Executive Summary

A STUDY OF THE PREVALENCE OF BURNOUT IN CONTRACTING OFFICERS AT ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND – WARREN, DETROIT ARSENAL

By Jaclyn M. Flewelling

A significant area of academic research is the ongoing investigation of the phenomena known as job burnout. The preeminent approach to understanding job burnout was created by Dr. Christina Maslach. Maslach (2013) provided the framework that job burnout is significant and disruptive levels of job-related stress and has three unique components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. In order to accurately investigate job burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS) and the Areas of Worklife Study (AWS) were created by Schaufeli, Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter in 1996 and Leiter and Maslach in 2000, respectively. This paper hopes to contribute to the existing research on job burnout.

The researcher focused on determining the prevalence of job burnout in the Contracting Officer position at the Army Contracting Command – Warren (ACC-WRN), Detroit Arsenal location, a supervisory position charged with contracting responsibilities for the United States Army. Using the MBI-GS and the AWS, along with the Burnout Prevention Survey, a third measure created by the researcher, the researcher sought to investigate the prevalence of job burnout in the Contracting Officer position, utilizing a sample size of 47 Contracting Officers. The researcher found that job burnout did exist in the position, as the respondent pool reported elevated levels of emotional exhaustion in the MBI-GS, corresponding with reported overwhelming levels of workload and a lack of perceived fairness in the AWS. However, the respondent pool also reported elevated and positive levels of professional efficacy, which could
serve as a means of reducing job burnout. Since the researcher has discovered the existence of job burnout, the researcher also utilized the self-reporting measures of the Burnout Prevention Survey, along with pre-existing research on job burnout, as investigated in the literature review, to make recommendations to mitigate the prevalence and impact of job burnout in the Contracting Officer position. These recommendations included implementing a formal cross-training program, provisioning of hours to seek counseling and support, the creation of intramural activity opportunities, increasing reward opportunities, and realistic reductions in workload.
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by
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to the two loves of my life, my husband, Rob, and my son, Landon, who have showed me nothing but love and support through this long and arduous process. I could not have done what I did, nor be who I am, without them in my life. I also cannot leave out the newest addition to our family, Holden, who although not yet with us in the flesh, fills me with love and perseverance to excel. Lastly, I would like to thank all my family and friends who have provided me with countless words of encouragement along my educational journey.
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Chapter I: Definition of the Problem

Background

Army Contracting Command – Warren (ACC-WRN) is one of six major contracting centers for the United States Army and has served as the headquarters for five contracting offices located throughout the United States, including Anniston Army Depot, Detroit Arsenal, Red River Army Depot, Sierra Army Depot, and Watervliet Arsenal. ACC-WRN has provided contracting support to various customers, including Program Executive Offices (PEO) and Program Managers (PM), TACOM Integrated Logistics Support Center (ILSC), and the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development, and Engineering Center (TARDEC), among other offices, that support the U.S. Army's major acquisition programs. ACC-WRN has acquired everything from research and development efforts to chemical defense equipment to combat and tactical vehicles, ensuring that U.S. Soldiers have what they need to be successful.

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2012), the civilian acquisition workforce was reduced by nearly 47% from September 1989 to September 1999. These eleven consecutive years of downsizing, through mostly attrition by the Department of Defense (DOD), resulted in a serious imbalance in skill and experience levels of the highly talented and specialized civilian acquisition workforce and a retirement-driven talent drain across the DOD, including at ACC-WRN (GAO, 2012). To address this, ACC-WRN began to steadily hire new civilian acquisition employees in 2002, with a major surge of hiring taking place from 2008 to 2011 in order to combat attrition and to accommodate an increase in mission resulting from a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Nearly 530 new civilian acquisition personnel were hired since 2008. While this upswing in hiring is a step in the right direction, the skill and experience imbalances resulting from the many years of downsizing by attrition still plague
ACC-WRN, and are especially apparent in managerial positions. In the past, it took an average of 10-15 years to obtain a Contracting Officer position, defined as first-line supervisors that possess the authority to sign, administer, and terminate contracts on behalf of the United States of America. As of 2015, it takes a mere five years with forty-percent of the Contracting Officers having ten years or less of contracting experience. Due to this rapid advancement, many of the recently promoted Contracting Officers lack the proper breadth and depth of contracting skills and experience to efficiently and effectively perform in the position.

In addition to a lack of contracting skills and experience, the U.S. Army has continuously introduced new contracting tools, documentation and oversight requirements, and data calls that deter Contracting Officers from performing their core responsibilities, including contract documentation reviews, providing contracting guidance to customers and employees, and, most importantly, mentoring their employees. With ever increasing responsibilities, Contracting Officers are stretched too thin to perform all of their assigned duties within a standard 40 hour workweek. To alleviate this, ACC-WRN has offered its Contracting Officers the ability to accumulate “credit hours.” For every hour worked over the standard 40 hours, Contracting Officers can bank up to 24 credit hours to be used as leave at a later date. While a nice perk, this continuous need for overtime to stay abreast of an ever-growing workload, coupled with a potential lack of skills and experience, takes its toll on Contracting Officers, both on a professional and personal level.

**Research Problem**

The role that Contracting Officers play in this nation’s security operations is a large and important one, as they serve as liaisons between a government that plans and funds a measure of self-defense and a private sector that provides the equipment, goods, services, and personnel the
government needs to operate self-defense measures. In order for U.S. Soldiers to have optimal equipment and be effective in their respective missions, the Contracting Officers need to be functioning at an optimal level to execute the contracts that supply that support. Due to the nature of the work, which includes characteristics such as unclear and/or unrealistic requirements, minimal “down” time, large consequences for failure, and lack of personal control, Contracting Officers are continuously exposed to stress-inducing conditions.

An unhealthy, unhappy, and unmotivated pool of Contracting Officers stands to produce subpar products at a subpar level of productivity. Compounding this is the threat of attrition by trained and skilled Contracting Officers because of burnout. For the purposes of this research, the operating definition of job burnout was provided by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996), who stated that burnout is “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (p. 4). Burnout can have devastating effects on workers and their physical health, as well as on the quality and quantity of the work that they produce. Burnout can also effect the general operation of a given company at large. The failure of ACC-WRN to address the prevalence of job burnout could lead to poor performance, which invariably could negatively impact the level of funding received by ACC-WRN to execute contracts, which in turn could reduce the viability of ACC-WRN in the future.

**Research Objective**

This study explored and investigated the prevalence of job burnout among Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, specifically at the Detroit Arsenal location. The research conducted to support this study was predicated upon the belief that the three realms, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, outlined by Maslach (2013) are not only
crucial to the mental and physical health of the workers, but also the quality of the work they produce. Considering the responsibility Contracting Officers have, including signing, administering, and terminating contracts on behalf of the United States of America to support its Soldiers, the importance of this study and its conclusions cannot be overstated. Moreover, the health of the organization itself is affected by the prevalence of burnout, and the research also worked within the framework of understanding how worker burnout and organizational viability are linked together. The researcher collected original data using three separate surveys, the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS), the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and the Burnout Prevention Survey.

This research and the subsequent conclusions and recommendations were intended for a diverse and multi-faceted audience. Primarily, the intended audience for this research was the supervisors and managers above the level of Contracting Officer. Individuals within management, such as Directors and the Executive Director, who have advanced latitudes of control over institutional policy and practice are vital members of the audience, as they can put into motion any recommendations and large scale changes. However, not all managers and supervisors have this ability but are included as important members of the audience. Group Chiefs and Division Chiefs work more directly with Contracting Officers and have the ability to enact much smaller measures of change, as well as have the opportunity to interact daily with Contracting Officers. A third target audience was the actual pool of research participants, the Contracting Officers. The study’s conclusions and recommendations were important for these individuals to understand in order to increase their level of insight and awareness into the impacts of job burnout in their own lives which could lead to increased self-advocacy in the workplace and the enactment of measures to reduce job burnout.
This study strived to address the research question: Does burnout exist within the population of Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, to what extent does it exist, and what negative impact does it have on the Contracting Officers? The researcher also developed a series of sub-questions in order to fully investigate and comprehend the aforementioned research question, as follows:

- To what extent is the burnout rate related to the organizational setting (workload, training, institutional support, etc.)?
- What do Contracting Officers utilize to mitigate the negative effects of job-related stress and burnout?
- What is the emotional experience of Contracting Officers suffering from job burnout?
- What can the ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, do to address potential institutional causes of job burnout and thereby reduce its prevalence and impact?

**Scope/Delimitations**

The target population of this research was individuals who held the position of Contracting Officer at ACC-WRN, including the five contracting offices at Anniston Army Depot, Detroit Arsenal, Red River Army Depot, Sierra Army Depot, and Watervliet Arsenal. Of the Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, this research only targeted those Contracting Officers located at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, Michigan. This delimitation was chosen for several reasons. First, the position of Contracting Officer is a worldwide position; therefore, there are many individuals around the world at other contracting centers, and this limits the breadth of the scope. Second, the practicality of even expanding the scope of this study to those Contracting Officers located at the other four contracting offices would greatly increase the sample size,
providing significant challenges such as the introduction of varying work environments and responsibilities.

Furthermore, including these other Contracting Officers would have also introduced a cost prohibitive measure, as providing the three surveys to the expanded sample size would be expensive, as well as a significant logistical challenge, as there is no nearby contracting center outside of the Detroit Arsenal, thereby making coordination of original data collection prohibitively difficult. As such, the research question and sub-questions were formulated with these delimitations in mind, and were focused on providing information on the prevalence of job burnout within the given population and the impacts of occurring burnout in said population.
Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Before the research question examining the prevalence of job burnout at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, could be answered, it was critical to establish that the topic to which the research question pertains was relevant. This was one of the primary purposes of this chapter that sought to explore the extent and the depth of the research question and the concepts concerning this current research. Research was conducted to consolidate relevant research into a chapter, and key components of previous research have been distilled down into cogent and concise points.

Regarding the concept of job burnout, there has been, to this point, a moderate amount of research done on the topic. Specifically, it has been a point of interest to psychologists investigating the interpersonal and environmental aspects of the workplace. Outside of this niche of psychological investigators, however, research on job burnout was difficult to find. By conducting a search for relevant literature related to the topic of job burnout, one could easily conclude that more research could certainly be conducted. The research that has been completed, however, was very informative and thorough. The following compilation of research was processed, and relevant themes were identified. Three specific themes were identified that run concurrent with three of the sub-questions developed in the previous chapter. The relevant research outlined in this chapter has either concluded that burnout was primarily caused by environmental factors or an individual’s dispositional and personal factors. However, some identified research did not concern itself with the causes of burnout, but rather, effective solutions to solving the problem of burnout. This organizational pattern was conducted in order to not only effectively convey the relevant points of outside research to the reader, but to also
create a more seamless link between current research and the research conducted and outlined in this study.

