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**COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
AND THE CANADIAN MILITARY POLICE**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

Canada's military, known as the Canadian Forces (CF), is an organization that evolved from a British colonial militia. The Military Police Branch (MPB), formed in 1967, is a relatively recent addition to the CF.

Recent enhancements to the Military Police recruitment process have resulted in a new dynamic at the grassroots level of the MPB reflective of changing generational perceptions and expectations.

High-performing organizations must successfully adapt to change when looking to the future. This inquiry examines how the MPB can successfully adapt its leadership style to the changing needs of emerging recruits. It explores how grassroots level communities of practice (CoP) could enhance the job performance and/or satisfaction of junior MP members within the Canadian Formation Military Police Section – Atlantic.

Conclusions revealed that CoP may provide such an opportunity within this group by (a) improving communication, (b) empowering members, and (c) enhancing strategic alignment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Action Research
CDS	Chief of Defence
CF	Canadian Forces
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CoP	Community/Communities of Practice
DHRRE	Director of Human Resources Research and Evaluation
DND	Department of National Defence
FMPS (A)	Formation Military Police Section – Atlantic
Gen X	Generation X
Gen Y	Generation Y
GIS	General Investigation Sub-section(s)
LCdr.	Lieutenant Commander
MALT-JPSL	Master of Arts in Leadership and Training – Justice and Public Safety Leadership
MP	Military Police
MPB	Military Police Branch
NCM	Non-Commissioned Member(s)
NDA	National Defence Act

CHAPTER ONE:

FOCUS AND FRAMING

Introduction

In 1992 the Canadian Airborne Battle Group was deployed to Somalia where a number of incidents, including the murder of a teenage boy by Canadian troops, came to the forefront of media attention. Subsequent reports by Chief Justice Brian Dickson (Department of National Defence [DND], 1997) and the Somalia Commission of Inquiry were highly critical of the Canadian Forces (CF) in general. These reports also identified areas of concern with regard to the Military Police Branch (MPB) and the ability of the MPB to effectively police the CF.

The reports made a number of recommendations that began a process of change throughout the MPB, which is still ongoing today. Changes included equipment funding increases, training outsourcing, and the establishment of the Military Police (MP) Complaints Commission. Measures including the adoption of a Code of Conduct and the creation of a Professional Standards element within the MPB were also undertaken.

One of the most perceptible changes involved the processes surrounding the selection of MP recruits. It was recognised that in order to attract superior recruits the MPB required a more competitive salary and benefits package to compete with other police organizations in Canada. These initiatives were coupled with a rigorous selection process including the requirement for post-secondary education for non-commissioned MP members.

As a frontline supervisor, I have been witness over the last few years to the enhancement in the selection criteria for personnel entering the MPB. The new MP recruit

is highly motivated, accountable and independent. However, the very attributes that create a superior performer may have created unique problems in terms of the assimilation of this younger generation of members into military culture and some difficulty in communication with their more experienced leaders.

Issues of communication and generation-specific needs are likely to increase in proportion to the influx of the younger generation into the ranks of the MPB. These issues, if not addressed, have the potential to lead to decreased job satisfaction and performance. For this reason, leaders will likely have to adapt to the changing landscape. The challenge will be to preserve the military traditions and culture that embed the MP into the CF as an instrument of the military justice system while maintaining an eager, effective and motivated workforce.

Working Research Question

The research question that has guided this project is, “How could a Community of Practice enhance the level of job satisfaction and performance in the Military Police at the grassroots level?”

Sub-questions

The following sub-questions arise from the research question, and help to focus the discussion throughout this report:

1. What are the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages that define a Community of Practice (CoP)?
2. What generational factors must be considered in the retention of today's job force, in particular within the ranks of the Formation Military Police Section – Atlantic (FMPS (A)) junior members?

3. What key success factors can contribute to a highly satisfied and performing job force, particularly within the ranks of the FMPS (A) junior members?
4. How could CoP successfully address the key success factors identified by FMPS (A) junior members?

The Opportunity

The MPB is an evolving organization faced with a several significant challenges. As a long-serving member of the CF and for the last fourteen years a member of the MPB, I have had the opportunity to witness some of these challenges. I have come to believe that while the MPB has succeeded in meeting the challenge of being perceived as a more independent and professional police service, our leadership style may not have progressed to meet the evolving needs of the next generations of recruit. In short, I question whether we are in fact satisfying their need to feel that by their actions they are contributing and adding value to the system within which they function.

In light of generational differences, the recruit being hired by the MP today would appear to have very little in common with the recruit who was hired twenty years ago (Abbott, 2005). It appears unrealistic and self-defeating to impose twenty-plus years of generational attitudes and expectations upon the new generations of recruit. For this reason, I am seeking herein to determine how the organization could make the most of the generational differences that exist by exploring the use of a forum of communication and participation, namely CoP.

Significance of the Opportunity

As previously stated, over the last ten years the MP have undertaken many change initiatives. These have transformed the MPB, its appearance, and the core values and professional expectations of its members.

Change and reorganization can often result in resistance stemming from a natural human desire to maintain stability through the preservation of status quo (Schein, 1992). As a Senior Non-Commissioned member (NCM) responsible for leading the junior members at the tactical level, it is my duty to implement the strategic, operational and tactical vision developed not only at a national level but at the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) unit level as well.

Based upon generational subtleties that will be addressed herein, it is possible that the members being brought into the organization under the new system of recruiting possess a level of maturity and confidence that could at times be confused with impudence and overconfidence (Theilfoldt & Scheef, 2004). In turn, junior members may perceive policies and direction developed at both the unit and national level as limiting and unnecessary because they often don't fully understand the full role of the MP in the CF.

If CoP are determined to be a suitable tool in addressing these perceptions, there is the potential to significantly enhance the junior members' job satisfaction and performance. This could be accomplished by providing a forum for their continued learning through the exchange of knowledge and best practices (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). Perhaps more importantly, it could demonstrate management's trust of their abilities as contributing members of the unit and provide a more in-depth understanding of the strategic direction of the organization as a whole. This could in turn result in a dissipation of change resistance and quicker acceptance of new organizational initiatives.

The long-term benefits could include (a) the reduction of stress among the members, (b) improved two-way communication, and (c) a more trusting and efficient peer group that could provide a superior and more consistent service to the CF. These could further enhance the credibility of the FMPS (A) as an effective police service.

As the MPB continues to evolve as a professional policing organization, it is important that we look at new ways of leading in an environment where change has become the norm. Any effort to decrease the stress associated with change and to enhance the satisfaction of our members can only improve the service we provide to our clients, namely the military community we serve. Exploration into whether and how CoP at the grassroots level could serve as an effective vehicle for these enhancements aims to directly contribute to this effort.

Systems Analysis of the Opportunity

The uniformed MP patrol members, supported by their non-uniformed peers in the General Investigation (GIS) sub-sections, are the most visible element of the MPB provided to the military community on any CFB. Although the cases investigated at the Patrol and GIS level are not as complex as cases assigned to the CF National Investigation Service, they have the potential to have a substantially positive or negative impact at the local and national levels. In other words our junior, or grassroots level, members are the MPB's face to the public.

The MP are the vehicle by which the MPB's values, beliefs, credibility and professionalism are transmitted. As such, it is important that we as leaders provide these members with the guidance, confidence and tools needed to perform their duties in the most responsible, satisfactory, effective and professional manner possible. Failure to accomplish this could result in the demise of the MPB as we know it.

A forum for the frontline members to (a) interact, (b) problem solve, (c) address recurring issues, (d) share knowledge and best practices, (e) cross internal unit boundaries, and (f) create even performance between the sub-units could only enhance the efficiency of the unit. This would in turn support both the mission and strategic vision of the MP.

By tackling the issue of the appropriateness and viability of CoP within the MP grassroots, there is potential to apply solutions arrived at throughout the MPB and to extend best practices nation-wide.

Organizational Context

The CF encompasses three armed services consisting of navy, army and air elements. There are currently approximately 65,000 Regular Force members employed within the organization. The CF is responsible to the Minister of National Defence, who is appointed by and reports directly to the Prime Minister of Canada. Transformational changes occurred within the organization in the early seventies. The navy, army and air force command structure were unified and renamed as Maritime Command, Mobile Command and Air Command. These Commands were placed under the authority of a full General known as the Chief of Defence (CDS). The CDS reports directly to the Minister of Defence.

All three Commands are participants in the Canadian Military Justice system. The Military Justice system has three basic components. They are military law, operational law, and administrative law.

This Canadian Military Justice system serves the particular disciplinary needs of the military, whose legislative basis is found in The Code of Service Discipline, Part III of the *National Defence Act* (NDA, 1985).

The primary goal of the DND and the CF is to “protect Canada, and Canadian interests and values, while contributing to international peace and security” (DND, 2005b).

Under Canadian defence policy, the CF are called upon to fill three major roles, namely (a) protecting Canada, (b) defending North America in co-operation with the United States of America, and (c) contributing to peace and international security.

The MP, while adhering to the principles of the organization as a whole, also subscribes to mission and vision statements adapted to the particularities of the duties they must perform and to the manner in which they must perform them. The relevance of these statements is directly applicable to the premise for establishing CoP this MPB, namely to enhance job performance and to achieve a sense of satisfaction in doing so. The mission statement of the CF Provost Marshall proclaims that, "The Canadian Forces Military Police contribute to the effectiveness and readiness of the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence through the provision of professional police, security and operational support services worldwide" (DND, 2005d, para. 1). The vision elaborates that, "the Canadian Forces Military Police are recognized for excellence, professionalism, integrity and transparency. The Military Police are operationally oriented with an ever-increasing sphere of influence, and reflect the cultural dimensions and values of Canada" (DND, 2005d, para. 2).

MP members are specially appointed persons under Section 156 of the NDA and may arrest or detain without warrant any person who is subject to the Code of Service Discipline regardless of rank or status. Further, Section 2(g)(i) of the Criminal Code of Canada defines MP as Peace Officers. This definition provides them with limited jurisdiction over civilians, allowing MPs to proceed through the civilian justice system in certain cases. There are approximately 1250 MP members, including all rank levels, scattered throughout CF Bases and units across the country. Some are also serving in Security Guard units at Canadian embassies worldwide.

MP recruits are drawn from all walks of life and as a minimum are required to have obtained a college diploma related to law and security studies. If successful in qualifying through the initial testing phase, they are flown from across the country to a central location where a board of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned MP members put them through an intensive series of interviews and police-related scenarios as a second stage of selection.

The Halifax MP Section, formally referred to as the FMPS(A), is the largest MP unit in Canada with approximately 75 MP members. The Patrol sub-section consists of approximately 40 personnel divided into four operational shifts and one training shift. The operational shifts rotate into training shift slot approximately twice a year. The GIS consists of approximately 10 MP members and is responsible for investigating the more in-depth general investigations. The more serious or sensitive investigations are conducted by the CF National Investigative Service and are completely autonomous of the FMPS(A).

FMPS (A) is considered one of the more active postings, receiving a substantial number of newly trained recruits yearly. The recruits are on a yearlong probationary period of employment often referred to as Probationary Employment Period (PEP). At present there are approximately 10 members on a PEP. During the yearlong period they are assigned a coach officer and are under close scrutiny by their immediate supervisors. They are provided continuous feedback and are formally assessed quarterly using a written report that is forwarded to the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy. The report outlines observed strengths, areas for development and ultimately their suitability for retention in the MPB. The PEP members are eligible for posting upon the completion of their PEP but in most cases remain at the unit for a number of years. This has created a very youthful and enthusiastic Patrol and Investigation sub-section with a requirement for technically strong Sergeants and Master Corporals to supervise and guide them.

This research project will take into consideration the above organizational structure, mission and roles. Concurrently, I will be seeking to determine what potential positive changes originating from CoP could be feasible for and beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the literature has identified several factors that could contribute to answering the research question: “How could a Community of Practice enhance the level of job satisfaction and performance in the Military Police at the grassroots level?” The three key factors identified herein are (a) communities of practice, (b) generational considerations, and (c) key success factors of high performing organizations.

Communities of Practice

The concept of CoP has been around for many years but the actual term was not coined until 1991 by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (Hildreth & Kimble, 2004). Etienne Wenger has since become one of the leading authors of our day on the concept of CoP, which are defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Early examples of CoP include (a) Homo sapiens gathered around the fire discussing a hunt and sharing information, (b) the corporations of Craftsmen in ancient Rome, and (c) the Guilds from the Middle Ages.

Types of CoP

There are different types of CoP used at all levels of profit and not-for-profit organizations throughout the world. The two types of CoP most often referred to are self-organized and sponsored. The former “pursue the shared interests of the group’s members” (Nickols, 2000, para. 1). This form of CoP adds value to an organization by circulating or sharing knowledge and acting as a funnel for information for the remainder of the

organization. They allow members to resolve problems and find solutions of their own volition. On one hand, these CoP can be extremely fragile due to their voluntary nature if attempts are made by the organization to manage or control them. On the other hand, they can be extremely resilient in that members can come and go as the interests and issues attract them. This type of CoP has been known to evolve into a sponsored group or dissipate if the members feel they are no longer receiving any sustainable return.

The sponsored groups “are initiated, chartered and supported by management” (Nickols, 2000, para. 2). Sponsored CoP have a substantial amount of pressure put upon them in that they are expected and required by their sponsoring body to deliver upon the expected organizational outcomes. A benefit of this type of CoP is that they get the needed resources in return for having a more formalized charter of expectations. However, sponsored CoP should not be confused with project teams, which are more autonomous and far-reaching.

While Nickols (2000) referred to two main types of CoP, Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003) further divided it into three, namely:

1. “Informal,” which could be as casual as a breakfast meeting of likeminded individuals with no official management involvement or sponsorship. The activities and outcomes of this type of CoP are the exclusive responsibility of participants. An example of expected outcomes for this type of gathering would be personal and professional development. Increased levels of trust and collaboration amongst organizational sub-sections would be another example. This type of CoP has no formal accountability structure and as such the organization may be unaware of its activities. This may limit communication with and follow-up by management;

2. “Supported” is similar to Informal in that the membership is self joining or peer invited but unique in that it has a sponsor or liaison from management within the organization. Examples of expected outcomes for this type of gathering would include (a) the sharing and building of organizational knowledge, (b) focus on skills pertinent to professional tasks, and (c) greater collaboration among subsections. Although management does have some input into the group’s purpose and the communication of its purpose, the Supported CoP’s activities remain largely governed by the members. The sponsor provides organizational support and acts as a communication conduit between management and CoP participants; [and]

3. "Structured" CoPs are management driven and directed with the endorsement of the membership. Selection criteria are more structured with new members being invited by members or by the organizational sponsor. An example of an expected outcome for this type of gathering would be the consistent enforcement and understanding of organizational policy. Problem-solving for issues identified by management would be another example. This CoP's findings and outcomes are the most likely to be readily and rapidly actioned by the organization given that it is organizationally driven from the onset. (pp. 36-37)

Approach to CoP

Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003) referred to two approaches to building a CoP, namely virtual and face-to-face. The authors spoke to the advantages of combining the two approaches in an effort to accommodate the largest number of stakeholders possible while providing the most flexibility to all participants. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) also supported the combined approach, noting however that "in the early stages of development, face to face meetings help lay the foundations of the community" (p. 89).

Advantages of CoP

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) highlighted a number of advantages unique to CoP within the workplace. These may include but are not limited to (a) bringing together individuals who might not necessarily interact during the course of day-to-day activities, (b) identifying and providing solutions for reoccurring workplace problems that may cross sub-unit boundaries, (c) identifying inconsistencies and levelling out the inconsistencies in service within sub-sections of an organization, and (d) linking unrelated activities that touch upon similar issues or concerns. The authors further distinguished the short-term and long-term individual and organizational advantages of CoP.

Short-term Advantages

Some of the short-term value described for the organization included (a) the provision of a forum for effective and efficient problem solving, and (b) a more comprehensive view of issues within a given system.

Short-term values for the individual member may include (a) access to an expert support network in addressing challenges, (b) improved communication with organizational members, (c) enhanced confidence in one's approach to problems, and (d) an increased sense of being a value-added team member within the system.

Long-term Advantages

Some of the long-term values to an organization listed by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) include (a) the ability to understand and carry out organizational strategic initiatives, (b) organizational credibility, (c) capacity for knowledge development, and (d) the capacity to act and react strategically.

The long-term values for the individual member listed by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) included but were not limited to (a) an inventive network for skills development and sharing of expertise, (b) enhanced professional credibility, (c) increased employability and advancement potential, and (d) a strong sense of professional identity.

