, then he or she can provide training and guidance on how to be a superior Naval leader. The results of this study provide insight into what characteristics Midshipmen admire and dislike in a Company Officer.

Should Company Officers alter their leadership style to accommodate the results of the USNA study? Generally speaking, perspective Company Officers should not have to make dramatic changes in their leadership style. The principles of good leadership that Company Officers learn both on the job and that are taught in the masters program at USNA provide a firm foundation. The results of the USNA study provide the perspective Company Officer with an understanding of what Midshipmen are looking for in an effective Company Officer. To simply direct that every Company Officer should be approachable, trusting, not a Form-2 leader, etc., will not produce an effective Company Officer. In fact, there is no foolproof formula that will consistently produce an effective Company Officer. The strengths and weaknesses of every leader are different. Each leader must use his or her strengths to his or her advantage. For example some leaders are effective by being soft spoken while others are effective by being loud and boisterous. The point is that everyone must develop a leadership style that is consistent with his or her personality. The USNA study provides each prospective Company Officer with

insight into the desires of Midshipmen. Knowing and understanding these desires will help a Company Officer guide his or her leadership style and lead his or her company most effectively.

If a prospective Company Officer wants to adapt his or her leadership style to meet the desires of Midshipmen, then the single most important skill to develop is "listening." By practicing good listening skills, a Company Officer can be perceived as approachable, fair, and understanding. With regard to the adjudication of conduct infractions, Company Officers with good listening skills give Midshipmen the feeling that they are being heard. In many cases, Midshipmen simply want to be able to explain their situation and to be understood. After they have been heard, if the decision by the Company Officer is that they receive some kind of punishment, then at least the Midshipman have the satisfaction of knowing that the Company Officer made the decision based on all the evidence. As a Company Officer, it has been the researcher's experience that Midshipmen will accept punishment if they feel that they have been heard and understood.

The researcher concludes that leading Midshipmen is different from leading the subordinates in the civilian workplace. It is also somewhat different than leading sailors onboard ship. Company Officers at the Naval Academy will have to employ a different leadership style than senior managers and executives and other military leaders. This leadership style may not necessarily be radically different, but it is going to have to account for the fiduciary responsibilities associated with being a Company Officer. First, Company Officers must adapt their leadership style to account for the enforcement of

rules and regulations at the Naval Academy. And second, this leadership style will also have to account for the specific needs of a young adult making the transition from life at home to life at the Naval Academy.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

First, perspective Company Officers should review the results of this study. As discussed, an understanding of these results is critical to establishing trust and loyalty between the Company Officer and Midshipmen. Second, perspective Company Officers should receive extensive training on listening skills. This training should include an explanation of why this training is being administered. Specifically, perspective Company Officers need to understand the importance of good listening skills and the effect that these skills can have on the morale of Midshipmen. The training should include the "hands on" experience of adjudicating an actual conduct case followed by a discussion with Midshipmen on how the case was handled and perceived.

Further research is recommended. The scope of this thesis was limited to the study of leadership from the perspective of the subordinate, Midshipmen. There are several echelons of leadership at the Naval Academy; the Company Officer and the Battalion Officer are two examples. Deeper insight into this topic may be gained by discussing the results of this study and conducting another independent study with both Company Officers and other senior leadership at the Naval Academy. Essentially, this study could be repeated at the different leadership echelons. The research questions posed to Midshipmen could be: (1) What leadership traits and characteristics do you admire most in an effective Battalion Officer? (2) What leadership traits and

characteristics do you admire most in an effective Commandant? The purpose of the study would be to gather data that could be compared. Since some of these leadership positions are relatively senior in the Naval Academy organization, the results may be similar to the results of the Kouzes and Posner (1993) study. However, like Company Officers, Battalion Officers also have the fiduciary responsibility of enforcement of rules and regulations. Therefore, those results may be similar to this study.