**Presentation of the Literature**

The relevant research has been divided into three sub-headings for the purposes of this chapter: work environment and job burnout, personal disposition and job burnout, and combating job burnout.

**Work environment and job burnout.** A significant portion of the research concerning job burnout has focused on the work environment itself as the primary cause of job burnout among workers. Dr. Christina Maslach has been one of the pre-eminent researchers in the field of job burnout, in its cause, as well as its assessment and treatment. Maslach (2003) conceptualized job burnout into what she termed the multidimensional model of job burnout and highlighted three dimensions, including overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. Maslach’s (2003) research concluded that, as a general rule, all three dimensions of burnout were positively correlated to workload demands; however, each of the three dimensions had a more specific facet of a workload demand to which it was attached. The dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism and detachment were more prevalent when the work environment provided work overload or interpersonal conflict, such as worker/worker conflict or worker/supervisor conflict (Maslach, 2003). A sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment tended to arise when a worker was not provided with the necessary resources to get a given job done, including a lack of critical information or tools or insufficient time to complete the task (Maslach, 2003).

Other research concluded that while the work environment was the primary cause of job burnout, the specific sources of stress within the workplace were more specific. Two separate
studies pointed to elevated levels of stress and subsequent burnout in workers under certain working conditions. Svenisdottir, Biering, and Ramel (2006) investigated the occupational stress and job satisfaction levels of nurses in Iceland, using samples from both nurses in a hospital and nurses in the health care field, but outside of the hospital setting. The researchers concluded that nurses within the hospital setting experienced far more occupational stress and were more susceptible to job burnout. This was due to the hospital setting requiring nurses to work more hours than nurses outside of the hospital setting, and these nurses had less opportunities to break at appointed times and had to tolerate unexpected and unanticipated changes to their work schedule (Svenisdottir et al., 2006). Further compounding their stress level was their work demands, as hospital nurses provided more direct patient care, and their support network at work, as hospital nurses worked in environments with greater staff shortages (Svenisdottir et al., 2006).

A related study from the *British Journal of General Practice* by Appleton, House, and Dowell (1998) seemed to validate and support the findings of Svenisdottir et al. (2006). Appleton et al. (1998) examined workers in the health care field – this time in Great Britain – and found that general practitioners who worked fewer hours, spent less time on call, and used deputizing services at work more often experienced less stress, were more satisfied with their work and were less susceptible to job burnout. Both of the aforementioned studies point to a similar conclusion, that a reduction in workload has positive impacts on workplace stress levels.

Research conducted by Nahrgang, Morgeson, and Hofmann (2011) took a meta-analysis approach to several aspects of the workplace, including job burnout, but also job demands, job resources, and worker engagement, and how they related to what they termed to be “safety outcomes,” such as “accidents and injuries, adverse events, and unsafe behavior” (p. 72). Interestingly, the researchers highlighted the importance of job complexity in job demands, in
that a more complex job was more demanding. The meta-analysis concluded that the more demanding a job was, the more it was likely to cause job burnout, which in turn reduced satisfaction and productivity and increased turnover (Nahrgang et al., 2011). Concurrently, the meta-analysis also indicated that the “more demanding” a job was, the less engaged and involved a worker tended to be in the job (Nahrgang et al., 2011). Workers who had more knowledge, more autonomy, and more positive support from their work environment tended to be more engaged with their job and more satisfied with their job and did not experience job burnout (Nahrgang et al., 2011).

While some research examined the relation of hours worked and workload to burnout, other research focused on the interaction of workers and their supervisors and how this related to job burnout. Research by Leary et al. (2013) was one study that undertook this perspective. This particular study examined dysfunctional leadership and its role in job burnout and framed dysfunctional leadership as a series of personality traits and divided them into three frameworks: Moving Away, which were managers who yelled at and belittled employees; Moving Against, which were managers who were disrespectful and selfish; and Moving Toward, which were managers who were passive and inactive (Leary et al., 2013). The managers that utilized the Moving Away personality framework experienced the worst outcomes with employees, in that there was the most dissatisfaction and job burnout, as their overt, negative behaviors harmed employees the most (Leary et al., 2013). Moving Toward managers also caused job burnout to occur in workers under them, as they were not available in a work crisis, for example, but were not as harmful as Moving Away managers (Leary et al., 2013). Moving Against managers also had bad outcomes and produced job burnout but could also modulate their behavior patterns.
effectively and inspire their workers, being viewed as “constructive narcissists” (Leary et al., 2013).

Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning (1986) took yet another different approach and conducted a study that focused on the “interpersonal” nature of the stress in the workplace by looking at how nurses interacted with other individuals in the workplace (p. 618). The researchers framed the source of stress as a natural aspect of the job that can be mitigated through a number of ways. The study specifically broke workplace stress down into three subsets, role conflict, ambiguity, and overload, and looked at these subsets through the lens of human interaction. This study highlighted that while stress for nurses came from numerous sources, including patients, patient outcomes, relationships with doctors, and a host of other interpersonal factors, nurses reported feeling less occupational stress if role conflict, ambiguity, and overload were reduced (Motowidlo et al., 1986). Specifically, effective ways to reduce role conflict, ambiguity, and overload included using and receiving from others sensitivity, consideration, warmth, and motivation, among other positive interpersonal interactions (Motowidlo et al., 1986).

While there was some research from outside institutions that focused on the work environment’s role in fostering job burnout, the United States Government seemed to be aware, on some level, that its work environment in certain areas was less than ideal. From March 1992 through June 2012, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted reviews centered on the Department of Defense’s (DOD) prior experience with civilian workforce downsizing, and its current strategic civilian workforce planning efforts. Since the 1990s, when the DOD began to significantly downsize, the Federal Government has been viewing the civilian workforce as costs to be cut rather than assets to be valued, resulting in significant imbalances in
terms of shape, skills, and retirement eligibility (GAO, 2012). Eleven consecutive years of downsizing the civilian workforce has put the DOD on the verge of a retirement-driven talent drain, imparting stress on its remaining workforce (GAO, 2012). Since 2006, the DOD has been required to have a civilian strategic workforce plan in place that includes information such as an assessment of the skills, competencies and gaps, projected workforce trends, and needed funding of its civilian workforce, in order to maintain a less stressed and more effective workforce (GAO, 2012). Although the GAO found improvements in the DOD’s efforts to strategically manage its civilian workforce, such as the identification of 22 mission-critical occupations in its strategic workforce plan, the GAO remained concerned that the DOD lacked critical information it needed to effectively plan for its workforce requirements, which has continued to negatively impact the workforce (GAO, 2012). While the DOD’s strategic workforce plan identified 22 mission-critical occupations, it failed to discuss competency gap analyses for 19 of these 22 mission-critical occupations (GAO, 2012).

As highlighted by the research presented in this section, there is reason to believe that the work environment itself contributes to job burnout. The research pointed to several specific contributors, including being over-burdened and over-worked, or not being given the proper tools to complete a job. Other contributing factors were more organizational components of the workplace, such as the amount of hours worked, the types of managerial styles a worker’s supervisor utilizes, or the nature of a worker’s interactions with other individuals in the workplace. In summation, there is significant data suggesting that the work environment can contribute to job burnout, but it is unclear which of the many facets of the work environment are responsible.
Personal disposition and job burnout. While a significant portion of researchers focused on the role of the workplace environment in producing job burnout, there are some researchers who have focused on what personality traits and personal dispositions workers themselves possess that contribute to job burnout. The available pool of research in this segment is smaller, but no less significant. Zellars, Hochwarter, Perrewe, Hoffmann, and Ford (2014) examined the role of personality traits in burnout, under the idea that most research about burnout focused on the job environment and discounted the impact of a worker’s personality. In this study, the researchers focused on nurses. Specifically, this study focused on what the researchers termed as positive and negative affective states, which they considered stable traits and framed as either extraversion (the positive states of optimism, talkativeness, and social poise) or neuroticism (the negative states of distress, nervousness, guilt, and frustration) and how each state was related to job burnout rates (Zellars et al., 2004). The researchers concluded that individuals with neuroticism and negative personality traits were more strongly impacted by emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than extraverted, positive individuals because positive individuals had a greater sense of personal accomplishments at work (Zellars et al., 2004).

Koeske and Kelly (1995) took a different approach to identifying the individual’s role in relation to job burnout and explored the nature of how mental health counselor’s emotional involvement in their work with their client impacts job burnout and job satisfaction. In short, the researchers examined how mental health counselors coped with the day-to-day stresses of their job. Some clinicians became what they termed to be “overinvolved” with their clients and their problems, meaning they invested significant amounts of emotion into their clients (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). These clinicians burdened themselves with too much work and too much empathic
involvement with their clients, which wore on them. It led to job burnout, which led to reduced morale and satisfaction, which then snowballed into poor delivery of the services that the mental health clinicians were supposed to provide (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). Not only did this negatively impact the client, but also the clinician, who experienced a range of negative emotions that led to quitting of their job (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). On the contrary, the polar opposite of over involvement was what the researchers termed “uncaring and cynical,” and they highlighted the ills of this position stating that it was not only intolerable to have clinicians behaving in such a manner, but also detrimental to the people clinicians were supposed to serve (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). Moreover, this position was stressful and emotionally taxing on workers, also leading to job burnout (Koeske & Kelly, 1995). Koeske and Kelly (1995) concluded that over involvement needed to be curbed and that a more neutral position that combined involvement with some detachment should be maintained in workers.

Research by Hayes and Weathington (2007) also served to supplement the idea that personality characteristics in workers contributed to job burnout, but to a lesser extent than other researchers. Their research looked at the impacts of dispositional optimism. Dispositional optimism was defined as the worldview of a person and the expectancy of more good things than bad things to happen in the future (Hayes & Weathington, 2007). This trait was seen as stable over the lifespan and as a moderator of how a person interacted with their workplace. The researchers theorized that more optimistic people were less stressed at work and experienced less burnout than pessimistic people. The research concluded that, while optimistic people were more suited to adjust and overcome work stressors than pessimistic people, optimism was not a moderator for levels of job stress and burnout (Hayes & Weathington, 2007). Optimistic people were more satisfied with their life than pessimistic people, but not with their job. Moreover, as
levels of job stress increased, so did the occurrence of job burnout, regardless of the disposition of people (Hayes & Weathington, 2007). In short, while temperament was important for a person’s ability to cope with stress, the job itself and the level of stress within was more crucial for the levels of subsequent burnout (Hayes & Weathington, 2007).