Characteristics of a Successful CoP

According to Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), the success of CoP resided in seven common principles. These are summarized in the paragraphs below.

The first principle involved building flexibility into the process, i.e. attracting participants to the concept and then allowing the forum to grow and/or change as needed in light of technology changes, focus changes, etc.

The second involved remaining open to views from other interest groups while remaining focused on the task at hand.

The third implied that not all members of the CoP will be involved to the same degree at all times. This is unique to CoP and distinguishes CoP from project teams. Members should not get discouraged if they see certain other members participating only sporadically or to a lesser degree.

The fourth principle addressed the fact that many back corridor discussions may have significant impact on the dealings of the CoP and can actually help drive the public forums.

The fifth touched upon the creation of value within the group, upon the recognition of the value that sharing small and perhaps seemingly insignificant and rote bits of knowledge can bring to the group.

The sixth dealt with making the CoP a comfortable yet innovative forum within which to discuss issues of concern and share knowledge.

The seventh principle involved setting a pace for the group which keeps the momentum and interest going while not over-taxing its members.

Potential Pitfalls of CoP

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) also listed two general types of disorders with some serious potential pitfalls to a CoP. The first was simply a CoP that is not functioning well. Usually the reasons are straightforward and can be attributed to a violation of one or more of the seven principles listed above.

The second general disorder identified several potential pitfalls which include a desire to own or impose one's will upon the CoP. Although a level of ownership is good for the development of a CoP, an excessive sense of ownership can lead to arrogance. If the community's hold on knowledge becomes exclusive, non-participating organizational

members may become resentful. This can result in the CoP becoming or being perceived as the “knowledge police” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 142).

It is important to avoid a clique mentality, which can seriously reduce the ability of the group to recruit and grow. If relationships within a CoP become overly tight within the core there can be a tendency for the community to close itself off from other points of view and become stagnant. Stakeholders within the CoP must remain vigilant of “toxic coziness” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 144).

It is also critical to avoid the atmosphere of marginality that can result from the shared discontent of a congregated group of disillusioned organizational members. In other words the CoP must not become simply a fault-finding community.

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) identified several other possible CoP disorders. They included (a) an over dependence upon the leadership of the CoP, (b) stratification of core members resulting in hierarchy within the membership, and (c) a loss of group identity when a community grows too large.

Successful CoP within a Military Context

The effectiveness and viability of CoP within a military context has been explored in the past. Kilner (2002) cited the example of a shared virtual forum for military commanders. This knowledge-sharing forum has proven successful in that it allows for (a) knowledge sharing, (b) just-in-time learning, (c) distance learning across geographical boundaries, (d) integrating doctrine, and (e) fostering excellence through professional relationships. It is interesting to note that this CoP, set up without authorization from the United States of America (US) Military, has allowed for the dissemination of real-time access to information that may have taken months to access previously. Company commanders in Iraq have indicated that they take 10-15 minutes per day to consult this Internet site and post lessons learned (Baum, 2005). Shortly after its inception, a website

entitled Platoonleader.org was set up for Lieutenant-rank officers. The success of both websites has been such that it appears the US military has forgiven the two officers for their affront to military protocol as both sites now appear on West Point's servers.

In light of the considerations listed above, it would appear that the CoP model could very well apply to a military context; in this particular case to the FMPS (A). However, exploration into the applicability will have to carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the various types, approaches and criteria for success in proposing or developing a CoP model.

Generational Considerations

Stereotyping is a hangover from the era of mechanical technology and it is fittingly named after a piece of mechanical equipment. A stereotype was originally a metal printing plate cast from a mould of the original letterpress. Once the stereotype was made, the type could no longer be reset. A stereotype is therefore fixed, and the term came to be applied to unvarying and unchangeable views of groups of people. (Fitzgerald, 1999, para. 2)

Through discussion with professional and academic peers, and in perusing the literature, I have surmised that the generational progression of front line employees to managerial leadership is no different within the CF MP than in other organizations. More specifically, it appears for the most part to march in "lock step" with time. To paraphrase, most organizational leaders tend to be older than their grassroots counterparts.

While mindful of Fitzgerald's (1999) comments on stereotyping as described above when applying general labels to persons based upon their birth date, it is recognized that certain characteristics have consistently been identified as inherent to specific age groups. Recognizing these characteristics and how they can impact or be affected by the workplace could play a very important role in the ability to enhance job satisfaction and performance through CoP within the FMPS (A).

In light of the considerations above, most senior commissioned and NCMs within the FMPS (A) fall into what is typically described as the “Baby Boomer” (Boomer) generation. Most FMPS (A) junior level members, for their part, can be classified into the ranks of what are referred to as Generation X (Gen X) and Generation Y (Gen Y). In researching the potential contribution of CoP to job performance and satisfaction, I found it relevant to determine whether CoP could appeal to the various generations based upon what is important to them.

Although there are differences of opinion, many demographers have defined Boomers as those born after the 2nd Great War between 1946 and 1964, which places the current age of Boomers between forty-one and fifty-nine (Willens & Harris, 2005). It should be noted that others hesitate to categorize in such absolutes, one such example being The Segal Special Report (The Segal Company, 2001). However, this action research (AR) project recognizes the Boomer definition encompassing individuals aged forty-one to fifty-nine.

Gen X was termed by the media after Douglas Coupland wrote a fictional work called *Generation X* in 1991. While the definition of Gen X may vary depending upon the reference, in general it can span those individuals born anywhere between 1961 and the early 1980's (Jochim, 1997). Here again the AR project narrows the definition, adopting the range of 1965 to 1980, while placing the current age of Gen X between twenty-five and forty.

Gen Y, also referred to as the Echo or Millennial Generation, is now making its debut in the work place and the MPB. Again, there is divergence of opinion as to the exact age of Gen Y, with the start year being defined anywhere between 1977 and 1982 (Wikipedia, 2005). For the purposes of this paper, I recognized as Gen Y those individuals born between 1981 and 2001, placing the current age of Gen Y between four and twenty-four.

Based upon the definitions for each of the three aforementioned generations, a recent poll by Statistics Canada reveals that approximately 30% of Canada's population could be considered Boomers, 21% would fall into Gen X, and 26% into Gen Y.

The CF accepts recruits as young as 16 years of age (DND, 2005b). Furthermore, a June 2001 news release announced modifications to the DND retirement policy (DND, 2005c) whereby members who have been offered or are serving on an indefinite period of service can stay in the Regular Force until the age of sixty versus fifty-five. This information further confirms that the main generational players within the CF are the Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y.

In considering the characteristics that distinguish these generations, the literature indicates that Boomers are very cognisant of the sacrifices they have made to the organization through long hours, long-term organizational loyalty and lost family time. This has allowed them to achieve high ranking positions and project for a reasonable retirement (Augustine, 2001).

Boomers are also known to be good at relationships, to be focused and to work well in teams. However, they are also described as self-centered and may be inclined to put the process in front of results (Hood, 2000).

Paula Allen (2004) has contended that the Boomers grew up in the optimistic sixties and seventies and have a propensity to look for promotion by staying with one company, working long hours and demonstrating allegiance. The sheer number of Boomers has made them competitive in every aspect of their lives, and they may appear to covet the trappings of success such as the big office, fancy title and large salary. A further distinguishing characteristic is that many do not anticipate absolute retirement from the work place.

In comparison, Gen Xers in the workplace are often stereotyped by Boomer management as lacking motivation and personal communication skills, and as unwilling to

sacrifice their personal time, ties and freedom for the luxury of a career. Other Boomer perceptions are that Gen Xers are boorish, self-important and lack the proper respect for position/rank and authority. Furthermore, they may side-step traditional organizational boundaries, or the chain of command, and seek advice elsewhere (Augustine, 2001).

Despite these seemingly negative perceptions, members of Gen X are also recognized as being adaptable, creative and computer/technology literate. This, combined with their lack of intimidation of authority, allows them to deal with a high level of responsibility (Hood, 2000). They dislike a rigid work environment and while they have a commitment to their team and their immediate supervisor they may not have the same sense of loyalty to the organization. A Boomer may gripe about management while accepting dissatisfaction as part and parcel of the job, whereas a Gen Xer is likely to approach dissatisfaction as an opportunity to seek greener pastures with another organization. In other words, Gen X members take their job seriously but have a general mistrust of institutions and are quite willing to start, stop or move laterally in their career rather than deal with unwanted frustration (Thielfoldt & Scheef, 2004).

Smith (2005) supported the premises above, stating that many Gen X employees do not plan to stay with one company for life and are unwilling to sacrifice their family life for the sake of a career. They are not motivated so much by overtime pay but by personal satisfaction with their careers. They have a great desire to learn and grow and will often change employment if they find an organization offering them not only better benefits but the prospect for personal growth. They not only want to be heard by their superiors, they expect to be heard and to be made aware of systems considerations within the organization and where they fit in to the big picture. He further described them as creative, autonomous, focused and “just” sceptical enough.

Despite the differences highlighted above in work ethic between Boomers and Gen X members, Smith (2005) noted that Gen Xers bring unique strengths and abilities to the workplace with their appetite for knowledge and technology. He maintained that this can be of benefit to companies willing to share information and have up-to-date technology.

The most recent generation identified herein, namely Gen Y, is said to be even more technically literate than Gen X. While Gen X was quick on the uptake of technology, Gen Y actually takes its existence for granted. They have grown up on a steady diet of computers, personal digital assistants, cell phones and digital cameras. Gen Y is typically team-orientated and works well in groups. Having grown up in an age where they were expected to juggle school, sports and social activities, they are renowned as being excellent at multi-tasking. They have been the center of their parent's attention and have had high expectations placed upon them. This may explain why they display a level of confidence that can be confused with cockiness (Thiel foldt & Scheef, 2004).

Carol Verret (2000) wrote that many managers become frustrated with Gen Y employees' tendency to candidly express their opinions on a given situation. As Gen Y has never known unemployment, those managers who have relied upon threats and intimidation will find that these employees will simply leave and find other employment. The author stated that "the onus is on us to make the workplace make sense to them, to keep it interesting and fun" (Verret, 2000, p. 3). This would appear to show a potential advantage of CoP as identified by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), namely as an arena in which to have fun with colleagues.

In considering the generational distinguishing characteristics noted above, it would appear that CoP could provide an appropriate forum for addressing workplace issues. More importantly, it could simultaneously contribute to job satisfaction and performance by providing an opportunity for the (a) open communication, (b) empowerment and (c) skills-

building valued by Gen X and Gen Y members, who make up the majority of junior level NCMs within the FMPS (A).

Key Success Factors for High Performing Organizations

Determining how highly performing individuals and cultures are defined within the workplace is inherent to establishing the effectiveness of CoP in enhancing job performance and satisfaction. Most of the literature I consulted, however, did not include one all-encompassing definition of job performance. Instead, I found a conglomerate of characteristics that can be recognized in highly performing employees and organizations.

Culture-Building.com is a company founded by Dr. James Vaughan, Ph.D. Dr. Vaughan specializes in organizational psychology, and clearly outlines several factors that are necessary to create high performing organizations. This literature review seeks to further explore these characteristics and the potential success of CoP in enhancing them.

1. Communication:

Communication is a familiar concept that is recognised as being of great importance in any organization. The problem is not so disseminating the information, as most organizations have the technology available to enable this. The challenge is getting the right information to the right people so as not to inundate the employees with unnecessary information. It would be presumptuous to assume that e-mail or intranets are the answer to the interpersonal issues that are a fundamental problem in organizational communications. In fact the technology may actually amplify the negative impact irresponsible communication can have upon an organization (Vaughan, 2005). Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) have also cited improved communication as a short-term value of CoP for organizational members.

2. Change:

Change has become a fact of life in today's organizations. Ironically, a feeling of continuous uncertainty brought about by change can incite employees to cling to the old and focus inward just when their organization needs them to be looking to the future. Although it can be easy to implement a change that is popular with the employees, it can become much more difficult and vital when the change involves a new way of doing business and letting go of old habits (Vaughan, 2005).

Schein (1992) supported this, stating:

All human systems attempt to maintain equilibrium and to maximise their autonomy vis-a vis their environment. Coping, growth, and survival all involve maintaining the integrity of the system in the face of a changing environment that is constantly causing various kinds of disequilibrium. The function of cognitive structures such as concepts, beliefs, attitudes, values and assumptions is to organize the mass of environmental stimuli, to make sense of them, and to provide, thereby, a sense of predictability. (p. 298)

3. Empowerment:

Leaders of highly performing organizations empower their employees in a number of significant ways. By getting them involved in the development of the organization's vision and communicating responsibly, they not only share information freely but listen intently as well. A paradox in many authoritarian organizations is the ability to view subordinate members as partners and trust them to do their jobs. Doing this creates an environment where risk taking is encouraged and mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. This not only decreases anxiety and fear in the work place, it encourages the creative process and is the cornerstone of trust (Vaughan, 2005).

The obstacle to empowering others can in many cases be the traditional view of the leader. Senge (1990) has stated that, particularly in the West, our perception of strong leaders is similar to the heroes we see in our movies. They make the decisions and motivate the troops. This is actually derived from an assumption that the grassroots employees are

like children who do not have the ability to lead change, are powerless, and lack the foresight of the organization's vision.

Yukl (2002) supported the concept that effective leaders empower their employees. He felt that how a leader manages his or her authority will correlate with enthusiasm, passive compliance or outright resistance. He maintained that an effective leader attempts to use authority in an ethical, understated and relaxed manner that incorporates the opposing views of the different stakeholders.

4. Shared Leadership:

Leadership has long been the domain of those who hold authority through rank, title or position. The reality in today's fast paced organizations is that leadership and some decision-making ability has to be exercised at all levels of the organization (Vaughan, 2005).

Shared leadership should not be confused with delegating responsibility. It means having appropriate and timely decisions being made by tapping into the expertise and ideas of everyone involved. By its very nature it creates an atmosphere where success can be obtained and best practices can be developed from rational and controlled risk-taking. It counters the "we have always done it this way" mindset and develops trust and co-operation among sub-sections and individuals. Shared leadership does not necessarily mean everyone has the authority to make decisions in all matters. However, it does empower them to take ownership within their own sphere of influence and contributes in an effective and meaningful way (Administrative and Fiscal Affairs Division, n.d.).

5. Organizational Learning and Systems Thinking:

Keeping employees abreast of changes in today's work environment can be one of the most serious challenges an organization can encounter. A learning organization will reduce the time it takes for information to be disseminated, absorbed and applied to the end product. It will tear down internal boundaries and readily make information accessible to all

(Vaughan, 2005). This concept ties into the premise by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) that one long-term value of a CoP can be empowering an organization's members to react quickly.

It is imperative that members of an organization be cognizant of the impact that they or their departments have upon the system or organization as a whole. Oshry (1996) described the inability of employees to recognise their impact on the organization as "spatial blindness" (p. 11). Members must understand that the performance and success of the organization is more important than individual achievements (Vaughan, 2005).

Powerful learning has been attributed to direct experience. It is through a process of trial and error that we see what works and what does not. However, if employees are not aware of how their action has impacted the organizational system, whether due to the consequences arising far in the future or in another section, it stands to reason that learning will not occur (Senge, 1990).

6. Teamwork:

In linking back to change, employees must have the ability to form teams, perform their mission and dissolve. This ability is crucial in an organization whose role and mission is based upon changing political or security environments. Although informal teaming occurs in successful organizations naturally, leaders need to foster conditions where the friendships, trust and team cohesiveness are formed to assist in fast-paced team transformation (Vaughan, 2005). Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) suggested that this requirement can be developed through a CoP based upon the community's ability to bring together individuals who may not interact on a day-to-day basis.

Collaboration is critical to creating and maintaining high performance in an organization. In order to create world class performance, leaders must foster collaboration

by “creating a climate of trust, facilitate positive interdependence and support face to face interactions” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 243).

Trusting others has been of significant benefit to high performance companies. Psychologists have found that people who are trusting are more likely to be happy and well adjusted than those who view the world with doubt and disregard. Generally people are drawn to people who trust them and are more apt to listen to and be influenced by them. It stands to reason that the most favourable team environments are those that have a climate of trust between all members (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

7. Strategic Alignment:

Generally when people join an organization they are making an agreement to work for a common goal. Yet it is common for not only individuals, but entire sections within the same organization, to work at cross purposes. The organization inadvertently creates an alignment of all its parts by developing its key success factors and allowing the individual, Section, Unit, and MPB to successfully move towards the achievement of the mission (Vaughan, 2005). This is supported by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), who noted that a CoP can identify and even out irregular performance within sub-sections.