The USNA study provides prospective Company Officers with valuable insight into what Midshipmen are looking for in an effective Company Officer. Since the data are from the perspective of the subordinate, they may be biased. However, the data remain important in understanding the psyche of Midshipmen. If prospective Company Officers take these data into account, it is the opinion of the researcher that they will become effective Company Officers. They will be effective not only in the eyes of Midshipmen, but also in the eyes of Naval Academy administration.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY

Effective Company Officer Survey

Imagine that you are creating the ideal Company Officer, and you have the ability to choose seven (7) qualities that will dominate his/her behavior. These should be the qualities that you think are the most important in describing an **effective** Company Officer. You will find that all of the qualities are important, your task is to choose the seven (7) qualities that you consider **most** important.

1. Read all the qualities and the description first.
2. Check (click) the box next to exactly seven (7) qualities you think are the **most** important.

❑ **Approachable:** friendly, open, easy to talk to, good listener, and promotes comfortable atmosphere.

❑ **Knowledgeable about people:** knows professional and personal information about his/her people (e.g. grades, family events), and knows when Midshipmen are acting uncharacteristically.

❑ **Knowledgeable about his/her profession:** knows the Navy/Marine Corps, and is competent with respect to his/her service community.

❑ **Trusting:** lets Midshipmen run the company as much as possible, avoids micro-management, allows Midshipmen to make decisions, and feels comfortable giving Midshipmen responsibility.

❑ **Understanding:** knows the stress and needs of Midshipmen, that USNA is not the fleet, and realizes that Midshipmen will make mistakes.

❑ **Caring:** genuine concern for successes and well being of Midshipmen, protects them from unfair treatment, and looks out for their interests.

❑ **Supportive:** encouraging, gives help or guidance when asked, spends personal time helping Midshipmen solve problems.

❑ **Mentor:** coach, counselor, advisor, teacher, and focuses on developing Midshipmen into officers and leaders.

❑ **Fair:** has no favorites, treats everyone equally, adjudicates conduct cases comparably, and enforces the rules for everyone.

❑ **Honest:** trustworthy, tells the truth, and admits when he/she makes a mistake.

- ❑ **Involved**: participates in Company functions, interacts with Midshipmen on a routine basis, is out walking around the Company, and promotes camaraderie.
- ❑ **Confident:** assertive and self-assured in all situations and doesn't beat around the bush.
- ❑ **Consistent:** makes decisions and sticks with them, and does what he/she says.
- ❑ **Decisive:** makes decisions in a reasonable amount of time.
- ❑ **Role Model:** sets a good example, maintains a good uniform appearance, shows mature behavior, has a stable demeanor, is patient, and promotes morality and integrity
- ❑ **Courageous:** stands up for beliefs, and doesn't back down to senior officers.
- ❑ **Practical:** has common sense; uses practical judgement, doesn't always go by the book and considers exceptions to the rules.
- ❑ **Fun:** is relaxed and happy, makes work enjoyable, knows how to work hard but also play hard
- ❑ **Motivational:** inspiring, doesn't use fear tactics, and brings out the best in Midshipman.
- ❑ **Positive:** focuses on the positive instead of the negative, uses positive reinforcement, acknowledges big and small achievements, and builds on the strengths of Midshipmen.
- ❑ **Loyal:** committed to his/her profession, Midshipmen, standards, and USNA
- ❑ **Informative:** keeps Midshipmen informed, explains decisions, provides feedback with punishment, uses "sea stories" to show significance, and clearly communicates goals.
- ❑ **Respected:** earns respect, doesn't rely on rank, and practices mutual respect
- ❑ **Forgiving:** gives Midshipmen a second chance, doesn't hold grudges, is willing to let Midshipmen make mistakes and learn from them.
- ❑ **Tactful:** maintains the confidentiality of the situation, and counsels in private.
- ❑ **Not a "Form-2 Leader":** uses creative ways to enforce the rules, and handles minor conduct offenses in the Company.

Please complete these demographic items.