A final piece of research completed by Biron and Veldhoven (2012) provided yet another perspective to the position that the individual, and not the environment, was the primary cause of burnout. Interestingly, the researchers’ position focused less on disposition and other inherited traits and more on conscious behaviors of workers and how they chose to interact with their work environment. The researchers focused on examining stress levels related to emotional exhaustion, a dimension of job burnout, and its relation to a concept they termed “psychological flexibility” (Biron & Veldhoven, 2012). Biron and Veldhoven (2012) grouped individuals at a workplace into three groups and examined them when they confronted difficulties and stressors. The three groups were broken down as follows; (i) individuals who participated in “surface acting” or putting on an emotional front, (ii) individuals who participated in “deep acting” or working to explore and regulate their emotions, and (iii) individuals who practiced “psychological flexibility” or actively accepted their emotions and did not attempt to regulate or modulate them in any way (Biron & Veldhoven, 2012). Interestingly, the researchers found that individuals who practiced psychological flexibility had significantly lower levels of emotional exhaustion than the other two groups, and as a result, were less stressed and more satisfied with their day-to-day work (Biron & Veldhoven, 2012). The researchers were sure to attribute the cause of increased or reduced stress levels to the individual and their interactions with their workplace, rather than to the workplace itself, and indicated that psychological flexibility was a “learned” trait (Biron & Veldhoven, 2012).
This other segment of research concerning the etiology of job burnout focused on the individual worker’s culpability in fostering its growth and not the job environment’s culpability. This research suggested that an individual’s personality characteristics, such as their affective states or the level of their dispositional optimism, contributed to job burnout. Still other research suggested that an individual’s ability to modulate their emotions played a role in producing or mitigating job burnout.

**Combating job burnout.** The third sub-topic of relevant research began with the assumption that job burnout was a real occurrence that effected the professional lives of many people and did not ostensibly concern itself with whether the work environment or personal disposition caused the job burnout phenomena. Rather, these researchers focused on conducting research that worked to uncover how to combat and reduce the occurrences of job burnout.

A primary theme throughout this research was the effect that good training had on reducing burnout levels in those workers suffering from job burnout. The study by Ellis and Pearsall (2011) investigated the impact of the practice of cross-training on reducing stress. Cross-training was the practice of having workers of a company learn to do several jobs within the company, including their own job (Ellis & Pearsall, 2011). While these workers may never actually work in the particular position, they were trained and thereby given the skill set and perspective of other workers. This cross-training allowed them to develop a well-rounded perspective of the company. Workers who did this were compared with a control group who were put into teams and did not participate in any form of cross-training. The researchers concluded that as job demands increased, the productivity and success of the non-cross-trained team decreased while tension increased (Ellis & Pearsall, 2011). Those that were cross-trained, however, completed tasks better and had much more success in modulating and reducing stress.
and interacting with one another (Ellis & Pearsall, 2011). Overall, Ellis and Pearsall (2011) concluded that cross-training had practical implications for the workplace, as it “inoculated” workers from stress present in the work environment.

Ukandu and Ukpera (2013) also examined the impacts of training and took it a step further and focused on fast food workers in the Cape Town metropolitan area. The researchers noted that an identified problem in the region was training, and, as a result, employee development eroded, which led to poor service for customers, worker dissatisfaction, increased worker stress levels, and a reduction in the employee’s commitment to the workplace (Ukandu & Ukpera, 2013). This lack of commitment led to turnover, compounding the matter (Ukandu & Ukpera, 2013). As the researchers analyzed the problem, they found that simply training workers in their tasks was insufficient. While productivity and customer satisfaction could be improved with workers receiving training in their immediate positions, worker stress levels and commitment levels were not affected (Ukandu & Ukpera, 2013). Workers also needed to feel empowered, and this was done with more in-depth training, as well as training for managers to assist workers in customer service skills, sales, and marketing techniques (Ukandu & Ukpera, 2013). Finally, the researchers were quick to point out that training was not a one-time affair, but a more continuous process that should occur at least once a week or over a ten-week period, once a year (Ukandu & Ukpera, 2013).

The idea of training having benefits on the overall well-being of workers was further supplemented by Brum (2007) who concluded that both initial training and continual access to training, while a large expense for a company to undertake, would increase employee “commitment” to the company. This initial and continual training increased productivity and empowered workers, which in turn improved stress levels and the overall well-being of workers.
(Brum, 2007). Training reduced job burnout and improved the overall health and functioning of employees (Brum, 2007).

Amo (2015) focused on the negative impact that a lack of training had as a means of underscoring its importance. She focused on how workers who were not trained well or given the opportunity to learn how to do their job well tend to be unhappy and unsuccessful (Amo, 2015). She advocated for companies to participate in in-depth training for the job a worker will be taking (Amo, 2015). Despite this recommendation, Amo (2015) highlighted how some companies refused to do this, viewing it as an unnecessary expense, and instead relied on some form of on-the-job training, like having a new worker learn from a more seasoned older worker or supervisor. Amo (2015) asserted that this lack of training led to workers who were unhappy, experienced job-related stress, and had low morale, mostly because workers simply did not understand how to do their jobs and had no real ideas about the goals of the job. Low satisfaction and morale led to increased turnover, which exacerbated the problem, and Amo (2015) discussed how this snowballed into increased costs for the company and eventually a loss of customers, highlighting the importance of training on another level.

Additional research in the area of addressing burnout took a different approach, simultaneously looking for the source of burnout in workers and how to reduce it. Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, and Schwartz (2002) investigated workers in the New York City Traffic Agency and the relation of interpersonal support levels and job burnout. Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) were interested in the level of support that these workers received and separated support from the workers’ families and support from the workers’ managers and supervisors. With regards to support, the researchers indicated that good family support generally meant that (i) the workers had someone to talk to at home about work, (ii) the people at home
cared about them, and (iii) the people at home made the workers feel better, among other things (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) identified good managerial/supervisor support as having (i) the manager/supervisor care about the well-being of the worker, (ii) the manager/supervisor back the worker up, and (iii) the manager/supervisor appreciate the work done by the worker, among other things. As the researchers suspected, the more support a worker received, the less likely they were to experience burnout and job dissatisfaction and the more productive and satisfied they were (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) went a step further and broke down the differences in the source of the support and what it correlated to. Specifically, the researchers found that if workers’ families supported them, they were less likely to experience burnout, but did not find strong correlations to productivity or satisfaction (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Conversely, the support of the workers’ managers and supervisors correlated with increased productivity and satisfaction but not burnout (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) further concluded that while both sources of support were critical for effective functioning of an employee, reducing stress levels rested on the employee being able to talk with someone at home.

This section of research acknowledged that burnout was prevalent in the professional world and suggested a means of addressing the problem, rather than searching for its root. A primary theme within this segment of literature was that effective training seemed to mitigate the growth of job burnout and produced better workers. Other conclusions from this section suggested that interpersonal support, both outside the workplace and from within it, seemed to have a positive impact on job burnout. Research from this section was clear to illuminate the concept that job burnout could be effectively addressed and suggested that it should for the betterment of companies and the workers in those companies struggling with it.
Summary of the Literature

As the preceding pages indicated, there was significant literature that explored the job burnout phenomena, its causes, and how to reduce or mitigate it. With that said, the relevant research was difficult to come by. The reasons for this were unclear, but it did demonstrate the need for further research in this area in order to expand the breadth and depth of the available research.

The phenomenon of job burnout is decidedly real, but it is not completely understood. A large portion of the research pointed to the source of job burnout being found in the workplace environment itself. It was difficult to reach a consensus in this area, but research pointed to employees being over-burdened, over-worked, and having excessive demands placed upon them like long work hours. There were also significant conclusions that pointed to interpersonal difficulties as a primary source for job burnout. These interpersonal difficulties could be either with poor and ineffective supervisors or with co-workers. Still other research placed the onus for the source of job burnout on the worker and not the place of employment. Relevant research examined the role of personal dispositions and its relation to job burnout prevalence and generally concluded that positive, optimistic people were less likely to experience burnout. Moreover, individuals who accepted their emotional responses to professional stressors rather than attempted to regulate them also experience less burnout. Based on the amount of relevant research for both positions, it is reasonable to assume that both environmental and personal factors play into job burnout prevalence.

Equally important was the research that focused not on the cause of job burnout but on the possible solutions to reducing it. Generally, the research presented in this chapter indicated that effective and continual training was a primary way of reducing job burnout. Furthermore,
additional research in the area pointed to interpersonal support, both outside and inside of the workplace, as important in reducing the incidences of job burnout. Interestingly, research also pointed to the importance of warm and positive interpersonal interactions within the workplace as effective tools of reducing job burnout.
Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

As stated in Chapter I, this study sought to address the research question: Does burnout exist within the population of Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN Detroit Arsenal, to what extent does it exist, and what negative impact does it have on the Contracting Officers? This chapter highlighted the population parameters, the testing devices used in the research, and the methodology used to acquire data to address the research question. This chapter also delineated the data collection, analysis, and synthesis utilized to address the research question and explored the assumptions, reliability and validity, and scope and limitations of this study.

Population

The population for this study was 96 first-line supervisors at ACC-WRN, consisting of Supervisory Contract Specialists (Contracting Officers), Supervisory Contract Specialists (Price/Cost Analysis), Supervisory Contract Specialists (Admin), and Supervisory Contract Specialists (Procurement Analyst). As previously stated, ACC-WRN is one of five major contracting centers for the United States Army and has served as the headquarters for five contracting offices located throughout the United States, including Anniston Army Depot, Detroit Arsenal, Red River Army Depot, Sierra Army Depot, and Watervliet Arsenal; therefore, the 96 first-line supervisors are distributed across the five locations.