In order to give life to a vision it must be shared by others. In order to enlist employees, leaders must be able to breathe life into and clarify the vision so it transitions from an intangible concept to a unified passion.

A key component of enlisting support is the establishment of trust. As implied by the term “lead,” leaders must go first and take risks before they can ask the same of their followers. If leaders wish to gain the benefits of a collaborative trusting work environment they must be willing to give that trust to others before asking for it in return (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

There would appear to be an undeniable link between seven key success factors listed above as key to job performance and the seven common principles listed within this literature review as key to the success of CoP (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This would seem indicative of an opportunity to align and improve job performance within the FMPS (A) through the establishment of CoP.

CHAPTER THREE:

CONDUCT OF ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

A qualitative and quantitative participatory AR method was selected as the research methodology for this project. The research question was “How can a CoP enhance the level of job satisfaction and performance in the MP at the grassroots level?” It relied on a dynamic AR approach, in that the concept of a CoP would be explored with the targeted population. The following methodologies were used in order to provide an initial framework for the CoP and to measure the outcome in regard to the aforementioned research question: (a) focus groups, (b) interviews utilizing qualitative data retrieval methods, and (c) surveys for the collection and correlation of quantitative data.

Research Approach

Generally there are two methods of gathering data for research purposes. The two approaches, identified as qualitative and quantitative research, each have their roots based in different areas of study. Quantitative methods were developed primarily from the natural sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics and geology. The research in these disciplines was objective and could be measured and repeated by other researchers. As the social sciences such as sociology and psychology developed, however, quantitative research methods were found to be restricting when trying to measure or explain human behaviour in measurable terms. The quantitative research method was useful in measuring how often or how many people react or behave in a certain way but failed to explain why they do so. Research that attempts to explain the “why” in social human behaviour is considered a qualitative method (Hancock, 1998).

Hancock, further defined qualitative research as being concerned with finding answers to questions which begin with; “why?,” “how?,” and “in what way?.” They concern social aspects of society such as why people act the way they do, how attitudes are formed, how people are affected by external events, how and why cultures develop the way they do, and the differences between them.

By using participatory AR, I sought to make the qualitative research more humanistic, holistic, and relevant to the lives of the people being studied. Through participatory AR, the concept of valued neutrality is rejected as well as rejecting the criticisms of those who believe that participatory AR lacks scientific rigor (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). My reason for choosing this approach was based upon my belief that although quantitative research methods could be valuable in showing what is happening in a community, they could not be relied on to accurately report on why it is happening. It is my opinion that the ambiguities of the human soul will always defy simple explanation through the use of charts, statistics and graphs.

The aforementioned research question sought to determine “how” a CoP could enhance job satisfaction and performance. The problem was twofold. Firstly, it was necessary to determine what the terms “job satisfaction” and “job performance” encompassed for the community being studied and what aspects and parameters would be used to measure the results of this social experiment. Secondly, it was necessary to determine what effects a CoP might have on job satisfaction and performance within the context of this community.

Research Methods and Tools

Research Tools and Rationale

The first step in this AR project was to develop a literature review that appropriately addressed the research question. That is, it set the stage for the premise of the research being conducted. It also sought to bring academic rigor and legitimacy to the process by situating the realities and viewpoints of the subjects being studied into a broader context (Stringer, 1999). As such, it took into consideration the key satisfaction and performance factors recognized in successful organizations, what generational influences exist in terms of job satisfaction and performance, and the potential impact of a CoP in light of these influences.

A focus group (see Appendix A) was conducted with a carefully selected cross-section of the targeted research population to (a) determine what the terms “job satisfaction” and “performance” encompassed for the population being studied, and (b) to produce a survey that could provide a baseline for future research. This initial choice reflected Crandall’s (1999) contention that a focus group is a suitable research tool when trying to develop a survey for subsequent quantitative research.

Face-to-face interviews were then selected as a means of validating the findings and common themes derived through focus groups. They also sought to further humanize the AR process by providing interviewees with the opportunity to elaborate on their feelings and concerns, while clarifying any confusion about particular questions. This was considered critical prior to distribution of the survey that was developed for all FMPS (A) grassroots members (Palys, 2003).

Finally, the survey developed as the last research tool in this AR project sought to apply a quantitative means of determining what job satisfaction and performance criteria CoP could most influence according to junior members of the FMPS (A).

Trustworthiness

The rigor of a process can be referred to as its trustworthiness. Creswell (2003) defines the tenets of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability and “confirmability.”

Credibility is established through (a) prolonged engagement in the research, (b) persistent observation of the participants and data, (c) triangulation of data through various research activities, (d) appropriate referencing, (e) peer debriefing, and (f) member checks with research participants (Creswell, 2003; Siegle, n.d.).

In this project, credibility was established by (a) recognizing and identifying my bias, (b) engaging an objective facilitator for the focus group activity, and (c) by triangulating data gathered through the literature review, focus group, interviews and surveys. Additionally, I submitted the research and methodology to my faculty supervisor and organizational sponsor for validation purposes. Finally, qualitative data was validated with focus group participants through theming and with interview participants (Creswell, 2003).

Transferability, the potential to transfer findings to other situations (Siegle, n.d.), was established through a rich and thick description of AR conduct (Creswell, 2003).

Dependability, the potential to present the study in such a manner that would allow another researcher to replicate it (Siegle, n.d.), was also ensured through a descriptive narrative of the process used to arrive at credible study.

“Confirmability” is the potential to prove that findings and conclusions are the result of research activities and not of researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, as cited in Siegle, n.d.). In qualitative research, it is the parallel notion of quantitative “objectivity” (Schwandt, 2001). To ensure “confirmability” I retained all raw data, including personal observations and notes, interview transcripts, focus group notes and themes, and survey results.

Research Procedures and Rationale

Focus Groups

Although there are alternate methods of developing a survey collection tool, I selected traditional focus groups as the most efficient means of quickly gathering accurate data upon which to base the survey. Kitzinger (1995) described these focus groups as a form of group interview that uses the dialogue between participants to generate data. It is a quick and convenient way to obtain data from several participants simultaneously by encouraging them to ask questions, compare experiences and exchange points of view. Kitzinger believed that because the participants examine the issues using their own language or jargon, the actual verbal interaction becomes a useful tool thereby allowing the researcher to probe deeper into topics that reveal themselves as being particularly important. Further, the actual jargon can be incorporated directly into the survey to assist respondents in more clearly understanding the questions that are being asked of them.

In October of 2004, the 2003, Master of Arts in Leadership and Training-Justice and Public Safety Leadership (MALT-JPSL) cohort conducted a small social experiment to determine the uses and values of various research methodologies that included focus groups, interviews and surveys. We determined by conducting a limited focus group that focus group participants must be carefully selected with a common interest and bond as a primary factor. This is not to say that the participants cannot be from different disciplines, but there must be at least some homogeneity in the group. This allowed the group to have a common language that was conducive to communication.

I approached six individuals within the FMPS (A) who met the participant criteria to take part in the focus group. I was convinced that the participants identified in the participants' section of this chapter had the language and common interest necessary for the successful implementation of a focus group. My opinion was based upon the MALT-JPSL

Common themes derived from focus groups helped guide me in my analysis of interview data. Any obvious commonalities and discrepancies were noted in the Study Findings section of this thesis.

Survey results were compiled electronically using an Excel spreadsheet. As noted previously, the purpose of the survey results was to add quantitative analysis to a mostly qualitative AR process.

Finally, all data was analyzed jointly in an effort to correlate common themes, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Project Participants

Research Team

The first step in identifying project participants was confirming a suitable project supervisor and organizational sponsor to be a part of my research team.

I approached the project supervisor, Captain Randy Gilbert, MA, CD, after meeting him in the second residency component of the Master of Arts in Leadership and Training (JPSL) 2003. At that time, he had expressed a keen interest in supervising future major projects and seemed to display exemplary time management and organizational skills. These were qualities I was looking for in a supervisor.

A number of considerations were then taken into account in determining what individual(s) would be best suited and willing to support the premise of this major project within my organization. These involved finding an individual within the CF (a) to whom I could have easy access, (b) who could provide me access to the human and physical resources required to carry out the project, and (c) who was dedicated to the enhancement of the MPB through progressive and innovative means.

Bearing these considerations in mind, I approached Lieutenant Commander (LCdr) Murphy. He is the Naval Provost Marshal (Atlantic) and the Officer Commanding the FMPS(A), located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. LCdr Murphy agreed to sponsor the major project described herein following his review of the proposal and its objectives.

Action Research Participants

The FMPS (A) is the largest MP section in Canada. It includes approximately 75 regular force MP members. This study involved three of the FMPS(A) sub-units consisting of approximately 50 MP personnel. These sub-units include the (a) Patrol Section, (b) General Investigation Section, and (c) Court/Victim Services Section.

All AR activities sought to ensure the privacy and anonymity of study participants. This meant reporting on achievement of selection criteria for the overall AR project rather than for each specific AR activity. Additionally, in some cases it was impossible to determine whether all pre-selection criteria were successfully attained. This was the case for generational diversity, given that it was impossible for me to determine the age of anonymous survey respondents. Selection of the six focus group participants was done by invitation and drew from a cross-section of all aforementioned sections except where confidentiality and anonymity could not be assured to potential participants. My goal from the onset was to ensure cross-representation by inviting at least one female, one francophone, and one visible minority member to the focus group.

Interview criteria were the same as indicated for focus groups.

The survey was sent to all members of the three targeted sections and a 31% response rate was achieved, although no demographic or identifying data was attached or retrieved.

Ethical Issues

Prior to the conduct of any research, a request for ethical review was submitted to the RRU Research Ethics Board. I conducted all research under the direction of the four guiding principles as laid out in Christians (2000). The basis for these principles involves informed consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy.

All members involved in the focus groups and interviews were required to read and sign a written informed consent (see Appendix C), which outlined confidentiality expectations and the freedom to withdraw or not participate without penalty. Survey participants were informed of their right to participate freely and voluntarily in the research and of their right to anonymity. Privacy was ensured through the use of a secure and anonymous electronic survey tool.

As per organizational requirements, a request for approval of survey content and considerations was also submitted to the National Defence Headquarters Director of Human Resources Research and Evaluation (DHRRE) prior to distribution of the survey.

The use of deception was not a consideration in this project and participants were kept verbally informed of the progression of the project.

The greatest ethical concern foreseen was my potential personal bias surrounding the research question and a perception of my influence over the research participants. I also recognized my preconceived notion job satisfaction and performance issues existed within FMPS (A). This was coupled with an assumption that there was potential for improvement. These perceptions were based upon my personal observations and assumptions derived through conversation and incidents that have occurred at the FMPS (A) over the last two years. Objectivity was a constant challenge throughout the AR project. I recognized that there could be the perception that my role as a researcher was compromised due to the personal and professional relationships already established with the research participants.

By recognizing my bias from the onset of this project I remained vigilant to possible or perceived influence by keeping a critical reflective journal throughout the process (Janesick, 2000). Furthermore, personal influence was identified early on to the project supervisor and organizational sponsor so as to have minimal impact on the project's outcome. This was reinforced through frank and open dialogue with both these individuals.

Another potential ethical pitfall was my position and rank within the organization. During the initial AR, namely the focus group, I was employed at the FMPS (A) as the training coordinator and held the rank of Sergeant. I had no direct supervision of the potential focus group participants and little or no influence on obtaining advanced training. Notwithstanding this, my position as the training coordinator had potential to influence the perception of freewill among the participants. There was a possibility that they would perceive that participating or not participating could influence their opportunity to be loaded on career advancing courses/training. Further, as part of my duties as a senior NCM, I was required to attend an annual mini-merit board and was expected to vote with respect to the junior NCMs' potential for promotion. Although the reality was my influence was negligible in reality, these factors were noted as a limitation of the study. I was transferred to another unit prior to initiating the remainder of the AR activities, thereby negating continuation of the above mentioned concerns.

Study Conduct

This AR project was carried out over the course of approximately nine months, from November 2004 to July 2005.

The first step in the process involved obtaining the confirmation of the supervisor and was undertaken on November 30, 2004. The confirmation of my organizational sponsor was also received at the end of 2004.

I submitted my major project proposal to both my project supervisor and organizational sponsor in mid-January (2005). Both individuals received my RRU ethics review request in early February of the same year. The ethical review request was then submitted to the RRU Research Department in mid-February.

Upon approval of the ethical review request, I proceeded to fine-tune the focus group questions based upon ongoing revisions to the literature review and with the continued support and suggestions of a MALT peer, my project supervisor, and my organizational sponsor.

The next step involved a review of my progress to date, embodied through the submission of a self-assessment to my project supervisor and organizational sponsor in mid-April 2005.

Once the focus group questions had been finalized I obtained the services of an experienced focus group facilitator. This left me free to participate as an observer in this AR activity. At the suggestion of the facilitator, I also obtained access to the Military Family Resource Center at CFB Halifax as a convenient location for the conduct of the focus group.

I began the selection of focus group participants by approaching a junior NCM a member of the FMPS(A) who had expressed interest in the project earlier in 2004. This participant will hereafter be referred to as NCM "A." We discussed the objective of the focus group and with NCM "A"'s assistance, I selected six other potential participants.

The members selected were all junior NCMs and were employed in the Patrol and Investigation sub-section of the FMPS (A). It was my original intention to draw a member from the court/victim services sub-section. However I did not invite a member from this section as it is comprised of only one individual and left me unable to offer the confidentiality safeguards necessary to meet the ethical standards required for the study.

The potential focus group participants were initially approached by NCM "A" on my behalf to minimise any impression of duress due to my position as the training co-ordinator. Five of the six potential members agreed to participate, with one declining due to prior commitments. The demographics of the group, including NCM "A," were two participants from the Investigation sub-section and four from the Patrol sub-section. In order to protect the identity of the participants I was unable to identify the further particulars of the group, other than to report that the group did have a proportionate male, female and francophone representation. Furthermore, the level of professional experience ranged from less than one year to more than five.

I briefed the participants on the objectives of the session and on the importance of respecting each other's opinion prior to commencing the focus group activity. The issues of maintaining confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participating were discussed and the option of withdrawal without consequence was reinforced.

I determined that the participants' familiarity with the concept of CoP was limited and provided them an information package (see Appendix D). The participants were asked to read the literature review and further discussion led to unanimous agreement to adopt the definition of CoP provided by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). I found that using the example of an existing informal CoP greatly assisted the participants in understanding the concept. After verifying that the participants were fully aware of the objectives, confidentiality requirements and limitations, they were presented with a letter outlining the same. I turned the floor over to the facilitator following receipt of the participants' written consent to participate. It was initially my intention to audio tape the focus group. However, I decided not to pursue this option after observing the dynamics of the group. I chose instead to confirm the theming with participants at the end of the session.

The first step was to determine how the members would conduct themselves during the focus group. All focus group members unanimously agreed to two key procedural rules. The members felt that they should agree to disagree while respecting other points of view. Furthermore, they agreed that allowing other participants to express their views without interruption was a necessary value.

Once the focus group was completed, I proceeded to further develop the original draft survey questions developed in the early stages of the AR project. The key factors identified by the focus group as potential contributors to job satisfaction and performance were now integrated into the survey as determinants for the potential contribution of CoP to the FMPS (A).

Though I had originally intended to proceed directly to a survey, I felt that there would be value in carrying out several interviews to validate findings from the focus group prior to approaching all FMPS (A) junior NCMs. I approached four members to take part in face-to-face individual interviews in early June 2005. All agreed to participate and were provided with time from their patrol duties by the shift supervisor to review CoP background literature and participate in the interviews. This literature was identical to that provided to focus group participants.

My initial intent was to use the survey questions developed in conducting the interviews, a technique that is deemed acceptable given that interviews and surveys are very similar tools (Palys 2003). However, in carrying out the interviews it became obvious that the dynamics of the solitary writing format selected for the survey were not suitable to the more social and participative context within which the interviews were being conducted. As such, the interview questions and feedback evolved as the interviews progressed. This progression produced less consistent answers in terms of quantitative data, but the flexibility of this process resulted in the retrieval of more in-depth information. This is

largely due to the opportunity it gave participants to elaborate on specific issues and to question the interviewer.

The wording of certain questions led to concerns and uncertainties from some of the participants. Certain changes were ultimately made to the final survey questionnaire as a result of this input.

Theming of interview results was then aligned with focus group results to determine any obvious correlations and inconsistencies. Results have been included in the Study Findings section of this document.

Concurrently to conducting the previously discussed interviews, I had submitted the final proposed survey format and questions to DHRRE consistent with CF policy. With the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Villeneuve, a member of the DHRRE Research Review Board, I modified the survey so as to reflect interpretation concerns raised by both interview participants and the Organizational Research Review Board.