1. What is your class? 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002
2. What is your ethnicity? Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, Other
3. What is your gender? Male, Female

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS BY GENDER

Admired Leadership Traits of a Company Officer
Percentages: Sample vs. Males vs. Females

Characteristic	Sample	Males	Females
Approachable	69.4	69.8	67.1
Trusting	59.8	61.2	52.1
Not a "Form-2 Leader"	52.2	51.5	55.9
Fair	43.5	43.3	44.1
Understanding	40.9	40.5	43.2
Respected	36.6	36.1	39.4
Knowledgeable about people	35.1	34.2	40.4
Practical	34.5	36.0	26.3
Honest	28.8	28.8	29.1
Fun	26.2	26.5	24.4
Consistent	26.1	25.9	27.7
Caring	26.0	26.0	25.8
Role Model	25.4	25.7	23.5
Involved	24.6	23.9	28.2
Motivational	23.1	22.6	25.8
Forgiving	20.8	20.9	19.7
Positive	20.1	19.4	23.9
Knows his/her profession	17.4	17.5	16.9
Courageous	17.1	17.5	15.0
Supportive	15.1	16.0	9.9
Mentor	14.2	14.5	12.7
Informative	11.9	11.6	13.6
Confident	10.1	10.0	10.8
Loyal	8.4	8.4	8.5
Tactful	6.4	5.7	10.3
Decisive	6.3	6.4	5.6

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APPENDIX C: SURVEY RESULTS BY CLASS YEAR

Admired Leadership Traits of a Company Officer
Percentages: Sample vs. Class Year

Characteristic	Sample Total	First Class	Second Class	Third Class	Fourth Class
Approachable	69.4	66.6	67.0	71.1	72.0
Trusting	59.8	66.2	69.1	55.2	51.4
Not a "Form-2 Leader"	52.2	37.6	54.2	62.4	52.1
Fair	43.5	45.2	42.4	41.6	44.7
Understanding	40.9	44.8	39.5	39.3	40.8
Respected	36.6	31.4	35.8	39.6	38.6
Knowledgeable about people	35.1	42.1	30.9	34.4	34.4
Practical	34.5	35.2	38.4	38.7	27.0
Honest	28.8	37.2	28.9	20.5	29.7
Fun	26.2	19.3	28.4	31.2	25.1
Consistent	26.1	30.3	26.1	24.0	25.1
Caring	26.0	23.8	27.2	27.2	25.6
Role Model	25.4	24.5	24.9	23.7	27.8
Involved	24.6	19.7	23.2	24.0	29.7
Motivational	23.1	20.3	22.9	25.7	22.9
Forgiving	20.8	17.9	22.6	20.5	21.4
Positive	20.1	16.6	18.6	20.5	23.6
Knows his/her profession	17.4	23.1	14.6	15.0	17.7
Courageous	17.1	20.0	21.8	16.2	11.8
Supportive	15.1	18.3	13.5	18.5	11.3
Mentor	14.2	14.1	12.3	14.2	16.0
Informative	11.9	12.8	8.9	10.7	15.0
Confident	10.1	11.0	10.6	7.5	11.3
Loyal	8.4	6.6	10.6	7.8	8.4
Tactful	6.4	4.8	4.0	6.6	9.3
Decisive	6.3	10.7	3.4	3.8	7.6

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APPENDIX D: SURVEY RESULTS TOTAL SAMPLE

Admired Leadership Traits of a Company Officer
Percentages: Total Sample

Characteristic	Number of Responses	Percentage
Approachable	966	69.4
Trusting	833	59.8
Not a "Form-2 Leader"	726	52.2
Fair	605	43.5
Understanding	570	40.9
Respected	510	36.6
Knowledgeable about people	489	35.1
Practical	480	34.5
Honest	401	28.8
Fun	365	26.2
Consistent	364	26.1
Caring	362	26.0
Role Model	353	25.4
Involved	342	24.6
Motivational	321	23.1
Forgiving	289	20.8
Positive	280	20.1
Knows his/her profession	242	17.4
Courageous	238	17.1
Supportive	210	15.1
Mentor	198	14.2
Informative	166	11.9
Confident	141	10.1
Loyal	117	8.4
Tactful	89	6.4
Decisive	87	6.3

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