Sample Size

This study, however, only focused on the Supervisory Contract Specialists (Contracting Officers) physically located at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, Michigan. Of the 96 first-line supervisors at ACC-WRN, there were 64 located at the Detroit Arsenal as of December 8, 2015. Of the 64 first-line supervisors, there were a total of 48 Supervisory Contract Specialists
(Contracting Officers), including the researcher; therefore, the sample size for this study was 47 Contracting Officers. The researcher decided not to include Supervisory Contract Specialists (Price/Cost Analysis), (Admin), and (Procurement Analyst) in the sample because these types of Supervisory Contract Specialists do not have the authority to sign, administer, or terminate contracts on behalf of the United States of America and are responsible for differing duties and responsibilities, which would complicate the analysis of primary data collected. Initially, the researcher contemplated further limiting the sample size by imposing maximum thresholds for years in the Contracting Officer position; however, it was decided that including all Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal, regardless of time spent in the position, in the sample would best serve the data collection process and overall results of this study because Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal vary greatly in age, ethnicity, and gender.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of gathering primary data through the issuance of three surveys, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS), the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and the Burnout Prevention Survey. ACC-WRN provided approval to the researcher to disseminate the three surveys to all Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal, as shown in Appendix E.

The MBI-GS, created in 1996 by Schaufeli, Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, is one of the leading burnout measures that assesses burnout in three subscales: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1996). The MBI-GS was administered electronically by Mind Garden, Inc., the publisher of the study. Mind Garden, Inc. distributed an email message to those in the sample size containing a direct link to the MBI-GS. The MBI-GS consisted of 16 statements to which the respondent assigned a frequency rating to reflect how often the
respondent experiences the given statement, ranging from 0 (Never) to 6 (Every day) (Maslach et al., 1996).

The AWS, created in 2000 by Leiter and Maslach and revised in 2011, was also administered by Mind Garden, Inc., along with the MBI-GS, and provided a context for the results of the MBI-GS by assessing the perceptions workers have of their work environment (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The AWS consisted of 28 statements to which the respondent assigned a distinct score reflecting their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), for each of the six areas of worklife, including workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

The Burnout Prevention Survey was created by the researcher to delineate the potential coping mechanisms used to prevent burnout and was administered through the online survey platform, SurveyMonkey. This survey consisted of demographic, numbered scale, and open-ended questions to provide further context to MBI-GS and AWS results and to provide the respondents with an opportunity to express unique perspectives and possible solutions.

The cover letter, as shown in Appendix A, was distributed to all 47 Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal via email. The letter informed each recipient that they would receive a separate email from Mind Garden, Inc. containing links to the MBI-GS and AWS. The letter also provided a direct link that would open the Burnout Prevention Survey in SurveyMonkey. Initially, the researcher’s intent was to give each recipient two weeks to complete the three online surveys; however, the researcher extended the response window by an additional two weeks to one month due to many Contracting Officers being out of the office for the holidays. Completion of all three online surveys took approximately 20-30 minutes. All entries for the MBI-GS and AWS were collected on the Mind Garden, Inc. website, and all entries for the
Burnout Prevention Survey were collected on the SurveyMonkey website. In order to ensure that all information remained confidential, the researcher requested that survey participants not include their names nor complete the optional demographic section on the AWS. All responses remained anonymous.

Due to the timeframe in which the researcher planned to disseminate the surveys, the expected response rate was 50% or approximately 24 responses out of 47 Contracting Officers surveyed. “Use or lose” annual leave must be taken by no later than December 31; therefore, many Contracting Officers were in and out during the month of December. The researcher had hoped that the release of the survey prior to the holidays and giving respondents two weeks to submit their responses would have resulted in an increased response rate; however, as a result of the lower than anticipated response rate, as mentioned previously, the researcher extended the response deadline in order to gather additional responses.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The researcher utilized a three-part survey process to ultimately find the answer to the research question: Does burnout exist within the population of Contracting Officers of ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, to what extent does it exist, and what negative impact does it have on the Contracting Officers? As mentioned in the section above, all entries for the MBI-GS and AWS were collected on the Mind Garden, Inc. website. Mind Garden, Inc. assessed the results by computing an average rating of the selections provided by the respondents within the three subscales: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Mind Garden, Inc. provided a detailed report containing all results, including figures depicting said results, to the researcher for the MBI-GS and AWS. As for the Burnout Prevention Survey, all entries for the Burnout Prevention Survey were collected on the SurveyMonkey website. The results were provided to
the researcher for assessment at the conclusion of the survey window. The researcher’s assessment included an examination of the qualitative responses and they were distilled down into several thematic elements. These thematic elements will be presented in the following chapter.

**Assumptions**

The researcher assumed that the survey respondents fully understood all questions and answered all questions honestly. The researcher also assumed that a response rate of 50-75% was a sufficient response rate to provide statistically sound results. Lastly, the researcher assumed that the Burnout Prevention Survey, created by the researcher, was an accurate assessment tool.

**Reliability and Validity**

As stated earlier, the researcher utilized three separate surveys to measure job burnout and to reach a conclusion. One of the three surveys that was used was the MBI-GS. Multiple perspectives on this survey’s validity and reliability were investigated by its creators. An outside investigation conducted by Schaufeli, Leiter, and Kalimo found that the MBI-GS was “consistently related to other constructs, as expected” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 25). Maslach et al. (1996) further concluded that the component of exhaustion was associated with mental and physical strain, work overload, and role conflict; that the component of professional efficacy was related to satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and access to resources; and that the component of cynicism was related to similar traits of exhaustion. In short, the MBI-GS measured what it was intended to measure, which made it valid. Moreover, the relationship between the three subscales and the written responses of 853 participants were examined, and it was discovered that the comments of these individuals correlated to their elevated subscales (Maslach et al., 1996). It was, therefore, concluded that the MBI-GS measured job burnout
consistently and with theoretical considerations regarding the burnout concept, indicating its reliability (Maslach et al., 1996).

The second survey, the AWS, was examined in a similar fashion with regards to its reliability and validity. The test-retest correlations of the AWS indicated a strong level of consistency over time (Leiter & Maslach, 2011), which indicated a strong reliability. Moreover, it was reported that an overwhelming proportion of written comments of 1,443 participants contained complaints, many of which were relevant to one of the six AWS scales (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The presence of this occurrence indicated validity in the AWS, as the test was measuring what it was intended to measure. Leiter and Maslach (2011) also reported that the test re-test correlations were consistent over time and indicated reliability.

The third survey, Burnout Prevention Survey, was created by the researcher to delineate the potential coping mechanisms used to prevent burnout. It was created for several reasons, most importantly to provide further context to the results produced by the MBI-GS and the AWS. The researcher wanted to present the respondents with the opportunity to provide some open-ended feedback such as what they would like to change or keep the same about their job and what coping mechanisms they utilized. The Burnout Prevention Survey was intended to enrich the results of the study and asked five demographic-related questions, one 5-point Likert-type scale question to measure the respondent’s degree of satisfaction with their current position, and eight open-ended, written response questions. The reliability and validity of the Burnout Prevention Survey was unknown at the time the survey was conducted and did not become clear until the data was collected and analyzed. The questions were created with the intent that they were accurate, relevant, and measured what they were intended to measure.
Scope and Limitations

Unfortunately, this research did have its limitations. First and foremost, the size of the research participant pool was small, containing only 47 Contracting Officers. There are upwards of 49 additional first-line supervisors in other enclaves of ACC-WRN that were not addressed due to logistical difficulties. This reduces the ability for the research conclusions to be completely applied to a larger swath of the population within government contracting. Overall, there is somewhat of a void of additional research within the concept of job burnout, which is limiting in and of itself. However, the richness of the data that was uncovered during the literature review research in Chapter II should speak to the need for more research in this area. Furthermore, while two of the three surveys used have been proven to be reliable and valid measures of burnout, the third survey, Burnout Prevention Survey, was created by the researcher, and while it strived to provide additional contexts to the survey outcomes of the research participants, it is an unproven commodity at the time it was conducted.

Summary

In conclusion, the researcher believed that the methodology presented here was sufficient to begin examining the prevalence and impact of job burnout of Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal. Utilizing two pre-eminent surveys that were created by noted job burnout scholars to assess the job burnout phenomena lent reliability and validity to the results and credibility to the research questions presented. Furthermore, this initial research was believed, by the researcher, to provide a sound base for future research in this area, specifically within the scope of ACC-WRN. It was the researcher’s hope that the conclusions drawn from this study would serve the greater purpose of addressing and improving any identified institutional obstacles highlighted by the research.
Chapter IV: Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents and reviews the data collected for this project. The researcher utilized three separate questionnaires to acquire data. The first survey used was the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) created in 1996 by Schaufeli, Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (Maslach et al., 1996). The second survey used was the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) created in 2000, and revised in 2011, by Leiter and Maslach (2011). The third survey, known as the Burnout Prevention Survey, was created by the researcher as a self-reporting measure and was posted to the SurveyMonkey website to be utilized by participants and complied by the website. The surveys were conducted simultaneously between December 8, 2015 and January 8, 2016. The purpose of the surveys was to explore, investigate, and determine the prevalence of job burnout among Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal. As stated in Chapter I, the operating definition of job burnout was provided by Maslach et al. (1996), who stated that burnout was “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (p. 4). The researcher expected a response rate of 50% on all three surveys and received an actual response rate of 61.7% on the MBI-GS and AWS derived from receiving 29 of the 47 surveys issued and 57.4% on the Burnout Prevention Survey derived from receiving 27 of the 47 surveys issued.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data has been analyzed and will be presented in a similar series as provided to the research participants who responded to the survey requests. The data related to the MBI-GS and the AWS was compiled and organized by the publisher of the studies, Mind Garden, Inc., at the
request of the researcher and was provided to the researcher, who has possessed license to utilize the surveys and subsequent response data. The MBI-GS measured the respondents overall experience with the job burnout phenomena, having used the three aforementioned domains set forth by Maslach et al. (1996), including exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Elevated levels of exhaustion and cynicism in the MBI-GS results contribute to and suggest current job burnout, while elevated levels of professional efficacy in the MBI-GS results contribute to a reduction in job burnout. The AWS measured the levels of correlation or “fit” between the respondents and six domains of the workplace, workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values, and whether the respondents felt job burnout or job engagement. The Burnout Prevention Survey has measured demographical data and also provided the respondents with a place to add specific commentary or other relevant remarks based on a line of questioning. Relevant remarks and overarching themes were gleaned from the data gathered from the Burnout Prevention Survey.

**Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey**

The respondents were first required to take the MBI-GS. The MBI-GS included 16 questions about job-related feelings and asked the respondents to rate their feelings on a scale of 0 to 6, with 0 meaning the respondent never felt the way the question asked and 6 meaning the respondent felt the way the question asked every day. As stated earlier, the MBI-GS took the respondents’ answers and measured the respondents overall experience with the job burnout phenomena and used the three domains: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1996). Of the 29 responses received, the respondent group reported elevated levels of emotional exhaustion and being overextended, with an average frequency score of 2.9, indicating these feelings occur a few times a month. The respondent group felt considerably less
cynical and impersonal towards the recipients of their services, however, with an average frequency score of 1.4, indicating these feelings only occur a few times a year or less. The respondent group felt a greater sense of professional efficacy, competence, and job effectiveness, having reported an average frequency score of 5, indicating these feelings occur a few times a week. Figure 1 below displays the above frequency information.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** Group Frequency Scores on the MBI-GS Domains.