I distributed the survey request, CoP background information and project specifications to the 49 Junior NCMs targeted by this AR project on June 21, 2005 upon confirmation of DHRRE final approval. All candidates were invited via e-mail correspondence to complete the on-line survey via the RRU secure server by June 29, 2005 at the latest. In light of a slow response rate, I verbally reminded the various sub-sections of the open and close date of the survey. A total of 15 of 49 potential responses were received to the survey as a result bringing overall response rates to 31%. Survey responses were then compiled using Microsoft Excel software for the purposes of data analysis. All AR findings were then integrated and correlated to arrive at the findings, conclusions and recommendations included in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR:

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Study Findings

As outlined in Chapter Three, the findings for this study were derived from four different sources. These included: (a) a literature review, (b) a focus group, (c) four one-on-one interviews, and (d) a survey producing a 31 % response rate out of 49 participants.

This chapter separately outlines the findings derived from AR activities according to the factors identified by AR participants as essential to job performance and job satisfaction.

Findings from Focus Group

Based upon the findings from the literature review, the premise of the focus group aimed to explore what criteria the FMPS (A) target group found essential to job performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, it sought to determine if participants felt that a CoP at the grassroots level could address these criteria and as such enhance their job performance and job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

The group was opened with a discussion based upon the professional experience of the members in regard to job satisfaction. More specifically, all participants were asked to describe the criteria that attributed to job satisfaction and why. The criteria identified by participants during this discussion as being most critical to job satisfaction were: (a) respect, (b) communication, and (c) recognition. Findings for each of these criteria are further described below.

Respect

Participants indicated that respect was of primary importance and referenced this criterion in relation to both their supervisors and their peers. In relation to the former, they described it as having their opinions and problems heard. Respect from their peers was considered just as important; participants specifically expressed a desire to be recognized by their peers for their contribution to the team. Supervisors providing explanations for tasks and decisions (when possible) was seen as affording respect and perceived as a being a contributing factor to job satisfaction in general.

Communication

Participants cited lack of communication and poor planning by supervisors as having a negative impact on staff morale. They also linked lack of communication to a perception that they lacked respect from their supervisors. Examples of this included situations in which grassroots personnel were only informed of decisions at the last moment. Participants noted that more advanced notice and earlier attempts at communication by superiors might allow junior NCMs to better address their own personal and professional planning needs. They cited job satisfaction for NCMs as a positive outcome of improved communication.

Recognition

All participants agreed that recognition and credit for work was essential to job satisfaction. They noted that the current level of peer recognition was adequate but indicated that positive feedback from supervisors/management was somewhat lacking. They stated that this was a MPB-wide issue and not specific to the FMPS (A).

Participants noted that recognition from superiors and peers should not be limited to the identification of mistakes and dealing with problems, but that a greater focus should be

placed on “a job well done.” Other criteria linked to recognition included (a) the feeling of accomplishment arising from a job well done, (b) feeling challenged in their job, and (c) receiving fair and equal treatment for the work they do.

Participants noted the importance of affording fair and equal treatment to all ranks, including to that of their immediate supervisors. They elaborated that a feeling of “just treatment” has a domino effect that will make its way down to the grassroots level. This is in keeping with the literature review on Gen X that describes a commitment to their team and immediate supervisor (Thielholdt & Scheef, 2004).

Benefits of Meeting Job Satisfaction Criteria

The group identified many benefits in meeting the job satisfaction criteria as identified above. They noted that it could (a) enhance self-confidence, (b) increase motivation, (c) strengthen the unit, (d) reduce attrition, and (e) create a healthier work environment.

The risks identified with not meeting job satisfaction were extensive and included personnel taking “shortcuts” while performing their duties, a weak end product and a toxic work environment. This in turn could lead to (a) increased stress levels, (b) strained interpersonal relationships, (c) breakdown of trust, (d) workplace incidents, and (e) low morale.

The group was optimistic and noted that there had been progress in improving job satisfaction within the MPB. Nonetheless, they surmised that progress was inconsistent across the country. They expressed the opinion that there was the potential to enhance job satisfaction further at the unit level by improving communication and respect in particular. They further expressed a desire to question supervisors without being “shot down,” although they were cognizant that there were particular decisions and situations where this was not possible.

Participants also supported a plan or mechanism that would facilitate and reinforce their ability to communicate with management. The group expressed a desire to have a more intimate relationship with management and wished there was more of an effort to connect regularly. E-mail was criticized as creating an unrealistic operational pace and as resulting in a significant decrease in contact with management.

Job Performance

When asked to describe the criteria that they felt were essential to job performance and why, participants identified four major concepts as critical, namely (a) trust, (b) knowledge, (c) communication, and (d) organization and planning.

Trust

The most often cited contributor to effective job performance during the focus group was trust between the grassroots, management and administrative bodies extending outside the section, including Professional Standards. Trust among peers was described as satisfactory. However, participants identified a perceived lack of trust between junior NCMs and management. They felt that the resulting fear of unknown repercussions if a mistake was made was contributing to a lack of involvement and motivation by junior NCMs. In other words, grassroots members might not always be performing to the extent of their abilities as a result of potential negative consequences.

Knowledge

Participants also acknowledged individual and management professional knowledge as significant contributors to job performance. They noted that by increasing employee knowledge, it is easier to ensure the right person for the right job.

Communication

Participants also identified communication as a major factor contributing to effective job performance. They stressed that “people have to be willing to listen.” They also criticized e-mail as desensitizing personnel, noting that it had resulted in some supervisors not leaving their offices. They associated the resulting decrease in face-to-face contact with a perceived lack of respect.

Organization/Planning

Organization and planning were also identified as contributors to job performance. The participants perceived last minute communication of tasks and requirements as indicative of poor planning. They further believed that poor organizational skills and planning has a negative effect on the job satisfaction/performance of the junior NCMs and linked it back to a perceived lack of respect.

Benefits of Meeting Job Performance Criteria

The benefits of addressing the aforementioned criteria in effective job performance included (a) increased productivity, (b) happier employees, (c) increased efficiency, (d) improved employee placement, (e) decreased attrition, (f) decreased stress professionally and personally, (g) increased respect for management, (h) more focused individuals, and (i) a more cohesive organization (i.e. strategic alignment).

The risks of not meeting effective job performance criteria were described as a domino effect where (a) morale would drop, (b) employee frustration would increase, and (c) client service would be negatively affected as a result. It was also felt that the attrition rate could rise. It should be noted that the influence of job satisfaction criteria on job performance and of job performance criteria on job satisfaction was a constant throughout focus group discussions.

Increasing Job Satisfaction and Performance Through CoP

Based upon the agreed upon definition of CoP by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), focus group participants recognized the potential to enhance job satisfaction through this forum. They believed that the focus group could be considered a temporarily established CoP. They stated that it had in itself allowed them to address certain issues and views with their peers.

They expressed their concerns that an “informal” type of CoP at the grassroots level would not serve to improve communication with management or appropriately address perceived “filters between us and him.” The latter comment was used to describe a perception that when junior NCMs attempted to pass information/ideas up the chain of command, the information was intercepted by middle management and diluted or restated prior to reaching the NPM(A).

They did however purport that a “supported” CoP, with management sponsorship to facilitate the passage of information to the NPM(A), would be beneficial. They added that for the CoP to be effective the management sponsor would have to be above the rank of Sergeant. They further voiced agreement that the liaison should not be a Commissioned Officer.

They described a CoP established according to pre-determined guidelines while able to retain flexibility. They noted that the attitude of the management sponsor would be crucial in that he or she would have to be enthusiastic about the process and participating out of true desire while supported by the organization.

Based upon the discussions, the group identified several themes for the potential focus of future CoP within the FMPS(A). These included: (a) assisting/influencing management with planning, (b) enhancing two-way communication, (c) increasing understanding at all levels, (d) mutual sharing and learning, and (e) professional support.

They felt that members of the CoP would have to (a) develop trust, (b) have the same goal in mind, and (c) have a clear cut set of values and a very clear idea of what the group was about so potential members could make an honest assessment before becoming involved.

Findings from Interviews

As in the case of the focus group discussion, certain common themes arose from the interviews. They reflected the focus group findings, and are included below under the headings: (a) respect, (b) communication, (c) trust, (d) organization/planning, (e) knowledge, and (f) accomplishment.

Respect

Interview respondents all agreed that respect from their supervisors and peers was a contributor to job satisfaction, although peer respect was noted as carrying greater influence.

Participant (1) supported these findings, stating that “without respect you don’t really want to be there.” The participant felt that respect from peers was in fact present within the FMPS (A) and noted that supervisors willing to give time to an employee were demonstrating respect while contributing to team spirit.

Participant (3) felt that the respect of peers was very important to job satisfaction stating “with respect comes trust and a good relationship. If they respect you, they will respect your views, which ties into communication.” However, this participant did not attribute as much importance to respect from his superiors.

Participant (4) also felt that respect from peers was important, specifying that the need for respect was reciprocal. More precisely, the more he respected a peer, the more he sought that peer’s respect. He expressed a similar opinion when discussing respect from superiors.

Communication

All interview discussions also revealed communication to be an important factor in job satisfaction and performance.

Participant (1) indicated that two-way communication with management was extremely important for job satisfaction and job performance, while cautioning the chain of command must be respected.

Participant (3) rated communication as very important, specifying however that communication with superiors was a challenge because “generations and attitudes have changed.”

Participant (4) also expressed dissatisfaction with communication with his superiors, wondering if the ideas are actually making it up the chain of command or if the higher ups even want to hear them.

Trust

Trust was expressed as a determinant of both job satisfaction and performance although not identified as critical to the latter. It was deemed particularly important in relation to peers.

Participant (3) specified that trust in superiors was not essential given the diverging views of the younger and older generations. He maintained that trust in the chain of command could easily be lost, and that this seemed to be a fairly common occurrence. He did however emphasize the importance of trust between grassroots members and superiors from the patrol supervisor’s level down, stating, “(the rank of) Warrant and above, it is not so important.”

Participant (4) also noted that trust in his peers was of particular importance to job satisfaction and performance.

Organization/Planning

Supervisor planning and organization skills were noted as being extremely important to job satisfaction. Participant (1) noted scheduling in particular, as this has a direct influence on one's personal life.

Knowledge

Knowledge was also identified as an indicator of job satisfaction and performance. Participant (1) indicated that peer mentorship and coaching was extremely important in contributing to his own continuous learning and knowledge, as was supervisors' knowledge.

Participant (4) qualified the importance of shared knowledge by indicating that a failure to share the reasoning behind decision-making with junior NCMs could result in "not developing your junior people's minds." He further elaborated "get them thinking 'ok, that's what went into that decision', whether it's the financial or legal implications that were involved behind a decision. Discussion allows you to find out where ideas and/or decisions come from. The best way is to talk. The ideas come out."

Accomplishment

A sense of accomplishment was perceived as another contributor to job satisfaction.

Participant (3) noted that a sense of accomplishment provided him with motivation and a sense of purpose.

Other Contributors

Other factors noted by interviewees as relevant to job satisfaction and performance included (a) peer unity, (b) clear direction as to management's information needs, and (c) peers' positive attitude (displayed as interest by peers regarding the sharing of information among themselves).

Benefits of Meeting Job Satisfaction and Performance Criteria

Opinion was varied among interviewees as to the extent of contribution of meeting job satisfaction and job performance criteria. However interview findings revealed a consistent correlation between job satisfaction and performance criteria and their influence on one another. In other words, both were found to have a direct influence on performance-related issues as illustrated in Figure 1.

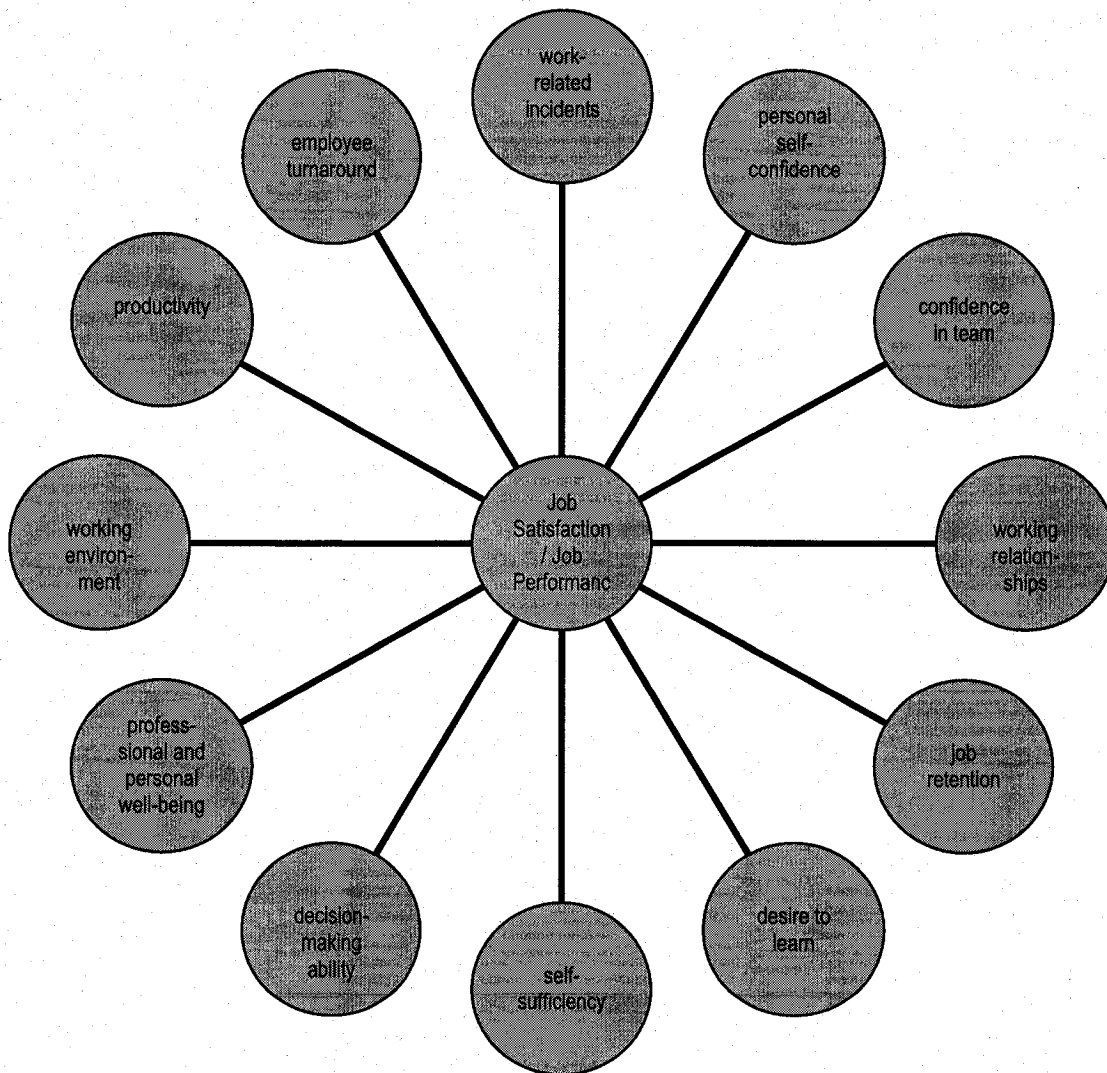


Figure 1. Influence of Job Satisfaction and Performance on One Another

Increasing Job Satisfaction and Performance Through CoP

Based upon the criteria noted above as being critical to job performance and satisfaction, interviewees were asked to elaborate on how they felt a CoP might help address some of these criteria. Overall, interviewees indicated a willingness to take part in a supported CoP on a regular basis.

Participant (1) felt that a CoP would greatly increase job satisfaction at the grassroots level. He felt all the aspects of job satisfaction and performance could be positively influenced but felt that communication between peers and supervisors would benefit the most. He further stated he would be willing to participate in a CoP approximately every three weeks for 90 minutes. When asked to describe what this CoP would look like he indicated an informal style in a relaxed environment.

Participant (2) was quite enthusiastic about CoP within the FMPS (A) as to enhancing job satisfaction and felt a supported CoP was the way to go. He stated that he was more than willing to participate on a monthly basis.

Participant (3) felt that Corporals coming together to exchange learning and experience could enhance both job satisfaction and job performance. He reasoned that this was "because you get to know your peers at different levels, and the various experience. We are all working for different entities; for the same purpose, but in isolation. This could keep everyone on the same wave length." He specifically indicated that by limiting the group to Corporals, rank structure would not be there to intimidate or limit the discussion. People would therefore feel more free to talk and open up in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust.

