

Ship Climate and Ship Performance

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Directed by Dr. Daniel P. McDonald, Director of Research
Summer 2010

Technical Report Number 06-10

Issue

Unit readiness is affected by unit cohesion, which involves group identity and group efficacy (i.e., belief that the group can achieve its objectives). What can commanders do to foster a command climate that enhances ship performance and subsequent recognition in terms of ship awards?

Current Status

The DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) was developed to assess facets of organizational climate that are relevant to unit-level performance. However, to date, DEOCS data is not linked with unit-level outcomes. The authors linked DEOCS scores collected from 11,921 sailors on 45 U.S. Navy ships with ship performance in terms of ship awards as designated by Navy officials. Findings indicated that both unit cohesion and hostile work environment predicted ship performance.

Recommendations

- Anecdotally, cohesion has long been considered important to military mission readiness, and human resources and legal officials traditionally called for increasing efforts to minimize levels of hostile work environments. With the present study, the authors empirically demonstrated that both unit cohesion and hostile work environments do have an impact on ship performance. This finding reinforces DEOMI's focus on these issues and suggests that further investigation of issues affecting unit readiness is warranted.
- The results of the study suggest that commanders pay particular attention to issues affecting ship cohesion and the hostility of the work environment on the ship. Both cohesion and hostile work environment have an impact on ship performance by affecting motivation and capability to perform.

- Cohesive ships feature sailors who are committed to their tasks, identify with their ships, and like and know their shipmates well. Hence, they are more highly motivated and capable of executing their tasks than low-cohesion ships.
- Similarly, ships with hostile work environments reduce motivation and distract sailors from tasks.