Figure 2, on the following page, demonstrates group standard deviations, which indicate the level of agreement among the respondents on the three domains. A larger standard deviation indicates a larger level of disagreement. The respondent group reflected a standard deviation of 1.3 in both the exhaustion and cynicism domains, indicating that some respondents have experienced stronger feelings of emotional exhaustion and overextension and impersonal attitudes towards recipients of their services than others. In other words, some individuals within the respondents have experienced facets of job burnout. However, there is significantly less standard deviation, 0.6, in the professional efficacy domain, indicating that the respondent group
has experienced similar levels in regards to their feelings of professional efficacy, competence, and effectiveness on the job.

![Figure 2. Standard Deviations of Group Frequency Scores on the MBI-GS Domains.](image)

The respondent group survey frequency results were then compared with the general population provided by Mind Garden, Inc., which included over 19,000 individuals across assorted occupations, as depicted in Figure 3 on the following page. The respondent group reported higher emotional exhaustion and overextension than the general population but also reported higher professional efficacy, job competence, and job effectiveness. As a result, it is indicated that the role of Contracting Officer is more emotionally taxing than the various jobs in the general population, but it is also one in which the individuals in the role of Contracting Officer feel more accomplished and effective. The respondent group also felt less impersonal attitudes towards the recipients of their services than the general population provided by Mind Garden, Inc. This indicated that the role of Contracting Officer is less difficult in this facet of job burnout than in many other professions.
Figure 3. Group Frequency versus General Population Frequency in MBI-GS Domains.

Figure 4, on the next page, compares the standard deviations of the respondent group with the general population of 19,000 varied individuals in the three MBI-GS domains of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Both the exhaustion and cynicism domains are in relative line with the general population’s standard deviation in these domains which indicates that some respondents’ experience with stronger feelings of emotional exhaustion and overextension and impersonal attitudes towards recipients of their services than others is normative. However, the respondent group’s standard deviation on professional efficacy is nearly twice the size of the general population’s standard deviation. This indicates that the experience of being a Contracting Officer has a demonstrable positive facet and one that works to counteract the previously highlighted prevalence of the negative facet of emotional exhaustion in the role of Contracting Officer.
Figure 4. Standard Deviations of Group Frequency Scores versus General Population Scores on the MBI-GS Domains.

Areas of Worklife Survey

The respondents then participated in the AWS. The AWS measured the levels of correlation or “fit” between the respondents and six domains of the workplace, workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values, and whether the respondents felt job burnout or job engagement. The results of the scores in the six domains are known as the agreement ratings. The survey asked 28 questions about the six aforementioned domains of the workplace and how the respondents experienced them by asking them to rate each question on a scale of 1 to 5. A rating of 1 indicated a stance of strong disagreement while a rating of 5 indicated a stance of strong agreement. A rating of 3 indicated that it is hard to decide either way. The role of the AWS was to assess the fit between a person and six domains of their job and has determined that a good fit is indicated by a score of 3 or above, while a bad fit is indicated by a score of 2.9 or
lower (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The AWS was given to the respondent group in order to further examine and investigate the prevalence of job burnout in the respondent group.

Of the 29 responses received, the respondent group reported that there is a good fit on four of the six domains, including control, reward, community, and values, and that there is a bad fit on the remaining two domains of workload and fairness, as depicted in Figure 5 on the following page. The indication of a bad fit between the respondent group and the domain of workload points to the relationship between the domain of workload in the AWS and the domain of exhaustion in the MBI-GS. Within the context of this study, it is reasonable to assume that the elevated levels of exhaustion shown in the MBI-GS are due, in large part, to the workload of the Contracting Officer, which is deemed to be a poor fit. In other words, Contracting Officers, at times, have too much work to do and not enough time or resources to complete the work. The domain of fairness in the AWS is also connected with the domain of exhaustion in the MBI-GS. Feelings of unfairness are reported when workers perceive “an inequity in workload or pay, or when there is cheating, or when evaluation or promotions are handled inappropriately” (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Moreover, workers are more concerned about fairness of the processes of the workplace, rather than outcomes themselves (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). In other words, workers desire workloads and tasks to be distributed fairly and equitably and want to be assessed for their workloads in a fair, equitable, and honest way. A lack of this equity can be manifest in emotional exhaustion. It is reasonable to conclude that the indication of a bad fit in the fairness domain of the AWS and elevated levels of exhaustion in the MBI-GS highlight that the perception of fairness is not adequately felt within the respondent pool of Contracting Officers.
Figure 5. Average Agreement Ratings on the AWS Domains.

Figure 6, on the following page, demonstrates group standard deviations which indicate the level of agreement among the respondents on the six AWS domains. A larger standard deviation indicated a higher level of disagreement. The highest areas of disagreement, based on a larger standard deviation, is in the fairness domain, followed by the workload domain. This indicated again that some Contracting Officers felt the workplace places too much workload on them and is not always equitable. The elevated largest standard deviation was within the reward domain, which measured the consistency between rewards for completed tasks and a workers expectation. Overall, the AWS measured this domain to be a good fit, supporting the assertion that Contracting Officers are generally pleased with their rewards, such as level of pay and the impact on benefactors of their work; however, based on the standard deviations presented, Contracting Officers can vary on how well rewards meet their expectations. The larger the standard deviation, the wider the range of responses, in that some Contracting Officers reported feeling more rewarded, while others reported less.
The respondent group agreement ratings were then compared with the general population provided by Mind Garden, Inc., which includes over 20,000 individuals across assorted occupations, as depicted in Figure 7 on the following page. The respondent group was above the scores for the general population in five of the six domains. The respondent group was significantly lower in the workload domain, 0.5 points below the normative score. It was also only 0.1 points higher than the normative score on the fairness domain, which also falls below the 3.0 cutoff for a good job/person fit. This data indicated that there is consistency in the postulation that Contracting Officers are overworked and, as a result, become emotionally exhausted.
Figure 7. Group Agreement Ratings versus General Population Agreement Ratings in the AWS Domains.

Figure 8, on the next page, compares the standard deviations of the respondent group with the general population of 20,000 varied individuals in the six AWS domains. Again, the respondent group’s level of agreement and disagreement on the six domains was in relative line with the standard deviations of the six domains of the general population; however, the normative standard deviation for the reward domain was unavailable to the researcher and, therefore, cannot be compared. The largest discrepancy in the standard deviation was in the community domain. This suggested to the researcher that the respondent group may be more tight-knit than the general population. Because the respondent group was tight knit, it can
suggest that the respondent group of Contracting Officers are a part of a more cohesive and supportive community.

![Figure 8. Standard Deviations of Group Agreement Ratings versus General Population Agreement Ratings in the AWS Domains.](image)

**Burnout Prevention Survey**

As stated earlier, the Burnout Prevention Survey was created by the researcher as a self-report measure and was posted to the SurveyMonkey website to be utilized by participants and data to be compiled by the website. The Burnout Prevention Survey measures demographical data and also provides the respondents with a place to add specific commentary, or other relevant remarks, based on a line of open-ended questions. Relevant remarks and overarching themes
were gleaned from the data gathered from the Burnout Prevention Survey. This was done by the researcher as a means of filling in any gaps in data that the previous two surveys may have missed and to assist the researcher in drawing conclusions from the data. Moreover, another benefit of the Burnout Prevention Survey is to provide a sense of empowerment to the respondents to provide reasonable and possible solutions to any identified problems. It should be noted that there is a slight discrepancy in the number of participants between the MBI-GS, the AWS, and the Burnout Prevention Survey. The former two had a total of 29 respondents, while the Burnout Prevention Survey only had a total of 27 respondents. This may have been a result of the researcher utilizing two different websites to disseminate the surveys, MBI-GS and AWS through Mind Garden, Inc. and the Burnout Prevention Survey through the SurveyMonkey website. Two respondents on the MBI-GS and AWS failed to go to the SurveyMonkey website to complete the Burnout Prevention Survey. Although there were two less respondents on the Burnout Prevention Survey, the researcher has deemed this to be statistically insignificant and has included the following data.

The demographical data of the respondents is as follows: 44.4% of the respondents were female, while 55.6% of the respondents were male. Of the 27 respondents, 7.4% of the respondents have worked at ACC-WRN for less than five years. A total of 44.4% have worked at ACC-WRN for 5-10 years, while the remaining 48.15% have worked at ACC-WRN for over 10 years. The demographics shift somewhat when cast in a different frame. Regarding the length of time the respondents have held the position of Contracting Officer at ACC-WRN, 59.26% have held the position for less than five years, while 37.04% have held it for 5-10 years, and only 3.7% have held it for over 10 years. Regarding hours worked and schedule, 92.59% work the standard eight hour work day, five days per week, and earn credit hours, while only 7.41% work
the compressed schedule and earn an RDO Day, one day off every two weeks, instead of credit hours. The size of the respondent’s current team varies as well; 7.41% of respondents indicate their team contains between 1-3 people, while 51.85% of respondents indicate their team contains 4-6 people and 40.74% of respondents indicate their team consists of seven or more people.

Question 6 of the Burnout Prevention Survey asked the respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with their current position, and 55.6% of respondents rated their current satisfaction level as somewhat satisfied or very satisfied, as depicted in Figure 9 below. Essentially, half the Contracting Officers are happy with their position and what it entails, while the large minority remaining are not.

![Figure 9](image)

**Figure 9.** ACC-WRN Contracting Officers’ Satisfaction with Current Position.

Questions 7 through 14 begin the self-reporting measure, and respondents were asked to provide answers to questions in short-answer form. While all the short-answer responses have
been saved by the researcher, they will not be individually listed within this paper for the sake of brevity. However, the researcher did review each one carefully, and worked to glean the general theme from the answers to each question.