Participant (4) thought the idea was good in theory and stated "the beauty of a group like a CoP is that it fosters discussion, perhaps with individuals that you would not deal with because they are not on your shift." He felt the challenge would be to create an environment

where the CoP members would be comfortable, preferably in an informal setting off-Base. He felt that the group would require some kind of facilitator to maintain focus. He indicated that the use of a non military facilitator may be the best practice for a CoP and felt it should be held on a quarterly basis in order to allow time for the group to produce results and to create anticipation among the members. He also felt that in order for the CoP to be effective it would have to be supported by the FMPS(A) senior management.

Findings from Surveys

Based upon feedback received from focus group and interview participants, a survey was distributed to all 49 FMPS (A) grassroots members. As noted previously, the survey was meant to apply quantitative measures to a qualitative AR study.

Job Satisfaction

The findings from the survey relating to job satisfaction were rated according to a five point scale. Participants were asked to what extent they felt that each of nine identified satisfaction criteria could be enhanced by CoP. The responses are provided below.

Respect

Findings showed that respondents felt the greatest impact of CoP could be felt in the enhancement of respect within the workplace, with (a) 74% of respondents indicating the potential for CoP to contribute to respect from their supervisors to a great extent or more and (b) 60% indicating the potential of CoP to contribute to respect from peers to a great extent or more.

This was reinforced when respondents were asked which factors could be improved through CoP. Fourteen percent of respondents indicated a “better working environment” and 12% identified a “more confident team,” “improved relationship with supervisors,” and an “increased job satisfaction overall.”

Knowledge

Findings showed that 67% of respondents felt that a CoP could enhance job satisfaction by contributing to continuous learning through peer mentorship/coaching and/or support to a great extent or more.

Again, this was supported through question 3, in which respondents ranked a “more knowledgeable workforce” as having the potential to benefit from CoP.

Peer Unity

Findings showed that 67% of respondents felt that the impact of CoP could be felt in enhancing peer unity.

Positive Attitude

Findings showed that 60% of respondents felt CoP could enhance the attitude of peers to a great extent or more.

Supervisor’s Planning/Organization and Clear Direction

Findings showed that 60% of respondents felt that CoP could contribute to supervisors’ planning and organization as well as to clarifying direction within the organization.

Communication

Findings showed that 53% of respondents felt that CoP could contribute to two-way communication with Commissioned Officers / Warrant Officers and Sergeants.

Job Performance

The findings from the survey relating to job performance were rated using the same five point scale as applied to job satisfaction. Participants were asked to what extent they felt that each of nine identified performance criteria could be enhanced by CoP. The responses are presented below.

Understanding Direction

Findings showed that respondents felt the greatest impact of CoP in terms of job performance could be felt in the enhancement of “understanding direction,” with 80% of respondents indicating that CoP could contribute to this criterion to a great extent or more.

Communication

Findings showed that 67% of respondents felt that a CoP could enhance job performance by contributing to communication with peers to a great extent or more. Of respondents, 60% felt that CoP could contribute to communication with supervisors to a great extent or more.

Knowledge

Findings showed that 67% of respondents felt that a CoP could enhance job performance to a great extent or more by providing a forum for continued education and/or training. Of respondents, 53% indicated that it could actually enhance their peers’ and supervisors’ knowledge to a great extent or more. In addition, this was supported by 66 % of respondents who felt that their confidence in their own abilities could be enhanced to a great extent or more through CoP.

Trust

Findings showed that 60% of respondents felt that CoP could enhance trust with supervisors to a great extent or more. Fifty-four percent indicated that it could enhance trust with peers to a great extent or more.

Preferred Type of CoP

Survey results showed that all but 7% of respondents supported management involvement in CoP. This translated into 53% of respondents preferring a supported CoP

(mandated jointly by management and CoP members), and 40% preferring the structure CoP model (mandated by management with the endorsement of CoP members).

Interest in CoP

Survey results showed that 100% of respondents would be interested in taking part in a CoP within the FMPS (A), with 60% indicating that these should be held on a monthly basis.

Study Conclusions

The conclusions herein seek to answer the research question and sub-questions listed in the Introduction by determining what key success factors could be addressed through CoP that could enhance the job satisfaction and performance of FMPS (A) junior members. They have been derived from this study's AR findings and the literature review.

This study determines that CoP could enhance job satisfaction and performance by contributing to three main criteria and subsequent sub-criteria. The three criteria identified are (a) communication, (b) empowerment, and (c) organizational learning and strategic alignment. Table 1 (see next page) highlights how AR activity findings correlated to these three criteria.

Communication

I have concluded from the AR findings that a supported CoP has the potential to enhance job satisfaction and performance within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level by addressing issues relating to communication, a key job satisfaction and performance criteria identified by junior NCMs.

This is supported by the literature which recognizes communication as a critical success factor in job performance and satisfaction (Vaughan, 2005). Focus group findings

Table 1. Correlating AR Activity Highlights to Satisfaction and Performance Criteria

	Focus Group	Interviews	Survey
Communication	Greatest contributor of CoP would be increased communication.	CoP could contribute to communication; could respect chain of command while providing forum in which to address communication challenges caused by generational differences.	CoP could enhance job satisfaction by improving two-way communication with superiors; job performance by contributing to peer communication.
Empowerment	Empowerment is closely linked to respect, having opinion heard by supervisors and having tasks and decisions explained; closely linked to trust – perceived lack of trust and fear of repercussions can discourage NCMs from performing to the best of their abilities.	Sharing the reasoning behind decisions will help serve to develop people's minds.	CoP could help understand organizational direction, and contribute to sense of respect, two factors closely associated with empowerment as described in the literature.
Organizational Learning and Strategic Alignment	Poor planning contributes to low morale and decreased job satisfaction; attempting to meet key job performance success criteria through CoP could result in cohesive organization.	CoP have the potential to break down silos and get members on same wavelength.	CoP show potential to enhance job performance and satisfaction by helping participants understand organizational direction.

also supported the premise, notably that a lack of communication had a negative impact on both job satisfaction and job performance within the FMPS (A). Participants in this forum indicated that CoP had the potential to most enhance job satisfaction by improving communication but that to be successful the CoP would have to be supported by the organization.

Of survey respondents, 67% felt that a CoP could enhance job performance by contributing to communication with peers to a great extent or more, and 60% that it could contribute to enhancing communication with supervisors to a great extent or more. A total

of 53% of respondents felt that it could contribute to enhancing job satisfaction by contributing to two-way communication with Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers and Sergeants.

Empowerment

I have concluded from AR findings that CoPs can enhance job satisfaction and performance within the FMPS (A) by empowering junior NCMs. The literature recognizes that CoPs can provide a safe, respectful, creative, and trusting environment within which to address workplace issues. It also states that empowerment is a complex concept, involving respect, sharing of information, creativity and trust in your followers (Vaughan, 2005). AR participants specifically recognized trust and respect as critical elements of job satisfaction and performance.

Participants expressed a strong desire to be respected, for example by recognizing junior NCMs' contribution to the organization and treating them as adults by providing explanations for tasks and organizational decisions where possible. Trust was identified the most often by focus group participants as a contributor to effective job performance, particularly between the grassroots, management and outside administrative bodies. The participants noted that lack of trust was potentially dissuading effective job performance in some instances because of fear of repercussions should mistakes be made.

All interview respondents concurred that respect was a great contributor to job satisfaction, particularly peer respect. This group also identified trust as a determinant of job satisfaction and performance, again noting that it was of particular importance at the peer level.

The survey results showed that respondents felt that the greatest potential impact of a CoP on job satisfaction resided in improving respect, both among peers and between peers and their supervisors. Finally, in terms of empowerment overall, 66% of survey respondents

indicated that their confidence in their own abilities could be enhanced to a great extent or more through CoP.

Organizational Learning and Strategic Alignment

I have concluded based on AR findings that there is potential to enhance job satisfaction and performance through a CoP within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level by addressing issues relating to organizational learning and strategic alignment. CoP within the FMPS (A) can serve as a vehicle for knowledge transfer and allow knowledge gleaned by members to be shared with management and vice versa.

The literature shows that keeping its employees up-to-date regarding changes taking place in today's workplace can be one of the biggest challenges organizations have. It is therefore important for the various sections within the organization to understand the impact that they can have on other sections and on the overall organization. CoP provides this opportunity. This will help ensure the strategic alignment and the cohesion of changes throughout the organization (Vaughan, 2005).

Focus group participants recognized their own knowledge and that of management as contributors to job satisfaction. They also identified organization and planning as contributors to job performance. They spoke of increased knowledge contributing to the aptness of individuals to perform their duties and noted that meeting the overall job criteria identified could contribute to a more cohesive organization and to strategic alignment.

Interviews revealed that by keeping grassroots members apprised of the reasoning behind decisions, management could contribute to a more informed workforce. They attributed extreme importance to a supervisor's planning and organization skills, as well as knowledge, in terms of job satisfaction and job performance. It was also noted that peer mentorship and coaching was extremely important in contributing to their own continuous learning and knowledge of the organization and its complexities. It was believed that by

meeting job satisfaction and performance criteria, knowledge could increase, contributing to a better working environment.

Interviewees indicated that a CoP might help align the various entities within the FMPS (A) by bringing together people who do not normally interact but who have various experiences that they could share. It could help put people on the same wavelength and reduce isolation.

Of survey respondents, 67% indicated that they felt a CoP could contribute to enhancing job satisfaction to a great extent or more by contributing to continuous learning through peer mentorship/coaching and/or support. As well, 60% felt that CoP could contribute to supervisors' planning and organization skills and abilities, as well as clarify direction within the organization. They felt that the greatest benefit of CoP in terms of job performance would be an enhanced understanding of organizational direction, with 60% indicating that CoP could contribute to this criterion to a great extent or more.

A total of 67% of survey respondents felt that CoP could enhance job performance to a great extent or more by providing a forum for continued education and/or training, and 53% felt a CoP could actually enhance the knowledge of peers and supervisors to a great extent or more. In summary, they felt that a more knowledgeable workforce was a potential benefit of CoP.

Scope and Limitations of the Research

In terms of scope, it should be noted that this research was limited to the FMPS (A). Although it is the largest guard house in the CF, it cannot be assumed that other MP units stationed in other environments will share the same concerns as identified herein. It should be noted that its very size may in fact contribute to its uniqueness.

Despite being large for an MP section, certain limitations must nonetheless be noted in terms of the inability to approach potential candidates or report out on demographics given that to do so would have compromised the anonymity of the research subjects. One such example is the case of a sub-section comprised of only one member. As a result, the study cannot assume that all sub-sections have been reflected in the findings.

Another limitation in terms of report-out on demographics resides in the identification of participation by visible minorities and females.

No reservists were included in this report as none were attached to the targeted sub-sections. As such, conclusions should not be extrapolated to reflect the views of this group.

It should be noted that AR respondents' experience varied, ranging from several months as a MP member to many years.

CHAPTER FIVE:

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Based upon the conclusions found in Chapter four it would appear that a CoP could be a valid management tool by assisting to improve job satisfaction and performance in the areas of: (a) communication, (b) empowerment, and (c) organizational learning and strategic alignment. This section provides recommendations as to “how” CoP could contribute to enhancing job performance and satisfaction within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level. Each recommendation describes the organizational implications involved with implementation. As many of these recommendations are intertwined, they have been broken into to main recommendations with sub-headings where applicable.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Establishment of “Pilot” CoP

Type and Membership

Based upon the research, the majority of respondents indicated that they would be willing to support the establishment of a supported or structured CoP. This desire to work with management provides the FMPS (A) an opportunity to go beyond typical cultural bounds. A CoP would serve as a vehicle by which the organization could improve communication, empower the junior members and further develop organizational learning, systems thinking, and strategic alignment.

It is recommended that a pilot “structured” CoP be formed within the FMPS (A) with at least a six-month commitment from the organization. Community membership should

initially be restricted to the Corporal/Leading Seaman rank level. The inclusion of other rank levels may be considered at a later date depending upon the evolution of the CoP.

The CoP would be fully supported by management at all levels with the mandate defined by senior management (NPM(A)) and endorsed by the CoP members. Initially, founding members of the community should be approached by management and drawn from FMPS (A) patrol and investigation sub-sections.

The potential founding members should not be placed under any duress to participate. The initial goal would be to select at least one member from each patrol and one from the Investigation sub-section for a total of six members (including training shift if activated). These founding members should then be requested to ask another member to join them from their individual sub-sections for a total of twelve, or approximately 25% junior NCM representation.

This community building technique was used by Clarica Life Insurance Company when recruiting members for an online CoP. They felt that the “buddy system” would facilitate community sharing by raising the comfort level of the members (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003).

The success of the AR focus group conducted during this project precludes that a CoP based upon this format would be an acceptable vehicle. It could ensure that the communication and learning is targeted in a manner that will encourage participation while maintaining accountability to organizational goals.

Selection of Organizational Liaison and Support

The establishment of a supported or structured CoP assumes the support of an organizational liaison. It is recommended that the lowest rank assigned to the organizational liaison position be Warrant Officer/Petty Officer 2 and the highest rank be CWO/Chief Petty Officer 2. It is important to note that the liaison should be an

“enthusiastic” and “committed” volunteer who will make it a priority to attend meetings. Focus group feedback indicated that this individual must be willing to commit to a frank exchange of ideas, to respect confidentiality and to foster an environment where ideas and learning are placed before rank/status. Based upon the perception expressed by AR participants that many filters exist between the grassroots members and senior management, the organizational liaison would report directly to the NPM(A).

The organizational liaison and members should be supported by the FMPS(A) Training Coordinator, who would be required to assist with research, obtain suitable facilities, and access outside resources.

Facilitation of the CoP meetings should be rotated through the membership in order to create a sense of ownership for the success of the group. This would further serve to develop the individuals as leaders.

Based upon the needs expressed by the organizational liaison, training on the conduct of CoP and focus groups should be obtained if necessary. This would ensure consistency and structure for the community meetings

Communication Plan

It is recommended that a communication plan be developed where potential members are clearly presented with the mandate of the CoP and organizational expectations of the members prior to joining. The purpose of the communication plan is to ensure a clear understanding of the CoP by all involved and as such may involve background research on the concept of CoP as well as on the focus of the pilot CoP.

The organizational expectations for the volunteers should include, but not be restricted to: (a) regular attendance at meetings during the trial implementation, (b) a six-month commitment, (c) report-outs to their various sub-sections, and (d) the expectation to maintain the confidentiality of individual contributions to the discussions.

Initially, community agendas would be developed for the most part by management. However, as the community gains strength community activities should be based upon identified needs of the members (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003). Some suggested activities could include, but not be restricted to: (a) discussions around new MP policy bulletins; (b) clarification of issues such as jurisdictional limitations; (c) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP); (d) equipment/training requirements; (e) lessons learned from investigations, arrests and court appearances; (f) standardization and alignment of service provided by sub-sections; and (g) morale issues.

The community focus of the meetings should be published well in advance to allow adequate preparation time for all participants and input by other FMPS (A) members. As well the organization should communicate the results to all stakeholders, good or bad, via a newsletter or a simple e-mail (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003)

Recommendation #2: Evaluating CoP Success

Knowledge cannot be measured in the same manner as can tangible activities, such as the number of files completed by the Investigation sub-section or impaired drivers arrested by patrols (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003).

The subjective judgment of a qualified person or group of persons is often a better measurement of performance than any objective measure. This is due to the ability of humans to draw nuances and understand the effect of circumstance upon performance. Obviously these subjective measures can be skewed by a person's prejudice and attitudes. This is not likely to occur in an objective measure if properly obtained. In light of these considerations, it is best if organizational output is measured by both means (Anthony & Young, 2003).

Prior to the establishment of a six-month pilot CoP, it is recommended that a baseline be established as to how the junior members rank the present level of (a)

communication, (b) empowerment, and c) organizational learning and strategic alignment within the FMPS(A). This quantitative data could be obtained by the development and distribution of a simple on-line survey.

As suggested by Saint-Onge & Wallace (2003), throughout the pilot program supervisory members within the organization should be asked to collect informal feedback from junior members through comments and discussions. This should be combined with the organizational structure seeking feedback from the actual community members.

At the midpoint of the pilot CoP, a meeting of all stakeholders should be held to obtain feedback for an informal check on the health of the community. This will ensure that any barriers that have been encountered can be addressed and modifications can be made if required.

At the end of the pilot CoP, all stakeholders and management should meet and discuss the process. The subjective information obtained from this activity could be correlated with quantitative data obtained from the re-distribution of the on-line survey.

Organizational Implications

The literature has demonstrated CoP to be a forum where grassroots members can be heard, increase their sense of contribution to the organization, and increase their knowledge of systemic issues specific to the organization (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

Implications as They Relate to Recommendation #1

Implementation of a CoP will initially require the coordination of a great many factors as noted in the study's recommendations. Most obvious is the required organizational involvement, commitment and enthusiasm at all levels for this type of forum (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2003). Failure to achieve this could result in decreased job performance and frustration resulting from the disempowerment and disillusionment of the

organization's workforce. As noted in the literature review, such an implication could lead to attrition, particularly within the younger generations (Thielfoldt & Scheef, 2004).

The implementation of a successful pilot on CoP could lead to the adoption of CoP elsewhere within the MP MPB, and ultimately to other military units within the CF. Based upon the literature review, successful implementation could allow the MPB and the CF in general to further enhance their ability to fulfill their mandated roles (DND, 2005a and d) by addressing generational considerations and the key success factors of high performance organizations.

Implications as They Relate to Recommendation #2

Ensuring the successful achievement and sustainability of the CoP's purpose will require evaluation of the process. Doing so will allow all stakeholders to understand their purpose and the efficacy of their activities more clearly (Palys, 2003). As evidenced through the literature review, this will address satisfaction requirements at all generational levels. More specifically, it will allow Boomers to perceive the benefits of the process (Hood, 2000), and the more results-driven Gen Xers and Gen Y to identify CoP outcomes.

Implications for Future Research

In themselves, the recommendations herein imply future research on behalf of the organization. More specifically, implementation will require familiarization by management and training personnel with CoP methodology and literature.

Following the evaluation of a pilot CoP, the concept of an on-line CoP could be further explored to allow for the extension of findings and lessons learned to other MP units. One such successful reference model for future research would be the Platoonleader.org virtual CoP endorsed by the US Military (Baum, 2005).

Ultimately, this research could be extended to include other civilian police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police contingents. Advantages of expanding the CoP's reach could result in an even more deep and meaningful sharing of best practice and experience.

CHAPTER SIX:

LESSONS LEARNED

Looking back upon the AR activities carried out over the last year, a number of lessons learned would influence any further research I would undertake.

Smaller is Better

Firstly, in developing my research proposal prior to the second MALT JPSL residency, I would choose a much more narrow focus for my research question. Because of the broad scope of my initial research question, a lot of time was spent reformulating the question and redefining my major project proposal. Looking back upon the process, I would seek to understand the various research methodologies prior to formulating the question. This understanding is critical to the development of an appropriate research question, the premise upon which all AR activities will be based.

The Literature Review is a Living Document

The value of the literature review should not be underestimated. As the project progressed, it became quite apparent that the literature review was not a stand-alone and stagnant document, but simply a basic starting point. It became increasingly evident that that the literature review is a living document essential to the progress of the project and that it cannot be considered complete until all AR and analysis has been carried out.

Time is of the Essence

Because AR depends on the support of and participation by many people and agencies, time management must be of the utmost priority, particularly in terms of obtaining approval of and feedback on research methodology and tools. As well, scheduling of AR activities such as focus groups, interviews and surveys should allow for sufficient time

to subsequently compile and analyze resulting data. While the project may be a priority to the researcher, he or she must consider the daily responsibilities and commitments of the people and organizations he or she is seeking to involve.

One should not overestimate the time commitment required to pull the project findings and conclusions together. While the AR may produce a slew of data, the researcher must not lose sight of the fact that it is the information actually derived from the data that will contribute to a quality end product. The richer the data gathered, the longer it may take to correlate. Beyond the commitment of time required by AR participants, the researcher must consider the fact that his or her own life may be fraught with unexpected or unforeseen events that risk disrupting the research schedule.

Never Lose Sight of the Big Picture

Finally, I would recommend piloting all AR tools to simplify correlation of data during the data analysis portion of the major project. If the tools are not aligned, it becomes much more complex to derive common themes and arrive at findings and conclusions. This was particularly made evident to me during the interviews, in which the close interaction between myself and interviewees occasionally drove me to deviate from the original purpose of the research.

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APPENDIX A:

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Based on your professional experience, what four criteria are essential to job satisfaction and why?
2. Based on your professional experience, what are the benefits of meeting job satisfaction criteria (refer to question 1) and why?
3. Based on your professional experience, what are the risks of not meeting job satisfaction criteria (refer to question 1) and why?
4. Based on the response to question 1, do you feel there is potential to enhance job satisfaction within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)?
5. Based on your professional experience, what four criteria contribute to effective job performance and why?
6. Based on your professional experience, what are the benefits of effective job performance criteria (refer to question 5) and why?
7. Based on your professional experience, what are the risks of not meeting effective job performance criteria (refer to question 5) and why?
8. Based on the response to question 5, do you feel there is potential to enhance job performance within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)?
9. Based on the definition of Communities of Practice (CoP), do you feel there is potential to enhance job satisfaction (refer to question 1) through CoP within the formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)? If so, how?

10. Based on the definition of Communities of Practice (CoP), do you feel there is potential to enhance job performance (refer to question 5) through CoP within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)? If so, how?
11. Based on today's session, what topics would you suggest as the potential focus of future communities of practice within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic) and why would you choose these in particular?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY BACKGROUND, CONTENT AND QUESTIONS

C.1 Background Information

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND THE MILITARY POLICE JUNIOR NON-COMMISSIONED MEMBER

A survey submitted by Sgt. Patrick R. Todd within the framework of a thesis aimed at answering the following question:

“How could a Community of Practice (CoP) enhance the level of job satisfaction and performance in the Military Police at the grassroots level?”

*DHRRE authorizes the administration of this survey within DND/CF in accordance with CANFORGEN 145/02 ADMHRMIL 079 UNCLASS 131028Z DEC 02. Authorization number: 381/05.
DREERH autorise l'administration de ce sondage dans le MDN/FC en accord vec CANFORGEN 145/02 ADMHRMIL 079 UNCLASS 131028Z DEC 02. Numéro d'autorisation : 381/05.*

This survey, being conducted **between June 22, 2005 and June 29, 2005**, is intended for the Junior Non Commissioned Members of the Formation Military Police Section (A) (FMPS(A)). It is part of an action research project (thesis) within the frame work of the Master of Arts in Leadership and Training – Specialization in Justice and Public Safety, through Royal Roads University, in Victoria, BC. The Project is being conducted by Sgt. Pat Todd, the researcher.

The Project is being supervised by Capt. Randy Gilbert, MA on behalf of Royal Roads University. The internal project sponsor is the NPM(A) LCdr Larry Murphy. Should you have any concerns or questions as to the authenticity of this research, please feel free to contact Capt. Gilbert via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com. LCdr Murphy can be contacted through normal Divisional channels.

As the front line and public face of the Military Police organization, the junior NCM level of expertise and professionalism is of great importance. For this reason, you are being asked to access the link included below to complete a survey based on your understanding of Communities of Practice (CoP's). It is critical that you read the reference material on CoP's below prior to answering the survey. Data gathered from this survey will be used for the purpose of determining if CoP's could prove effective in increasing job satisfaction and performance at the grassroots level within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic).

Individuals completing this survey do so voluntarily by clicking on the link found below, which will remain open until **June 29, 2005**. This survey is housed on a secure server accessible only to the researcher. Results will remain **anonymous** and **non-identifiable** even to the researcher. No participant can or will be identified by completing or not completing the survey. Information gathered will be reported on in a quantitative generalized manner. The results, findings and recommendations of the survey and other

action research methods will be published and made available to any who wish to access it. The researcher would like to express his sincere appreciation to all who take the time to contribute to this research. Your contribution is invaluable to the outcomes of the above-mentioned thesis.

It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and the identity of respondents will remain anonymous. Please answer spontaneously and do not research any of these questions. Please answer each question; do NOT leave any answer blank.

Reference Material – Defining Communities of Practice

For the purpose of this thesis, the researcher has adopted the following definition of **Communities of Practice (CoP's)**:

“Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area on an ongoing basis”

(Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p.4)

CoP's are not a new concept and have been around for many years. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) use the examples of the early Homo Sapiens gathered around the fire discussing a hunt and sharing information as to what worked and what did not. Other examples were the corporations of Craftsmen in ancient Rome and the Guilds from the Middle Ages.

Many of you may in fact be involved in *forms* of CoP's within the Section already. The gathering for breakfast by some Patrols after their last night shift is a great example of an existing informal CoP. The stories told and experiences shared from the preceding shift are an important aspect of learning. If you look back at the definition, you would likely agree that you are a group of people with a common set of concerns, problems and passions who are sharing knowledge about your work.

Although there are many characteristics ascribed to CoP's, for the purpose of the study we will look at three in particular as described by Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003). They consist of the following:

1. ***“Informal,”*** such as the casual breakfast meeting described above, which have no official management involvement or sponsorship, and whose activities and outcomes are the exclusive responsibility of participants. Examples of expected outcomes of this type of gathering would include personal and professional development, and increased levels of trust and collaboration among subsections (i.e. patrols and invest). This type of CoP has no formal accountability structure and as such, the organization may be unaware of its activities, which may limit communication with and follow-up by management;
2. ***“Supported”*** which is similar to the Informal in that the membership is self joining or peer invited but it has a sponsor from management within the organization. In this case, an example of a suitable sponsor could be the Section's MWO. Examples of expected outcomes for this type of gathering would include the sharing and building of organizational knowledge, focus on skills pertinent to professional tasks, and greater

collaboration among subsections. Although management does have some input into the group's purpose and the communication of its purpose, the Supported CoP's activities remain largely governed by the members. The sponsor provides organizational support and acts as a communication conduit between management and CoP participants;

3. *"Structured"* CoPs are management driven and directed with the endorsement of the membership. Selection criteria are more structured with new members being invited by members or sponsors. The sponsor in this case might well be a Divisional Officer or the NPM(A). Examples of expected outcomes for this type of gathering would include the consistent enforcement and understanding of organizational policy, and problem-solving for issues identified by management. This CoP's findings and outcomes are the most likely to be readily and rapidly actioned by the organization given that it is organizationally driven from the onset.

If you would like to receive more information on communities of practice, do not hesitate to contact Sgt. Pat Todd at (902) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your participation.

To access the survey, please click on the following link:

<http://learn.royalroads.ca/DLOpenQuestions/Questions.asp?intContainerID=5483&StyleSheet=admin.css>

N.B. Please be sure to click on the "Record Response" icon located on the lower left hand side of the survey once you have completed the survey. This will ensure the anonymous recording of your responses in the secure on-line database.

C.2 Survey Content and Questions

Survey Information:

Could CoPs Enhance Job Performance & Satisfaction at MP Grassroots Level

This survey is intended for the Junior Non Commissioned Members of the Formation Military Police Section (A) (FMPS(A)). This survey is part of an action research project (thesis) within the frame work of the Master of Arts in Leadership and Training – Specialization in Justice and Public Safety, through Royal Roads University, in Victoria, BC. The Project is being conducted by Sgt. Pat Todd, the researcher. The Project is being supervised by Capt. Randy Gilbert, MA on behalf of Royal Roads University. The internal project sponsor is the NPM(A) LCdr Larry Murphy. Should you have any concerns or questions as to the authenticity of this research, please feel free to contact Capt. Gilbert via e-mail at gilbert_randy@hotmail.com. LCdr Murphy can be contacted through normal

Divisional channels. As the front line and public face of the Military Police organization the junior NCM level of expertise and professionalism is of great importance. For this reason, you are being asked to complete this survey based on your understanding of CoP's. Data gathered from this survey will be used for the purpose of determining how Communities of Practice could prove effective in increasing job satisfaction and performance at the grassroots level within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic). Individuals completing this survey do so voluntarily. Results will remain anonymous and non-identifiable even to the researcher. No participant can or will be identified by completing or not completing the survey. Information gathered will be reported on in a quantitative generalized manner. The results, findings and recommendations of the survey and other action research methods will be published and made available to any who wish to access it. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and the identity of respondents will remain anonymous. Please answer spontaneously and do not research any of these questions. Please answer each question; do NOT leave any answer blank. Sgt Patrick R. Todd 30 MP Coy

This Survey is anonymous

Helpful Information:

1. To complete this Survey form, you will need to use Internet Explorer 5 or greater.

[Your Browser: IE 6.0]

2. To complete this Survey form, you will need to have Javascript enabled. [view instructions]

3. Once you have completed this form, you will need to click the "Record Response" button. If you do not click this button, your response will not be recorded.

4. If you are using Internet Explorer 5 or greater with Javascript enabled and you have clicked the "Record Response" button, but you are still encountering problems, please

note the steps you followed and what you saw on your screen. Providing this information to the Computer Service Desk will enable us to diagnose and resolve this problems faster.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire contact the Owner or, for technical questions, the RRU Helpdesk.

Could CoPs Enhance Job Performance & Satisfaction at MP Grassroots Level-Survey

Form

1. Section 1 – Based on your understanding of communities of practice (CoP's), to what extent do you feel using a CoP within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level could enhance job SATISFACTION by contributing to each of the following factors? (i.e. to what extent do you feel CoP's could improve:)
 - a. Respect from my peers
 - to no extent
 - to some extent
 - to a fair extent
 - to a great extent
 - to a tremendous extent
 - b. Respect from my superiors
 - to no extent
 - to some extent
 - to a fair extent
 - to a great extent
 - to a tremendous extent
 - c. Feeling of accomplishment
 - to no extent
 - to some extent
 - to a fair extent
 - to a great extent
 - to a tremendous extent
 - d. My peers' positive attitude
 - to no extent
 - to some extent
 - to a fair extent
 - to a great extent
 - to a tremendous extent

e. Continuous learning through peer mentorship/coaching and/or support

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

f. Peer unity

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

g. Supervisor's planning and organization

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

h. Clear direction

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

i. Two way communication with Commissioned Officers / Warrant Officers / Sergeants

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

2. Section 2 – Based on your understanding of communities of practice (CoP's), to what extent do you feel using a CoP within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level could enhance job PERFORMANCE by contributing to each of the following? (i.e. to what extent do you feel CoP's could improve:)

a. Communication with my peers

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

b. Communication with my superiors

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

c. Trust within peer group

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

d. Continuing education and/or training

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

e. Trust of supervisors

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

f. Supervisors' professional knowledge

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

g. Peers' professional knowledge

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

h. Confidence in own abilities

- to no extent
- to some extent
- to a fair extent
- to a great extent
- to a tremendous extent

- i. Understanding direction
 - to no extent
 - to some extent
 - to a fair extent
 - to a great extent
 - to a tremendous extent

Section 3

- 3. Which of the following do you feel could be improved through CoP's:
 - a. Decreased number of incidents
 - b. Better working environment
 - c. More confident team
 - d. Decreased employee turnaround
 - e. More knowledgeable workforce
 - f. Increased credibility within the organization
 - g. Improved relationship with supervisors
 - h. Decreased stress
 - i. Improved productivity
 - j. Increased job satisfaction
 - k. None of the above

Section 4

- 4. Based on the CoP reference material provided, which type of CoP do you feel would be most effective and feasible in a Guard House environment?
 - informal supported structured none

Section 5

- 5a) Would you be interested in taking part in a CoP aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and performance within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)?
 - yes no
- 5b) If no, please list any concerns or barriers that would prevent you from doing so. (Maximum 4000 characters)
- 5c) If interested how often would you be willing to participate in a CoP?
 - weekly bi-monthly monthly quarterly other

Section 6

- 6. Please feel free to provide any additional comments, questions or concerns you would like to see addressed regarding Communities of Practice within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic). (Maximum 4000 characters)

APPENDIX C:

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Hi _____:

This letter is to request your interest in taking part in a focus group / an interview to be held to determine the potential to enhance job performance and satisfaction within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic) through the development of communities of practice (see attached literature on subject matter).

I will be conducting the focus group / interview as part of my action research project (thesis) within the framework of the Master of Arts in Leadership and Training – Specialization in Justice and Public Safety, through Royal Roads University, in Victoria, B.C.

This project is being supervised by Capt Randy Gilbert, on behalf of Royal Roads University. The internal project sponsor for the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic) (FMP(A)) is LCdr Murphy. Should you have any questions or concerns as to the authenticity of this research, please feel free to contact Mr. Gilbert via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com or LCdr Murphy through the usual channels.