Question 7 of the Burnout Prevention Survey asked the respondents if they believed the level of training they received was adequate for the current position. The resounding theme, based on the respondent answers, was that they believed they had received adequate training. A significant number of individuals stated that the position of Contracting Officer, itself, is a training mechanism, with one respondent reporting that, “Since I have been in this position for over 8 years, I have gained enough knowledge to do my job.” Sorting through the data received on Question 7, the researcher also discovered that while the respondents believed that they had received enough training to effectively perform their jobs, a significant portion of them felt that they did not have enough time to complete the tasks assigned to them. Many of the respondents noted in their answers that the level of training was not even an issue but that the amount of time was. This is consistent with the finding of an elevated level of exhaustion in the MBI-GS and the indication of a bad fit in the workload domain in the AWS. Some respondents expressed reservations about receiving more training, as it would create a situation where they “won't have time to do actual work”, as one respondent suggested.

Question 8 asked the respondents to report how they relieve stress on a regular basis. Several themes were extracted from the data. Ten respondents, representing 37% of the respondents, indicated that they utilized some form of regular exercise as a means of stress relief. An even larger number of respondents indicated that they use some form of interpersonal connectedness to family, friends, co-workers, or some combination of these qualifiers, to relieve stress. While there is some variance to how the respondents relieve stress, nearly every
respondent indicated that they felt they had an effective outlet for stress that worked for them. Question 9, related to Question 8, asked whether ACC-WRN/TACOM provides an opportunity to release or diminish stress. Overwhelmingly, the respondents reported that ACC-WRN/TACOM provides a gym to utilize, although most respondents do not use it. The other theme prevalent in the respondents’ answers to Question 9 was a lack of awareness of any other programs or facilities to reduce stress. From this, it is reasonable to conclude that Contracting Officers have an opportunity to decompress, recharge, and rest away from work, which seems to prevent more extreme experiences with job burnout and additional, elevated measures in the MBI-GS and AWS.

Question 10 switched gears and focused on assessing the support the respondents felt their work environment provided them and their professional endeavors. Nearly every respondent indicated that they felt supported by their work environment in some capacity. One respondent stated that having “worked in private industry, it’s refreshing to see all of the assistance offered by both my peers and upper management.” Question 11, aligned with Question 10, asked if the respondents felt appreciated in their effort level and outcomes produced. The pool of respondents’ answers were somewhat more complex for this question than previous questions. The researcher was able to deduce that, as a whole, the respondents felt appreciated but on a smaller and more localized level. There is a noted lack of appreciation between the respondents and individuals if the distance between them is significant. Many respondents reported that their peers, team members, or immediate supervisors were appreciative, but that there was a disconnect between themselves and upper management or with customers. Moreover, a significant number of respondents reported that they were only given attention when something negative occurred, with one respondent stating that “I only hear from
management when there is a problem or issue.” This would seem to point towards the reason for the bad fit reported in the fairness domain of the AWS.

Question 12 allowed the respondents to indicate what they would change about their position. The overarching theme of this answer pool was a reduction in workload. A significant majority of respondents indicated that they would reduce the workload of the Contracting Officer. One respondent stated that they would like the “choice between” the supervisory role of the position and the contracting role of the position, as there is not enough time to fulfill both roles. This is a theme that was repeated throughout the respondent answer pool. Generally, Contracting Officers felt competent in the multiple roles they had, and could do each effectively, but having to take on the multiple roles simultaneously was a burdensome workload. This is congruent with the findings of exhaustion in the MBI-GS and a bad fit in the workload domain of the AWS. In short, Contracting Officers felt they simply do not have enough time to do the myriad of work-related tasks assigned to them.

Question 13 built on the themes from Question 12, and asked what the respondents would keep the same about their position. A significant amount of respondents indicated that they appreciate the level of authority and autonomy granted to Contracting Officers. Moreover, another common theme within the data was the perceived outcome of the work a Contracting Officer performs. A significant amount of respondents reported that they appreciate knowing what their efforts went towards, including supporting the warfighter, and did not want to change this focus. This would seem to point towards why the respondent pool of Contracting Officers have very elevated levels professional efficacy, and why they cope with a burdensome workload.

The final question, Question 14, asked the respondents to identify how they utilize their social network for support. The overarching theme garnered from the data for this question was
that the respondents utilized their friends, family, and peers for emotional support. A significant amount of respondents utilized the word “vent” to describe the process of interacting with their social network in regards to work. Moreover, many respondents appeared to utilize their work peers as a source of professional support, seeking out advice, guidance, or a familiar perspective to speak with. Interestingly, a significant amount of respondents indicated that they did not involve their family with work matters and worked to compartmentalize their lives. Again, this indicated that Contracting Officers have an outlet for stress, which in turn reduced the experience of job burnout.

**Data Analysis Conclusion**

Overall, the researcher received an actual response rate of 61.7% on the MBI-GS, derived from receiving 29 of the 47 surveys issued, and 57.4% on the Burnout Prevention Survey, derived from receiving 27 of the 47 surveys issued. The researcher deemed that, while not every Contracting Officer at the Detroit Arsenal responded, the data provided by those respondents that did provided substantial information to address the research question regarding job burnout and to identify the positive and negative areas of the work environment moving forward. The data can be used to make conclusions on the prevalence of job burnout in the Contracting Officer position at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal.
Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Most adults spend a significant portion of their lives in the workplace. The reasons for doing so are numerous and varied, but may include a means to support a lifestyle and family, a means to give back and support a larger objective, and a means to self-actualize and grow as an individual. Since these working years make up such a large percentage of the lives of people, much research has been done to explore the experience of being in the workplace. One of the larger segments of this research has focused on the phenomena of job burnout. This research project was an attempt to contribute to the abundance of research on the matter. Specifically, the research in this project focused on identifying the prevalence of job burnout within the position of Contracting Officer at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, and what negative impacts any present job burnout has on Contracting Officers. From the acquired data, the researcher aspired to make recommendations to improve the experience of Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal.

In order to conduct this research, the researcher identified the sample size of respondents – 47 Supervisory Contract Specialists (Contracting Officers) physically located at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, Michigan – and created a testing battery for the respondents to complete. The researcher used the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) to measure the prevalence of job burnout and the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) to supplement the data acquired. These assessment tools were predicated on the conceptualization of job burnout into a multidimensional model of job burnout, described by Maslach (2003), and highlighted three dimensions, including overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. The researcher created the third measure, titled the Burnout Prevention Survey, which provided additional supplementation to the
data provided by the MBI-GS and the AWS. These three measurement tools were utilized because the researcher deemed them to be effective at not only identifying and assessing the prevalence of job burnout, but also at highlighting specific problem areas that solutions can be built to address.

As a review of the relevant research in Chapter II illustrated, the phenomena of job burnout is pervasive in the realm of employment and has real impacts on the workers and the companies that employ them. Based on the data presented in Chapter IV, the researcher was able to conclude that the phenomena of job burnout is occurring within the population of Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal; however, it is occurring in less aggressive and disruptive manners. Specifically, the job burnout is occurring within the realm of emotional exhaustion and is being primarily caused by an untenable amount of workload being placed on the Contracting Officers, with insufficient time to complete the tasks. Despite the fact that only 61.7% of the total Contracting Officers in the sample size participated in the MBI-GS and AWS surveys and 57.4% in the Burnout Prevention Survey, the researcher feels that information gathered from over half of the sample size is significant. Moreover, the fact that only 61.7% and 57.4% of the Contracting Officers, respectively, responded to the surveys only seems to support the conclusion that Contracting Officers’ workload level and lack of time is a problem at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal. The following section will explore these conclusions in more detail.

Conclusions

The researcher’s overall research question sought to determine the prevalence of job burnout among Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal. More specifically, the research also sought to determine to what extent the job burnout rate is related to the organizational setting, what Contracting Officers utilize to mitigate the negative effects of job-
related stress and burnout, the emotional experience of Contracting Officers suffering from job
burnout, and what the administration at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, can do to address potential
institutional causes of job burnout to reduce its prevalence and impact. The answer to the overall
research question as to the prevalence of job burnout among Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN,
Detroit Arsenal, was that job burnout does exist. More specifically, the source of this job burnout
was due to a facet of the organizational setting of ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, particularly the
workload placed upon the Contracting Officers. This assertion can be made because of the
findings of the MBI-GS, which showed elevated levels of reported emotional exhaustion in the
Contracting Officer population. The respondent’s average frequency of feeling emotionally
overextended and exhausted was a few times a month. This level of frequency was significantly
greater than the general population average, which was determined and provided by the creators
of the MBI-GS and the AWS.

The findings of increased emotional exhaustion in the MBI-GS correlate with the AWS
findings of a “bad fit” between worker and work environment in the domains of workload and
fairness. Both domains scored below a 3.0 – especially the workload domain, which scored a 2.5
– indicating that Contracting Officers had more demands at work than they were capable of
effectively managing with their current resources. Multiple instances of similar research outlined
in Chapter II highlighted the notion that increased levels of emotional exhaustion are the driving
force for job burnout. Maslach (2003) stated that the dimension of exhaustion was more
prevalent when the work environment provided work overload. Furthermore, two additional
studies pointed to similar conclusions. Svenisdottir et al. (2006) concluded that Icelandic nurses
who worked more hours and had a significantly larger workload than their peers experienced job
burnout. Similarly, Appleton et al. (1998) found that British doctors who worked less hours and
delegated certain tasks experienced less burnout. The self-reporting of Contracting Officers in the Burnout Prevention Survey supported the notion that they were emotionally overextended by various roles and did not have enough time to complete given tasks, and that the frequency of this occurrence was undesirable. Many Contracting Officers stated in the answers of the MBI-GS that a major stressor was the scope of their responsibilities and their constant struggle to complete all required tasks.

However, despite the prevalence of job burnout because of emotional exhaustion and workload, the researcher also concluded that the Contracting Officers were able to mitigate the impacts of emotional exhaustion to some degree, as evidenced by the low levels of cynicism in the respondent population of the MBI-GS. Koeske and Kelly (1995) investigated this facet of job burnout and suggested that more effective and less burnt-out workers balance between being over-involved with those they service and being uncaring and cynical about those they service. The numbers from the MBI-GS indicated that Contracting Officers were good at balancing their level of involvement with those they served, especially when comparing their reported frequency of this occurrence with the general population as provided by the creators of the MBI-GS and AWS. Contracting Officers were significantly below the average of the general population in level of involvement.

Further evidence that Contracting Officers were also working to mitigate the job burnout facets of emotional exhaustion and workload were the “good fits” in four of the six domains of the AWS, and self-reporting in the Burnout Prevention Survey indicating that nearly every Contracting Officer had an effective means of resting and recuperating from stress. Most Contracting Officers reported in the Burnout Prevention Survey that they believed they had an effective means of unplugging from workplace stress either by some form of physical activity or
by using their social network of friends and family for support. Research by Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) of individuals in the New York City Traffic Agency highlighted the importance of social support outside of work, as workers who had the support of their social network outside of work experienced less burnout.