The purpose of this project is to determine if and how communities of practice can increase job performance and satisfaction within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic) at the grassroots level. Its objectives are to determine the viability of using communities of practice as a means of increasing job satisfaction and performance within the junior ranks of a military police unit through:

- the establishment of a baseline measurement for current levels of satisfaction and performance issues;
- the promotion of a knowledge-sharing and learning forum;
- the determination of the level of interest in communities of practice;
- the proposal of recommendations/solutions based on participant input.

The focus group / interview will be held on (DATE) at (TIME), at the (LOCATION).

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is understood that information provided by participants may be included within the researcher's final body of research (i.e. thesis). While participation and commitment is greatly appreciated and valuable to research outcomes, participants who choose to take part in the focus group / interview retain the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice to pre-existing entitlements.

Please note that the focus group / interview will be audio/video taped and all raw data from the focus group / interview will be numerically coded and kept in the property of the undersigned for a period of two years following submission of thesis (i.e. until August 31, 2007). No identifiable data will be divulged by the researcher or used in the development of the major project. Participants will be requested to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of fellow members who they may become aware of as participants, and assume responsibility for this by signing below.

To indicate your consent and agreement to maintain the confidentiality of members who you may become aware of as focus group / interview participants, simply sign this letter.

Yours truly,

Patrick R. Todd

By signing below, I, the undersigned, do confirm that I have read the above, agree to take part in the focus group / interview described herein, and to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all fellow focus group / interview participants who I may become aware of.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT (block letters)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

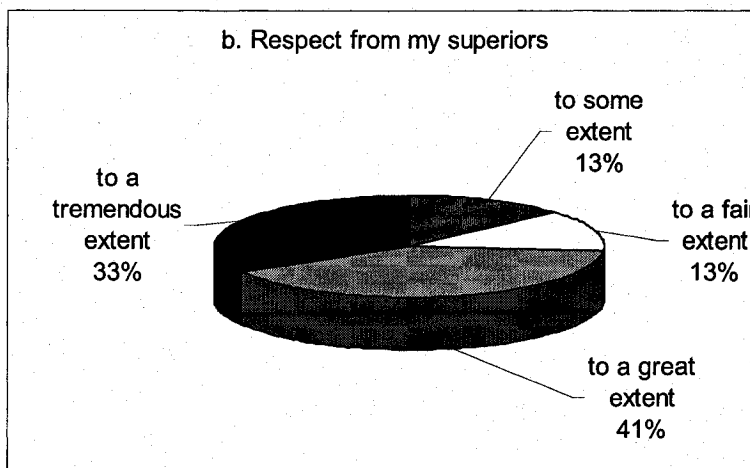
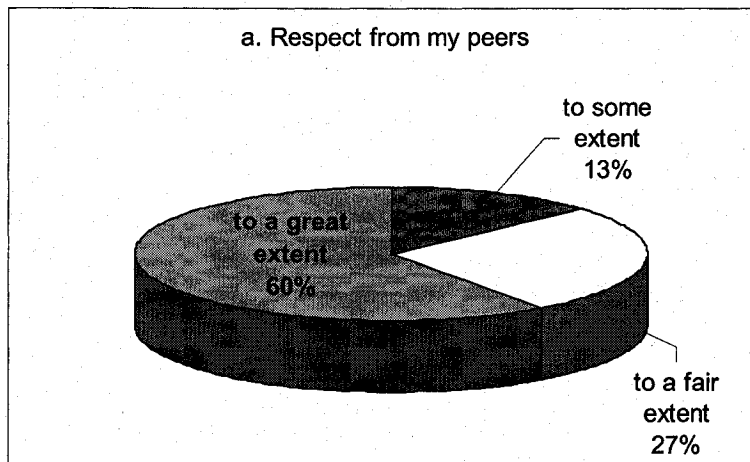
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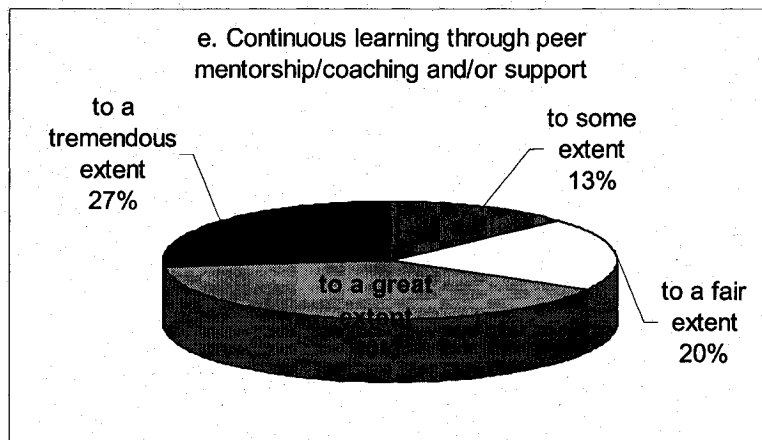
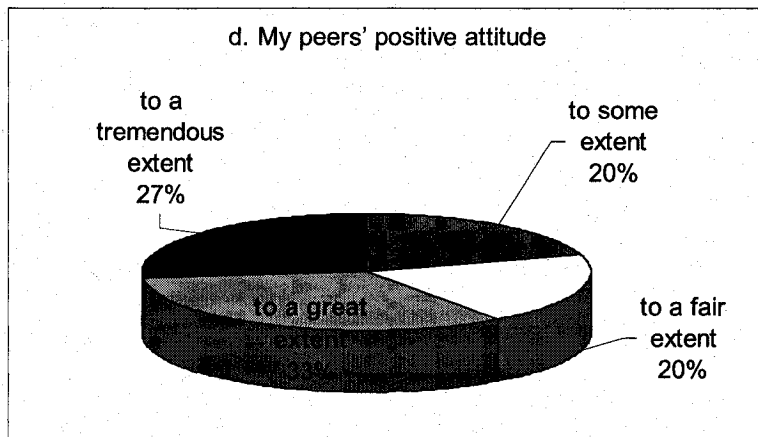
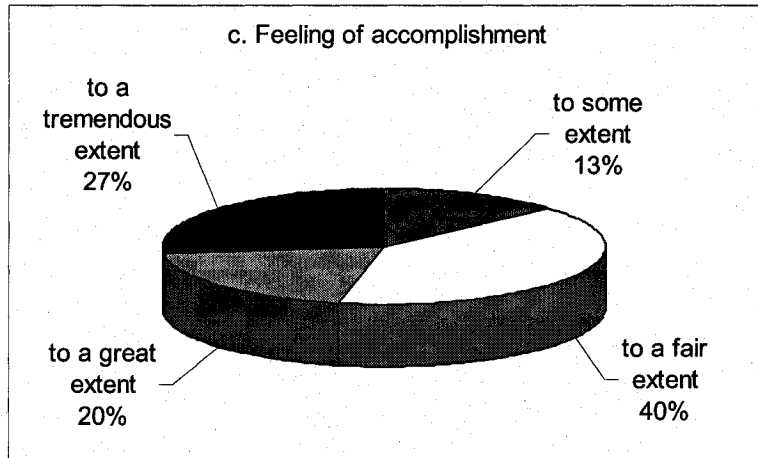
APPENDIX D:

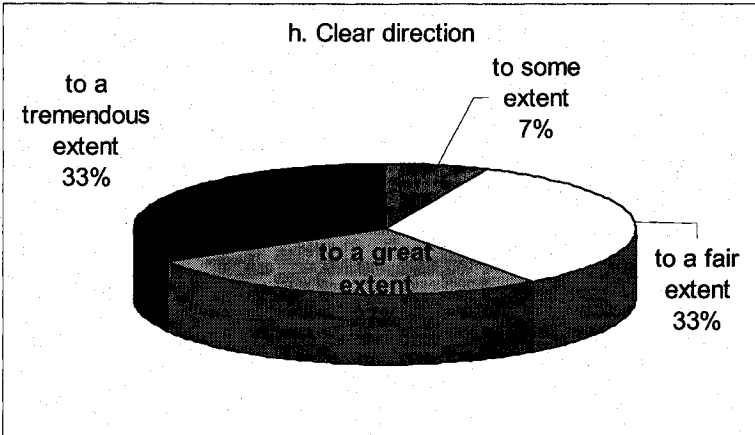
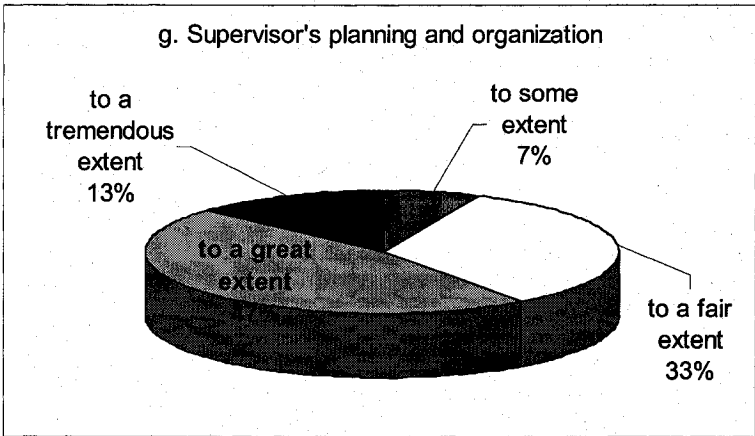
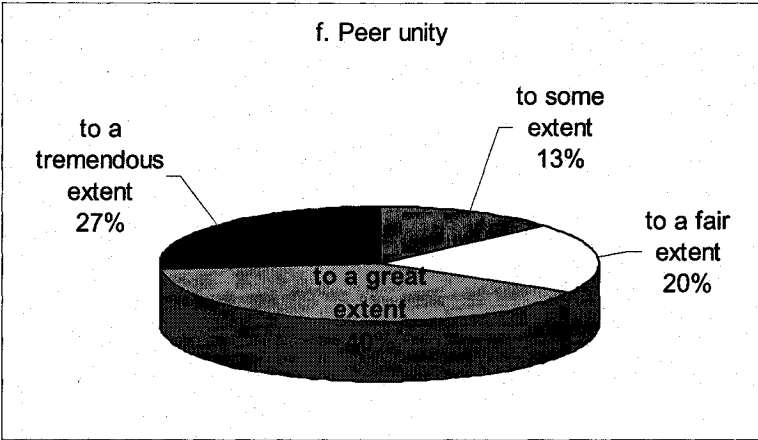
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (CHARTS) – SURVEY

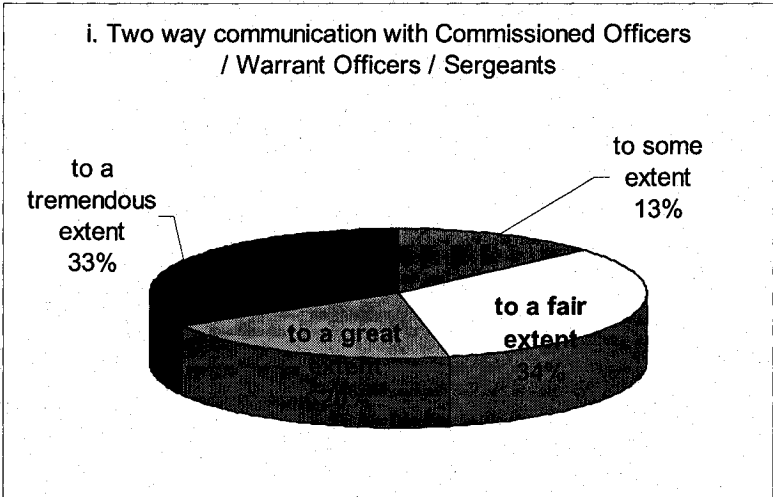
Question 1.

Based on your understanding of communities of practice (CoP's), to what extent do you feel using a CoP within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level could enhance job SATISFACTION by contributing to each of the following factors? (i.e. to what extent do you feel CoP's could improve:)



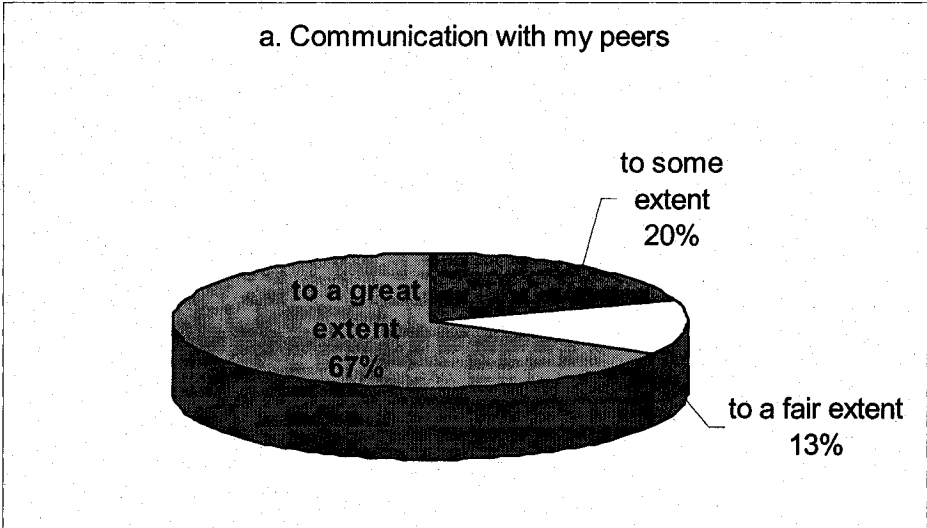


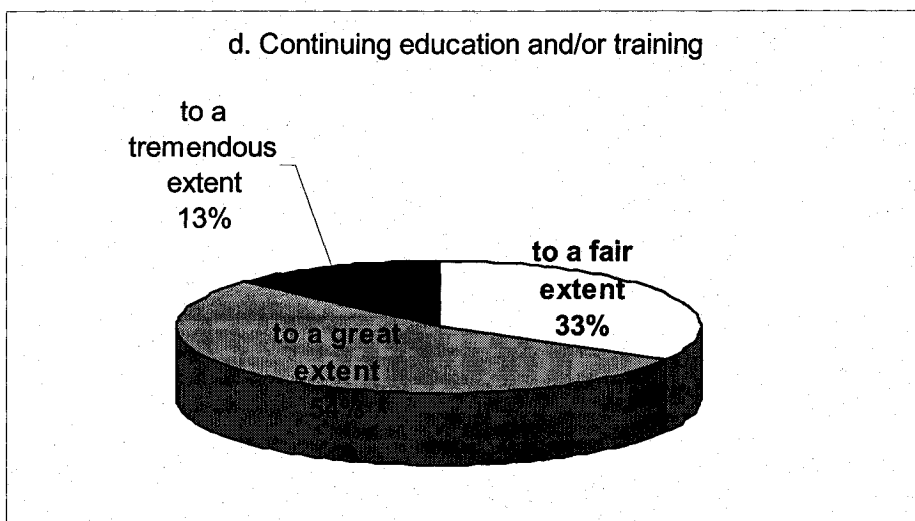
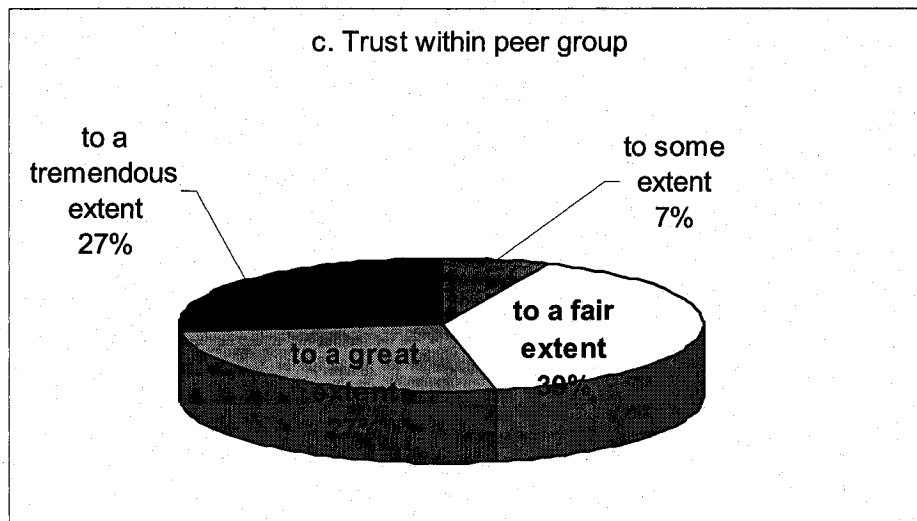
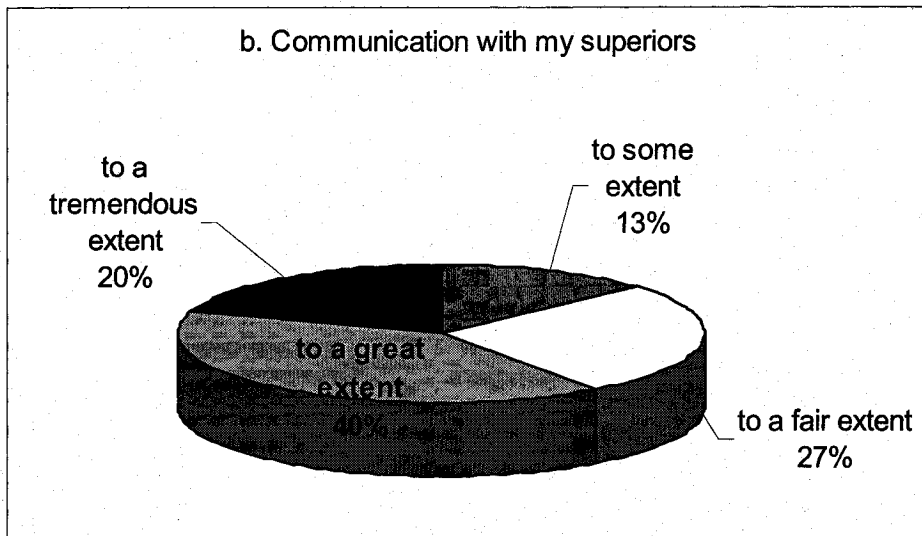


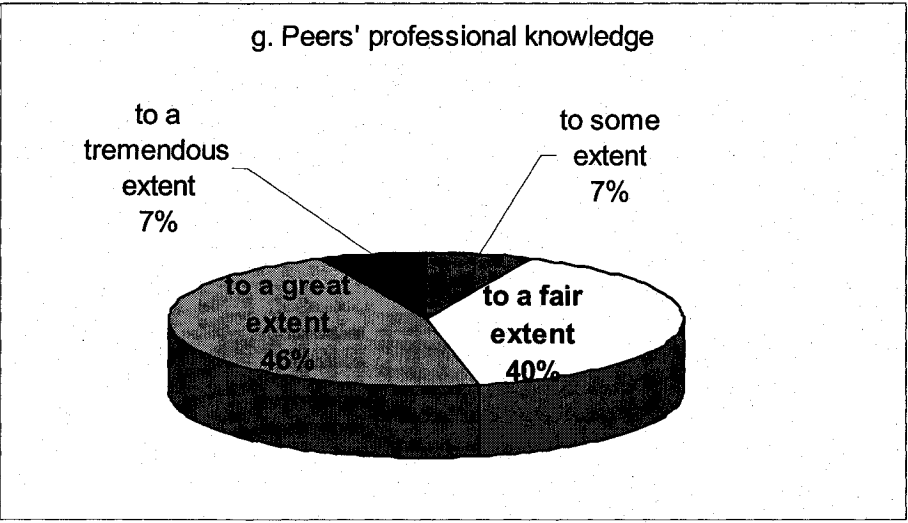
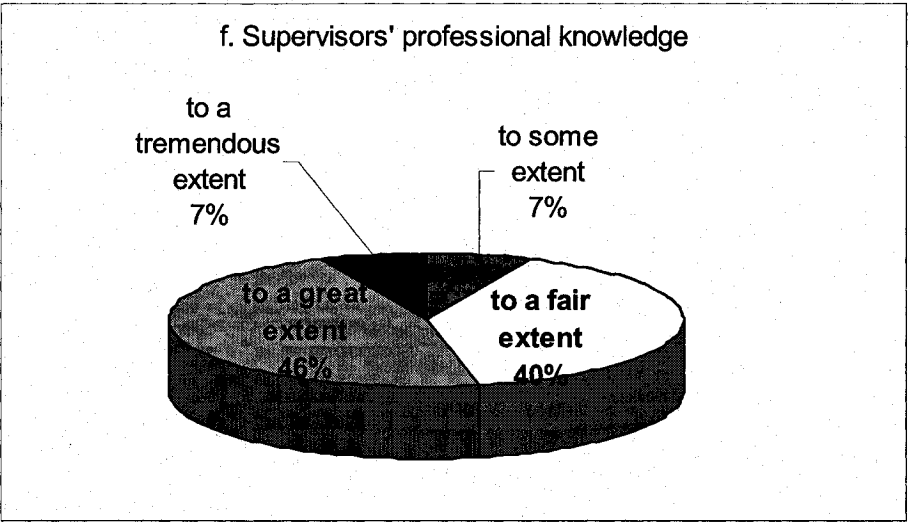
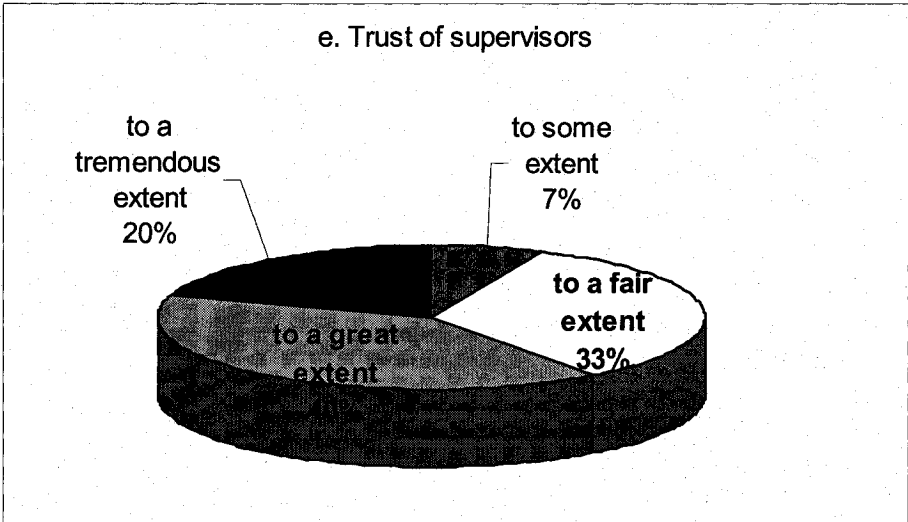


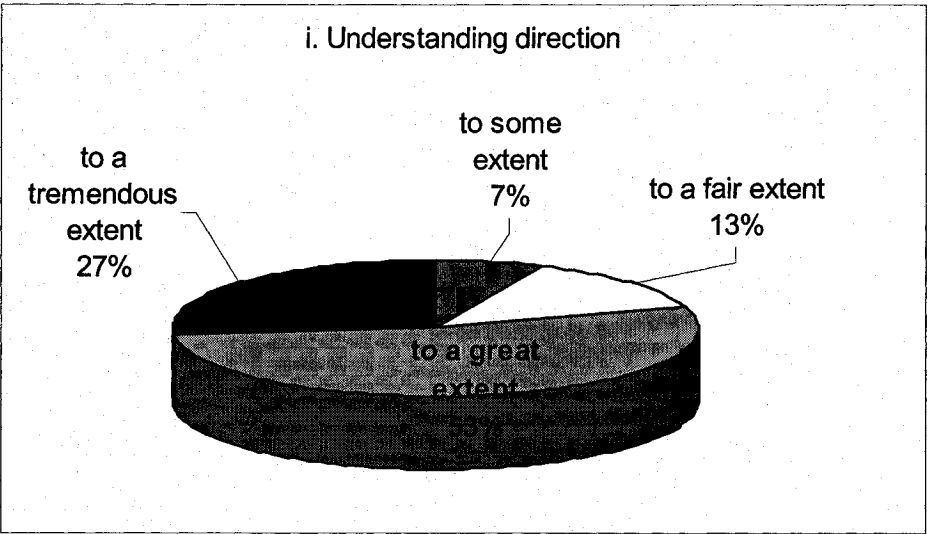
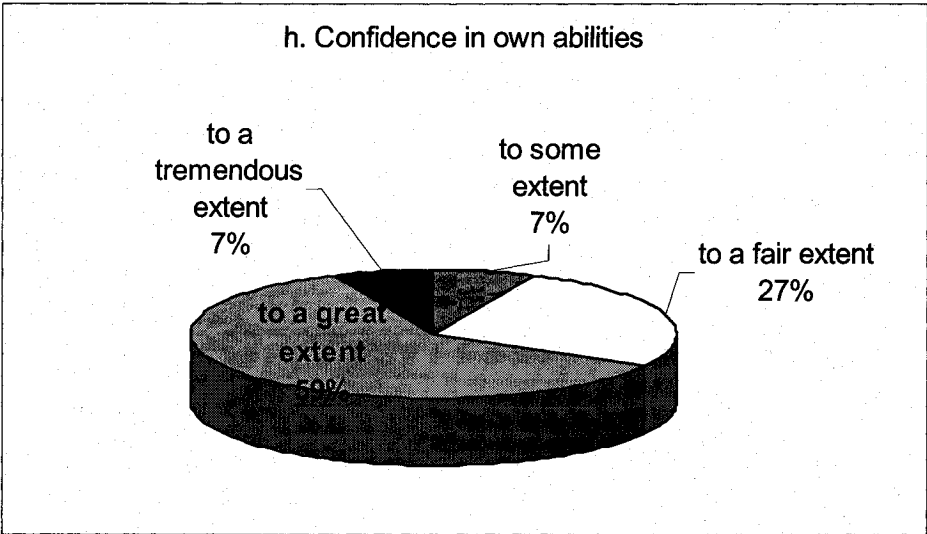
Question 2.

Based on your understanding of communities of practice (CoP's), to what extent do you feel using a CoP within the FMPS (A) at the grassroots level could enhance job PERFORMANCE by contributing to each of the following? (i.e. to what extent do you feel CoP's could improve:)

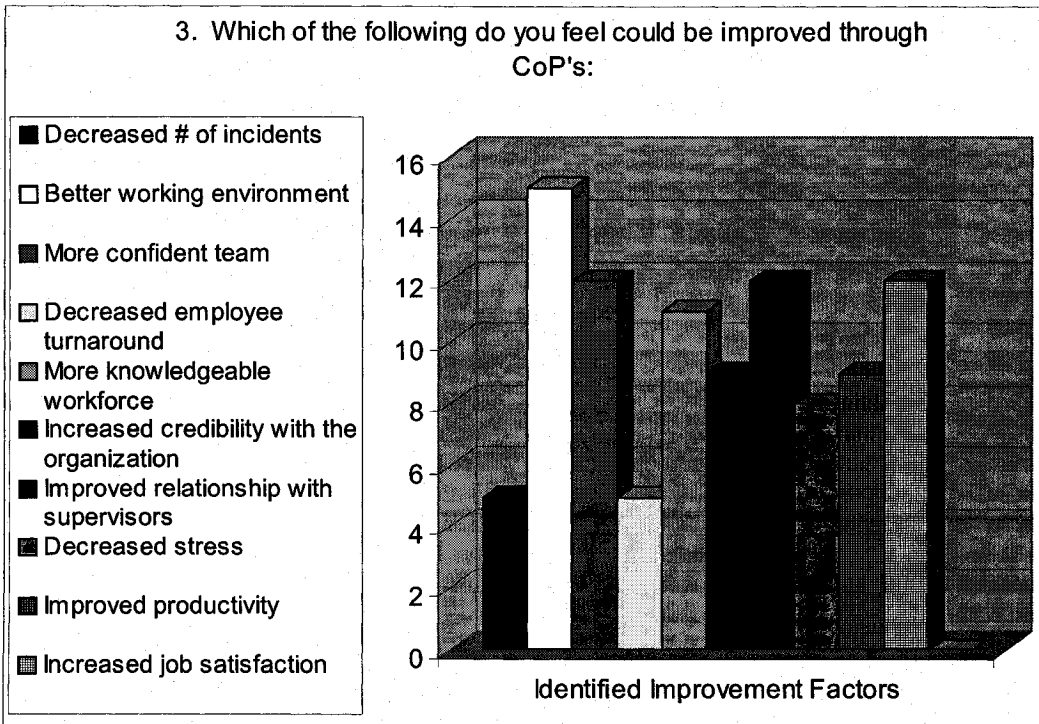
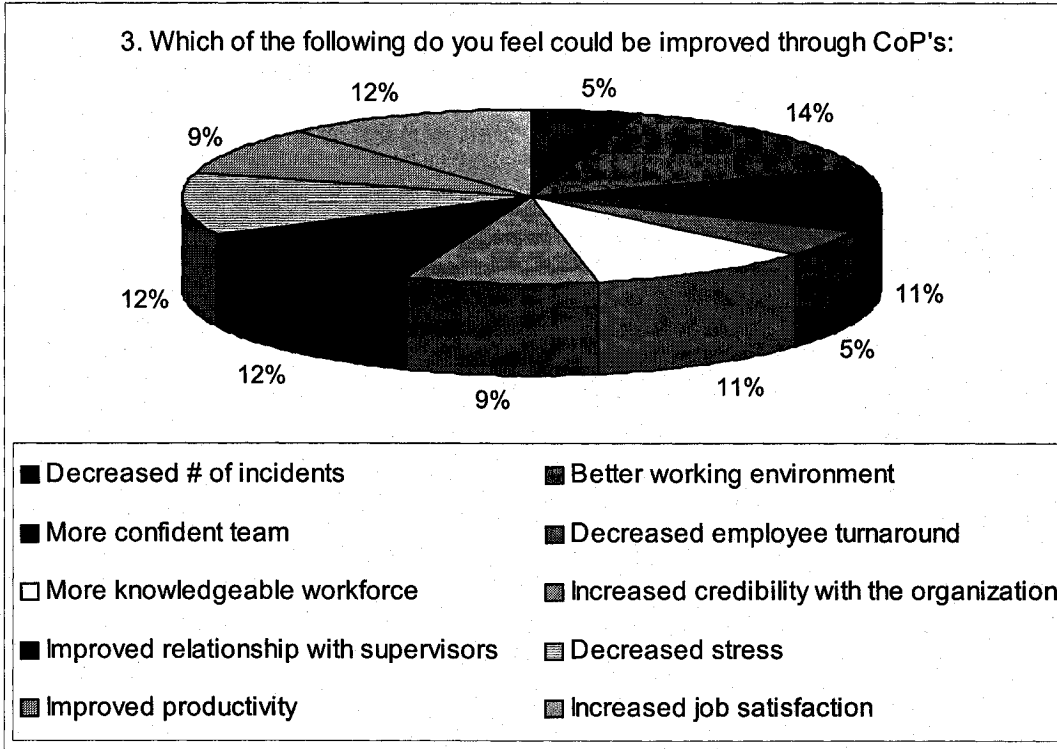




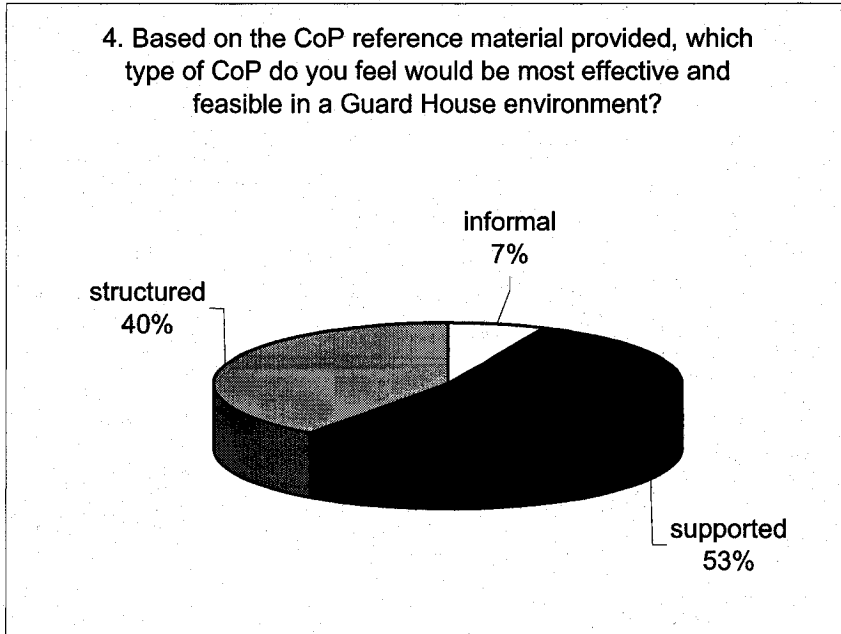




Question 3.



Question 4.



Question 5.

5a) Would you be interested in taking part in a CoP aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and performance within the Formation Military Police Section (Atlantic)?



■ yes □ no

5c) If interested how often would you be willing to participate in a CoP?