Apart from the finding that job burnout was occurring in the Contracting Officer population at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal, an equally important finding was the frequent occurrence of positive professional efficacy. Based on the findings of the MBI-GS, the Contracting Officer respondents generally felt competent and effective in the work that they did, on average, multiple times per week. This was significantly over the average in the general population and pointed to the conclusion that while the role of Contracting Officer produced significant and unwanted emotional exhaustion, it also provided an opportunity for individuals to hone their skills, utilize them, and improve their sense of self. Maslach (2003) suggested that a primary means of reducing the negative impacts of job burnout was to increase professional efficacy. Motowidlo et al. (1986) reached a similar conclusion, highlighting how reducing role ambiguity reduced job burnout. Moreover, the very elevated levels of professional efficacy not only served as further means to cope with emotional exhaustion but also highlighted a positive characteristic of the Contracting Officer role at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal. Multiple respondents indicated within the Burnout Prevention Survey that they felt good about themselves knowing what all of their efforts went towards. Research by Amo (2015) supported this conclusion, as she highlighted the importance of high morale as a means of building an effective workforce.
Recommendations

The core of any effective workplace is the presence of a high-functioning workforce. Job burnout is a primary threat to stability and effectiveness of any workforce. With respect to Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal, the emotional exhaustion domain of job burnout was an issue within the workplace, as evidenced by the elevated levels of emotional exhaustion across the respondents; however, it could also be concluded that there were positive attributes to the role of Contracting Officer that could be built upon by ACC-WRN to further mitigate job-related stress and burnout.

**Recommendation 1: Cross-training.** One of the primary themes in the relevant literature outlined in Chapter II indicated that a major component to combating job burnout is training. Specifically, Ellis and Pearsall (2011) highlighted the importance of cross-training – the training of workers in areas other than their current position – as a method of training to reduce the impacts of job burnout. Ellis and Pearsall (2011) reported that cross-trained employees handled an increase of job demands better than those workers not cross-trained and did better at modulating their stress levels related to their job. Results derived from the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey disseminated by the researcher indicated that Contracting Officers had a very demanding job and these demands were correlated with increased stress levels and emotional exhaustion. ACC-WRN has instituted a multitude of training programs related to the specific job functions; however, was lacking in building a varied and nuanced knowledge base of its employees, including Contracting Officers.

The researcher recommends implementing a formal cross-training program for Contracting Officers that will assist them in understanding and supporting one another, thereby reducing negative emotional responses indicated in the emotional exhaustion scale. The
researcher has overheard multiple customers voice their concern over the rate at which Contracting Officers rotated to different divisions, leading to disruptions in ongoing actions. The cross-training program could help to lessen the magnitude of impact of rotations, thereby lessening disruptions, while still allowing Contracting Officers to be exposed to other action types. The researcher recommends pairing two Contracting Officers, from different divisions within ACC-WRN at the Detroit Arsenal. The Contracting Officers would still maintain control over their own actions; however, the cross-training program would allow the other Contracting Officer the opportunity to offer a different perspective while absorbing information to apply on potential future actions. Granted, a large extent of the burnout experienced by Contracting Officers was related to an overbearing workload, which this cross-training program may add to; however, the researcher believes that the benefits of this program would outweigh the negative affect on workload, especially if it is applied judiciously. This program would offer Contracting Officers the opportunity to strengthen their breadth and depth of contracting knowledge so that when the time does come for the Contracting Officer to rotate to another division, the Contracting Officer is more well-rounded in terms of their knowledge base; thereby, lessening the level of stress typically experienced by Contracting Officers who rotate to another division blind.

**Recommendation 2: Counseling and guidance.** Additional research in Chapter II highlighted the role an individual’s personal disposition can play in the prevalence of job burnout, like Zellars et al. (2004), who concluded more positive and optimistic affective states correlate with less job burnout. While the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey did not address this facet of job burnout, the researcher believes it is reasonable to consider the possibility that some Contracting Officer’s personality characteristics can account for the higher
levels of emotional exhaustion. As such, the researcher recommends that ACC-WRN provide additional services for Contracting Officers, and other workers, to explore these aspects of their personality and how they interact with the job environment. Specifically, the researcher recommends implementing a program similar to the Community Health Promotion Program (CHPP) for mental health. The CHPP allows first-line supervisors to approve up to 3 hours per week excused to participate in Command-sponsored formal physical exercise. The mental health promotion program could allow supervisors to approve one hour per week excused to seek professional psychological counseling, guidance, and support. Participation in the program would be voluntary and would require the personnel to provide formal documentation from the therapist as proof of attendance. Providing this outlet may help Contracting Officers alleviate stress while delivering coping mechanisms they can use on a daily basis to combat job-related burnout.

**Recommendation 3: ACC-WRN intermural activities.** Question 8 of the Burnout Prevention Survey asked respondents to report how they relieve stress on a regular basis. As reported in Chapter IV, a few themes were extracted from the data including participating in some form of regular exercise and interpersonal connectedness to family, friends, co-workers, or some combination thereof. Question 9 of the Burnout Prevention Survey asked whether ACC-WRN/TACOM provides an opportunity to release or diminish stress. Overwhelmingly, the respondents reported that ACC-WRN/TACOM provides a gym for employees, including Contracting Officers, to utilize, although most do not use it; however, there was a lack of awareness of any other programs or facilities that ACC-WRN/TACOM offers to reduce stress. The researcher recommends that ACC-WRN implement various intermural activities for not only Contracting Officers, but all ACC-WRN personnel, to partake in after work as an outlet for
reducing stress. In the past, many ACC-WRN personnel at the Detroit Arsenal participated in softball leagues, bowling leagues, etc. and speak fondly of the memories.

**Recommendation 4: Time-off awards.** Question 10 of the AWS assessed the support the respondents felt their work environment provided them and their professional endeavors. Nearly every respondent indicated that they feel supported by their work environment in some capacity; however, responses to Question 11, which asked if the respondents felt appreciated in their effort level and outcomes produced, implied that, as a whole, respondents felt a lack of appreciation from upper management (not the immediate supervisor) and customers. In order to address this perception, the researcher recommends that ACC-WRN, along with its customers, consider issuing time-off awards to Contracting Officers to recognize significant accomplishments. ACC-WRN has been focusing recently on encouraging management to recognize personnel for significant contributions; however, Contracting Officers are not as often recognized. Contracting Officers are also not offered the same option as personnel to select between a cash award or time-off award for their annual bonuses. The only way that Contracting Officers can gain additional time off beyond the standard level of leave provided by ACC-WRN is to work additional hours to apply toward credit hours, as mentioned in Chapter I. By issuing occasional time-off awards, the researcher feels that this would go a long way with improving morale and, therefore, lessening the occurrence of job burnout among Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN, Detroit Arsenal.

**Recommendation 5: Reduction of workload.** The AWS indicated a bad fit between the respondent group and the workload domain, as depicted in Figure 5 of Chapter IV, which pointed to the relationship between the workload domain in the AWS and the exhaustion domain in the MBI-GS. As stated in Chapter IV, it was reasonable to assume that the elevated levels of
exhaustion shown in the MBI-GS were due, in large part, to the workload of the Contracting Officer, which was deemed to be a bad fit in the AWS. In other words, Contracting Officers, at times, have too much work to do and not enough time or resources to complete the work. Question 12 of the Burnout Prevention Survey asked respondents to indicate what they would change about their position, and the overwhelming majority responded that they would reduce the workload of the Contracting Officer. One respondent went on to state that they would like the “choice between” the supervisory role of the position and the contracting role of the position, as there was not enough time to fulfill both roles. As a result of the feedback received from the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey, the researcher recommends three potential courses of action in order to reduce the workload of Contracting Officers.

First, the researcher recommends issuing one limited warrant per team to a highly-rated GS-12 level Contract Specialist. This limited warrant would allow the Contract Specialist to review and award low-dollar value actions and routine modifications that, although minor in nature, tend to take up a disproportionate amount of the Contracting Officer’s time.

Second, the researcher recommends redirecting some administrative responsibilities that are currently at the Contracting Officer level to either the Division Procurement Analyst or the next level of management, the Group Chief. An example of an administrative responsibility that the Division Procurement Analysts could take over from the Contracting Officers is the dissemination, collection of data, and responses to all taskers. Currently, the Procurement Analyst sends the taskers out to the Contracting Officers to gather data from their teams and provide back to the Procurement Analyst. Rather than leaving the Contracting Officer in as the “middle man”, the Procurement Analyst should instead go directly to the Contract Specialists to gather data and merely copy the Contracting Officers on the communications for their awareness.
An example of an administrative responsibility that the Group Chiefs can take over from the Contracting Officers is the drafting of employee appraisals. Contracting Officers traditionally draft employee appraisals based on the accomplishments drafted and submitted by the employee; therefore, a Group Chief could easily draft the appraisal, as well, with this information in hand. The Contracting Officer could then just review the draft of the appraisals once completed by the Group Chief. Reassigning some of the administrative responsibilities of the Contracting Officer would allow more time to focus on the technical aspects of the job rather than being bogged down by administrative activities that could easily be handled by a less overworked position.

Lastly, the researcher recommends putting a cap on the size of all contracting teams at three Contract Specialists per team. The demographics section of the Burnout Prevention Survey found that the size of the respondents’ current teams vary with only 7.41% of respondents indicating that their team contained between 1-3 people. A staggering 51.85% of respondents indicated their team contained 4-6 people and 40.74% of respondents indicated their team consisted of seven or more people. This large discrepancy among team sizes may be contributing to the focus on workload as a contributing factor to the prevalence of job burnout experienced by Contracting Officers. Although capping the team size at three does not equally correlate to the amount of workload handled by the team, it does lessen the amount of workload currently experienced by the 92.59% of Contracting Officers with teams of four or more, as well as limits the amount of administrative-related tasks, such as appraisals, that Contracting Officers would have to complete for three versus seven or more employees.

Understandably, this last course of action would result in the need to hire additional Contracting Officers, which may not be in the budget at this time; however, capping team sizes should definitely be explored. Implementing one, two, or all three of the aforementioned
solutions would help to reduce the scope of the Contracting Officer role, freeing up time for Contracting Officers to focus on not only technical reviews of contracting documents but also on developing and mentoring personnel, which is currently suffering due to the overwhelming workload placed on Contracting Officers. By allowing more time to focus on developing and mentoring employees, the quality of work products will improve, further lessening the workload of Contracting Officers. By lessening the workload of Contracting Officers, the research indicated that the prevalence of job burnout would also lessen, leading to happier, healthier Contracting Officers.

**Recommended additional research.** As stated above, the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey did not address the correlation of a Contracting Officer’s personality characteristics (i.e. pessimistic/optimistic) with job burnout. The researcher recommends an additional study on this topic to assess the role a Contracting Officer’s personal disposition plays in the prevalence of job burnout. Conducting this study before and after implementing Recommendation 2 above may offer some additional insight into the reason for higher levels of emotional exhaustion among Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal.

The researcher also recommends reissuing the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey to the Contracting Officers at the Detroit Arsenal one year after implementing any recommendations offered within this study to measure their effectiveness on reducing the prevalence of job burnout currently experienced by Contracting Officers. Other ACC-WRN contracting offices may also benefit from disseminating the MBI-GS, AWS, and Burnout Prevention Survey to the Contracting Officers located at those locations as well.
References


Appendix A: Survey Participation Cover Letter

December 8, 2015

Dear Participant:

My name is Jaclyn Flewelling, and I am a fellow ACC-WRN Contracting Officer and graduate student at Central Michigan University. For my final capstone project, I am examining the prevalence of burnout in Contracting Officers at Army Contracting Command – Warren (ACC-WRN). Because you are a Contracting Officer, serving in a first-level management position, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the following three surveys: (1) Masach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS), (2) Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and (3) Burnout Prevention Survey.

ACC-WRN has authorized participation in these surveys during duty time. The three surveys combined will require approximately 20-30 minutes total to complete. In order to ensure that all information remains confidential, please do not include your name on any of the surveys and do not respond to the optional demographics questions in the AWS. Your responses are anonymous.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions in each of the surveys as honestly as possible and promptly return the completed MBI-GS and AWS via the Mind Garden website (you will receive a separate email from Mind Garden containing participation instructions) and the completed Burnout Prevention Survey via the SurveyMonkey website by clicking the survey link and entering the password found at the end of this letter. Please note that in the Burnout Prevention Survey, “Organization” is defined as ACC-WRN.

As stated above, your responses are anonymous. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Opting to participate or not will have no effect on your job or position within ACC-WRN. For those who participate, there is no compensation for responding, nor are there any known risks.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected and my subsequent analysis and recommendations will provide useful information regarding the prevalence of burnout in Contracting Officers at ACC-WRN and potential solutions. Copies of the final project will be provided to not only my Central Michigan University instructor but also to our Business Management Division to consider possible initiatives to enhance the working environment at ACC-WRN. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number or e-mail address listed below. Please also feel free to e-mail me if you would like a summary copy of the final study.

Please note that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the MSA Program by calling 989-774-6525 or addressing a letter to the MSA Program, Rowe 222, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Sincerely,

JACLYN M. FLEWELLING
flewe1jm@cmich.edu or (586) 354-6144

Faculty Monitor: Dr. Martin Meloche, melo1cjms@cmich.edu

Survey 1: MBI – General Survey – You will receive an email directly from invite@mindgarden.com containing the survey link.
Survey 2: Areas of Worklife Survey – You will receive an email directly from invite@mindgarden.com containing the survey link.
Appendix B: Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS)

For use by Jaclyn Flewelling only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on September 22, 2015

MBI-General Survey

Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Michael P. Leiter, Christina Maslach & Susan E. Jackson

The purpose of this survey is to discover how staff members view their job, and their reactions to their work.

Instructions: On the following page are 16 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, write the number “0” (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

Example:

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1. I feel depressed at work

If you never feel depressed at work, you would write the number “0” (zero) under the heading “How Often.” If you rarely feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number “1.” If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week but not daily), you would write the number “5.”
A STUDY OF THE PREVALENCE OF BURNOUT

For use by Jaclyn Flewelling only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on September 22, 2015

MBI-General Survey

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How Often

0-6

Statements:

1. _______ I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. _______ I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. _______ I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. _______ Working all day is really a strain for me.
5. _______ I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work.
6. _______ I feel burned out from my work.
7. _______ I feel I am making an effective contribution to what this organization does.
8. _______ I’m becoming less interested in my work since I started this job.
9. _______ I have become less enthusiastic about my work.
10. _______ In my opinion, I am good at my job.
11. _______ I feel exhilarated when I accomplish something at work.
12. _______ I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
13. _______ I just want to do my job and not be bothered.
14. _______ I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything.
15. _______ I doubt the significance of my work.
16. _______ At my work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done.

(Administrative use only)

EX: _______ cat:_______ CY: _______ cat:_______ PE: _______ cat:_______

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Appendix C: Mind Garden, Inc. Permission Letter for MBI-GS

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Instrument: Maslach Burnout Inventory, Forms: General Survey, Human Services
Survey & Educators Survey

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert Most
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www.mindgarden.com

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Appendix D: Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS)

For use by Jaclyn Flewelling only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on September 22, 2015

Appendix: Sample Areas of Worklife Survey

Areas of Worklife Survey

by Michael P. Leiter & Christina Maslach

Published by Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Note to Masters and Doctoral Students:
You may insert the following SAMPLE copy of the instrument in your IRB proposal if necessary.
You may NOT insert a complete copy of the instrument in your Thesis or Dissertation!!!
See Mind Garden Sample Item letter for details.

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### Areas of Worklife Survey

Please use the following rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Please circle the number corresponding to your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Hard to Decide</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Workload

1. I do not have time to do the work that must be done.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
2. I work intensely for prolonged periods of time.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
3. I have so much work to do on the job that it takes me away from my personal interests.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
4. I have enough time to do what's important in my job.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
5. I leave my work behind when I go home at the end of the workday.
   - 1 2 3 4 5

#### Control

6. I have control over how I do my work.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
7. I can influence management to obtain the equipment and space I need for my work.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
8. I have professional autonomy/independence in my work.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
9. I have influence in the decisions affecting my work.
   - 1 2 3 4 5

#### Reward

10. I receive recognition from others for my work.
    - 1 2 3 4 5
11. My work is appreciated.
    - 1 2 3 4 5
12. My efforts usually go unnoticed.
    - 1 2 3 4 5
13. I do not get recognized for all the things I contribute.
    - 1 2 3 4 5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Hard to Decide</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. People trust one another to fulfill their roles.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I am a member of a supportive work group.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Members of my work group cooperate with one another.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Members of my work group communicate openly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I don’t feel close to my colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Resources are allocated fairly here.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Opportunities are decided solely on merit.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. There are effective appeal procedures available when I question the fairness of a decision.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Management treats all employees fairly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Favoritism determines how decisions are made at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. It’s not what you know but who you know that determines a career here.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. My values and the Organization’s values are alike.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The Organization’s goals influence my day to day work activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. My personal career goals are consistent with the Organization’s stated goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. The Organization is committed to quality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics

The following optional questions are frequently used with the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) and are included in Mind Garden’s Transform™ online version of the AWS.

1. Gender:  __ Male  __ Female

2. How long have you worked at this Organization? (Please select one)
   __ 0-6 Months  __ 6-10 Years
   __ 7-11 Months  __ 11-15 Years
   __ 1-2 Years  __ 16-20 Years
   __ 3-5 Years  __ 21+ Years

3. How long have you worked in your present position in this Organization? (Please select one)
   __ 0-6 Months  __ 6-10 Years
   __ 7-11 Months  __ 11-15 Years
   __ 1-2 Years  __ 16-20 Years
   __ 3-5 Years  __ 21+ Years

4. Your employment status:  __ Full-time  __ Part-time

5. The Organization name:  ____________________________

6. The Department name:  ____________________________

7. The Organizational Group you are in:  ____________________________

8. Is your position considered: (Please select one)
   __ Front-line staff
   __ Supervisor
   __ Management (First-level)
   __ Management (Intermediate)
   __ Management (Senior)
Appendix E: Mind Garden, Inc. Permission Letter for AWS

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Instrument: Areas of Worklife Survey

Authors: Michael P Leiter & Christina Maslach


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Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
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## Appendix F: Burnout Prevention Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your gender?</td>
<td>Female, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How long have you worked at ACC-WRN?</td>
<td>Less Than 5 Years, 5-10 Years, More Than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How long have you been in your current position?</td>
<td>Less Than 5 Years, 5-10 Years, More Than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is your current work schedule?</td>
<td>Standard (Straight 8s with Credit Hours), Compressed (Short/RDO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the size of your current team?</td>
<td>1-3, 4-6, 7+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How satisfied are you with your current position?</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfied, Somewhat Unsatisfied, Neutral, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Do you feel the amount of training you have received is adequate for your current position? Please explain.

8. Please explain how you believe you relieve stress on a regular basis.

9. Are there facilities, services, or outlets that ACC-WRN/TACOM offers that provide you with an opportunity to release or diminish stress? Please describe what and how you are using these provisions.

10. Do you believe your workplace environment supports you in your professional endeavors? Please explain.

11. Do you believe your workplace environment appreciates the effort you put in and the outcomes you produce? Please explain.

12. As a whole, what would you change about your current position? Please explain.

13. As a whole, what would you keep the same about your current position? Please explain.
* 14. How do you utilize your social network (family, friends, co-workers, etc.) for support? Please explain.
Appendix G: ACC-WRN Clearance Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND-WARREN
6581 EAST 11 MILE ROAD
WARREN, MICHIGAN 48397-5000

October 28, 2015

Business Management Division

Ms. Jaclyn M. Flewelling
30319 Palomino Dr.
Warren, MI 48093

Dear Ms. Flewelling:

I have reviewed your request to conduct a research project involving Army Contracting Command – Warren (ACC-Warren) and the survey material that will be used, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Study (MBI-GS), Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and Burnout Prevention Survey.

I feel that this project will be beneficial to ACC-Warren as well as the project’s participants. You have my permission to use ACC-Warren first line supervisors as the subject pool for this project. If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please contact me at laura.c.jacobson.civ@mail.mil or 586-282-6016.

Sincerely,

Laura C. Jacobson
Chief, Business Management Division
Appendix H: CMU Research Review Application Approval

Dear Jaclyn,

Your Research Review Application has been reviewed and approved. You may start your data collection. This approval will not expire as long as your topic and methodology remain unchanged. If your topic or methodology changes, please submit a new Research Review Application and supporting documents to your instructor by e-mail.

Please contact your instructor if you have any questions. Also, be sure to check with your instructor concerning the due dates for your project.

Good luck with your project. This is the only notification you will receive. Please keep a copy for your records.

Kim Gribben
Assistant Director, MSA Program